

Why 40?

In today's focus passage, Elijah travels for 40 days and nights. Rabbi Adam Morris, who answers questions at "Ask the Rabbi," (www.seasonsonline.ca) writes, "The rabbis interpret the significance from the first 40 we get in the story of Noah. And the rabbis suggest that 40 is important because (as they believed) 40

days after a child is conceived, the Talmud tells us, the soul enters the body. Forty, therefore, is a symbol of birth, rebirth, and change. A 16th century rabbi (Rabbi Judah ben Loew) taught that 40 is a number that has the potential to raise someone's spiritual state."

For reflection:

- **How is this evident in Elijah's journey to an encounter on Mount Horeb?**

The presence of God is not evident in the busyness or spectacle (chaos) of the mountain, instead in calm and stillness.

- **How do you seek God's presence by "being" rather than "doing" in your life as a congregation? What makes "being" difficult for your congregation?**

Write 40 words on a page in your journal.

Tear another page into 40 pieces.

Rearrange the pieces into something new.

