

# CREATING YOUR PRAYER VASE



## You will need for this project

- 1 vase or jar
- sand or dirt
- 6-10 smooth rocks (1 ½ to 3 inch size)
- 3-4 twigs from dead branches – should be about as long as your jar is high
- a small bit of moss (preserved moss is available at craft stores) – you don't need a lot!

**As you work, you may wish to think about your experiences of wilderness---both literal and metaphorical.**

## POURING OF SAND

Sand accumulates slowly over time, wearing away from rock and stone, crystallizing tiny organisms and minerals into hard matter. In the deep crust of the earth, grains of sand compress into stone. Sand reminds us that the wilderness has history, for as long as there has been creation, there has been wilderness. The wilderness is somewhere we've been before. Carefully pour sand into the bottom of your vases, filling them up about one to three inches from the bottom.

## ASSEMBLING OF TREE BRANCHES

In the winter, many trees let go of their leaves. Some trees need to be pruned in order to bear fruit. Trees remind us that we have to let go in order to start anew. And every spring, trees show us

what it looks like to become new. In the wilderness, God is cheering for you. The wilderness is a place to begin again.

Take three or four branches and arrange them in your vase, sticking them into the sand at the bottom. Trim as needed.

## **WRITING PRAYERS AND ADDING STONES**

In the bible, the wilderness was often like a maze for the lost. Jacob wrestled with a mysterious angel through the night in the wilderness. The Israelites escaped to the desert and then wandered there for forty years. Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman alone by a well in the midday heat. But often, the wilderness was also a place to encounter the divine. When Jacob dreamt of a ladder leading to heaven, he placed a stone to mark the spot. He called the holy place “Beth-el”—God’s house. Even when we are lost or walking in the dark, stones remind us that God is transforming our terrain into holy ground.

Think of someone who is or situations of wandering through the wilderness—through the wilderness of uncertainty, grief, sickness, or hardship. Write prayers on 6-10 stones at your table for those in the wilderness. When you finish writing your prayers—on one or more stones—gently place them in your vases, filling them as far as they will go.

## **ADDING MOSS**

The wilderness can be a place of new life, resilient life. And in the soil of our wildernesses, God can plant seeds. Moss has no roots and requires no soil. Instead, it grows on the face of stone. Moss is known for its hardiness—it can sustain drought, too much rain, and cold temperatures. Some mosses can grow again after being frozen for over a thousand years. Moss reminds us that the wilderness is a place of new life, of resilient life.

Place a bit of moss at the top of each of your vases.

**(Liturgy from ©Sanctified Art)**

**Please use your vase to pray daily for the people or situations written on your stones and to remind you that God is always present, even and especially, in the wilderness.**



*jeanwoessnerphoto*