

Sunday, October 6, 2024

Scripture Reading: Job 1:1; 2:1-10

*God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.
—Augustine*

Most of our readers have a lot of life experience. A lot! So you get it when I say that sometimes, life seems to have it in for us. I'm talking about the hard knocks of life; those times when we get hit with a punch that sends us plumb into next week.

Once in a while, life hurts, doesn't it? In the first and second chapters of Job, the ancient patriarch is hurting. In one day, he loses all his camels, sheep, donkeys, oxen, servants and even his ten children. And he ain't feelin' so good, either. He looks like a shadow of his former self. Among other health issues, he's stricken with sores that itch so bad he has to scrape them with shards of pottery. He wants to die. His illness makes Covid-19 look like a sneeze or a sniffle.

Job's friends gathered round, as we learn later in the book of Job. They knew every platitude in the book. Perhaps your friends have said to you in your time of despair, "Well, time heals all wounds." No, it doesn't. Or that friend who said when your infant grandchild died, "Guess God needed another little angel in heaven!" No, God didn't need another angel in heaven. Or, "God won't give you more than you can handle." Tell that to Job or all those who died before they could be delivered from danger.

The next logical move is then to ask "Why?" Why did a loved one die? Why is the world so wicked? Why do we live in a world where children suffer? Why are innocent people struck down because of the carelessness and recklessness of others?

In times of suffering, Job learned *to choose faith*. This is what the great heroes of the Bible did. In Hebrews 11:1, we read, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The text then identifies some of these heroes and heroines: Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, ... "Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight" (Hebrews 11:32-34).

They chose faith in their suffering. We can do no less.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Help me, O God, to choose faith when I face my hour of trial. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Week of October 6, 2024

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: 1 Corinthians 5-9

Monday: Ezekiel 37-41

Tuesday: Ezekiel 42-48

Wednesday: Daniel 1-3

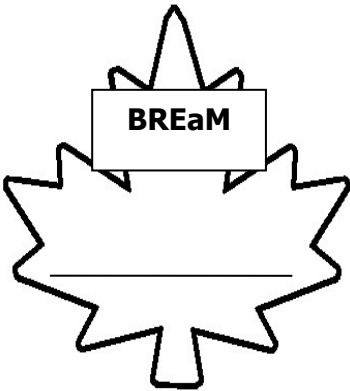
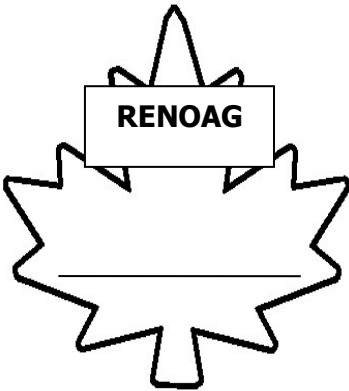

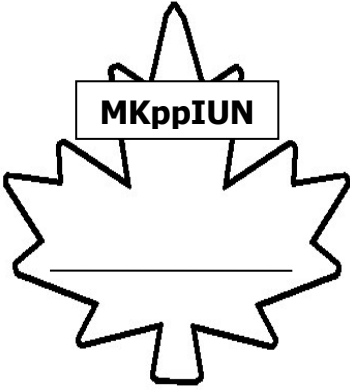
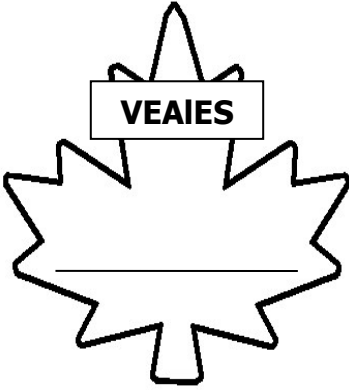
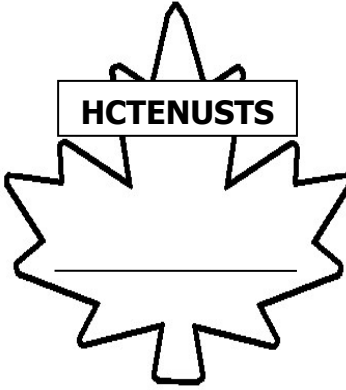

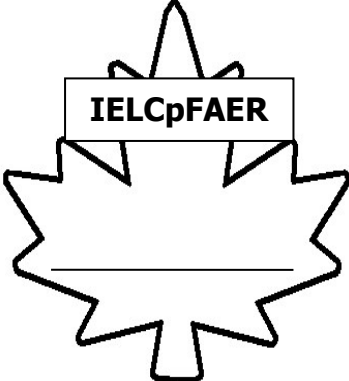
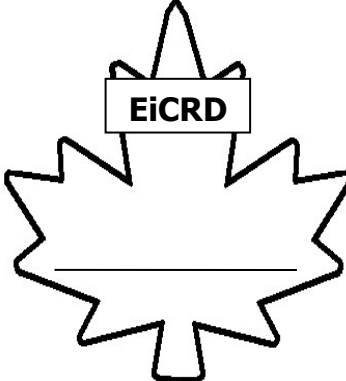
Thursday: Daniel 4-6

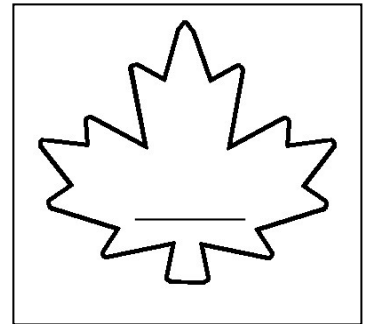
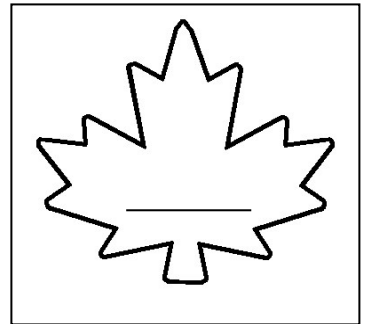
Friday: Daniel 7-12

Saturday: Psalms 112-114

FALL FUN!

Unscramble the letters in each leaf below and write the word on the line provided. Each word is appropriate for the fall season. Notice the lowercase letters in the leaves. Unscramble these eight letters to form **two words** that reveal an American favorite, and write in the empty leaves below.



SOLUTION: BREAM=amber;
 RENOAG=orange;
 AFLLeNN=flannel;
 MKppIUN=pumpkin;
 VEALES=leaves;
 HCTENUSTS=chestnuts;
 HRAEVST=harvest;
 IELCPFAER=fireplace;
 EiCRD=cider.
SECRET WORDS: apple pie.

October 6, 2024, is World Communion Sunday