

“Lift Up Your Heart”

Each day, begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Monday, 9/1/08 – Read John 21:1-3

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Do you ever feel discouraged? Do you ever feel “down” or get down on yourself? Does your faith help you in the down times? ... The disciples of Jesus felt that way too. Peter just wanted to go fishing, to return to his routine activities. When you get down, what do you do?

Tuesday, 9/2/08 – Read John 21:4-8

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Peter had gone back to normal life; he had gone to his work. Then, right there in the midst of Peter's normal activities, the Risen Lord shows up. Jesus, risen from the dead, is there. ... Peter doesn't recognize him at first. And then gets so excited that he jumps in the water and swims to shore. ... The Risen Lord shows up in your life too. Unannounced -- and probably sometimes unrecognized. When has the Resurrected Christ shown up in your life? Maybe you didn't even recognize it at the time, but think back and see if you can name a time when the Living Jesus showed up for you.

Wednesday, 9/3/08 – Read John 21:9-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus honors the work these fellows have been doing. He asks them to bring the fish they have caught. ... And Jesus honors the work you do. When you do your work today, hear Jesus saying to you: “Bring me your work. Let me bless it.” ... Would it make a difference in your work, if you heard Jesus saying that to you?

Thursday, 9/4/08 – Read John 21:12-14

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The Risen Lord said to the disciples, “Come and have breakfast.” And then he serves them -- he gives them bread and fish. Jesus was reminding the disciples of the last supper, before his crucifixion, when he also gave them the bread. But this time it's all different. This time it's full of joy and happiness and delight. ... In your mind's eye, picture Jesus inviting you to breakfast and giving you the bread and the fish. Let yourself feel the joy and the excitement of being with Jesus, risen from the dead.

Friday, 9/5/08 – Read Philippians 4:4-7

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Our communion service always begins with the words, “Lift up your hearts ...” Communion is a time for rejoicing, for celebration -- just like the Risen Lord's inviting the disciples to come have breakfast. ... Sometimes

when we get “down,” we feel powerless over our feelings. The communion service reminds us to be active, to lift up our hearts. ... Right now, begin a few minutes of prayer, and picture yourself lifting your heart up to God.

My Faith Journal, August 31, 2008
BREAKFAST

What do I want to remember out of today’s message?

Saturday, 9/6/08 – Read Matthew 11:28-29

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading (verses we also read last week) is Jesus' invitation to us. Sometimes we cannot manage our negative thoughts and feelings all by ourself. We have to trust God, trust Christ, with our hearts. As you pray today, take in a big breath; then, as you exhale, imagine that you are entrusting to God all the negativity that is inside you.

What action do I intend to take as a result of today’s message?

Sunday, 9/7/08 – Read Philippians 4:8-9

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Trusting God with our negativity is not a passive thing. We need to be spiritually active. We need to lift up our hearts to God. We have to discipline our thoughts. Today notice those times when the negative thoughts seem to crowd in on you, and then gently refocus your thinking. As today's reading suggests, “think about these things.” Write down the thought you want to focus your attention on today – a thought you’ll return to when you get distracted.
