

*Focus reading:* Mark 13:1–8 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=407482551>)

*Other lectionary readings:* 1 Samuel 1:4–20, 2:1–10; Hebrews 11:14–25

*Theme:* The Way of Faithfulness

The temple was not only an impressively large, beautiful building admired by at least one of Jesus' disciples, but it was the center of Jewish faith in which was located all of the power and authority that Jesus challenged. So, when the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, the people lost much more than a building! It was a time of turmoil and despair. We do not know exactly when Mark was written, or if these words of Jesus were understood to be a specific prediction about the temple or a general truth about structures and systems that are temporary; but when the disciples request a timetable, Jesus has none to offer. Instead he tries to prepare them for the dark days ahead. Where there is darkness and turmoil, deception finds an opening. The search for stability leads people to accept authority from the wrong source. Jesus warns his followers to not be led astray out of fear. Jesus likens the coming turmoil to childbirth. What is seen as the end of time is actually the beginning of God's new creation. There will be hard times, but God is working through the chaos and will bring us to the future God has planned for us and for all of creation.

#### HOPE VS FEAR

In these verses, Jesus describes things that sound pretty scary: wars, earthquakes, famines. Yet, Jesus doesn't want us to be afraid. He wants us to live in hope, trusting God's promise that a new day and new life are ahead. What causes fear in our world and in your child's life today? How do we act when we are afraid? If fear could talk, what would fear say? What would hope say? How do we act when we are hopeful? Go back to the fear-filled situations and talk about how hope would make a difference. Invite your child to draw a picture of fear and one of hope. Without displaying it, decide what you want to do with the picture of fear. Hang up the picture of hope where it can inspire you each day.

#### PRAYER

Loving God,  
Superheroes,  
tall buildings,  
and solid rocks  
all seem strong to us.

Yet, they are not as strong as you and your love.  
May we put our trust and hope in you,  
knowing that you are with us during the most difficult times  
and that you will bring about a new and better day for all.  
Amen.