



KIDS CORNER

PREPARING FOR EASTER

A FAMILY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

2023



ASH WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 22, 2023

“and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”

MARK 1:13

PREPARING FOR EASTER:

WHAT IS LENT?

Today is called Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Lent is a period of 40 days before Easter that many Christians purposely use as a time to grow in their faith. Just like Jesus spent 40 days in the desert preparing for his public ministry, Lent is a time for us to prepare ourselves for the celebration and meaning of Easter.

On Ash Wednesday, many Christians wear ashes on their foreheads in the shape of the cross. This is a very old Christian tradition. Christians wear the ash symbol to show that without God, that is all we are—ashes. It's a way of admitting how much we need God.

Many Christians also choose to give up or “fast” from something for Lent. It might be something we find fun like playing video games, eating fast food, or watching

TV. Giving one of these things up can help us recognize their power to distract our attention from God. It's also common during Lent for adults to fast from something one might need, like lunch. It can be hard work to give stuff up, but through this struggle God shows us that he is always with us, giving us strength and hope to persevere.

But Lent isn't just about giving things up. Many people commit to positive practices like prayer or Bible study during Lent. This series of weekly Lent devotions will help you think about things we can all do to become more like Jesus. It will encourage you to think about how you talk to God, about how you treat other people, and about how you make choices everyday. Each devotion has a memory verse for the week and a challenge activity that you can do with your family.

CHALLENGE

Is there something you want to give up for Lent? Ask God to bless your commitment and help you grow in your faith and to rely more on him. As a family, talk about what you might do when things get difficult and you're tempted to use, have, or do the thing you have chosen to give up.



WEEK 1

SUNDAY • FEBRUARY 26, 2023

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

ROMANS 12:12

PREPARING FOR EASTER:

PRAYER AND ACTION

During Lent, one way to grow in faith is to pray daily. Think about the things you pray for each day. Do you pray and then forget about it?

God wants us to pray, and then listen, in order for us to learn his heart. He also wants us go and take action as he leads. Too often, we allow prayer to become routine. We get stuck praying the same exact “thank you, God, for everything” prayer, or we focus only on asking God for “stuff.”

Do you ask God to help you make decisions in your life? Do you wait for his answers? Many times, we just do things in our lives without ever praying about them first. We need both: first prayer and listening, then God-directed action. In these weeks leading up to Easter, practice praying about possible decisions and actions. Be sure to pray, listen, and then take action.

Want to dig deeper and learn more about prayer? Read 1 [John 5:14-15](#), [Ephesians 6:18](#), and [James 5:13](#). Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* [Prayer and Action](#) episode.

CHALLENGE

1. Share “prayer stories” with your family (just like Grandpa asked people to share in the [Prayer and Action](#) episode). Tell about a time when you prayed and took God-directed action, and how it turned out.
2. Share about a situation that you’ve been praying for. With your family, ask God about what you could do to be Christ’s hands and feet in that situation, and see where God leads you. Be sure to go back later and tell your family what happens!



“Give and it will be given to you.”

[LUKE 6:38A](#)

PREPARING FOR EASTER: GIVING

Sacrificial giving is hard! [Luke 21:1-4](#) tells the story of the widow who gave an amazing gift. Shortly before Jesus' death, he was at the temple watching as people gave their offerings. A poor widow walked up to the collection box and gave two small copper coins as her offering. Although this was a small gift, so small it would be considered insignificant by most, Jesus commended her because she “put in all she had to live on.”

Sacrificial giving pleases God, but not many of us actually give until it hurts. Do you give your “leftovers”—whatever is left after you’ve taken care of all your needs and wants? During Lent, instead of holding tightly to what

you have, ask God to help you hold everything loosely so you can give generously, even if it hurts. In [2 Corinthians 8:3](#), Paul congratulates churches for giving even beyond their own ability. How can you sacrifice and give “beyond your own ability”? Giving like this is very difficult. It isn't something you should do because you feel guilty or feel like you have to. Sacrificial giving is a way of giving thanks to God for his great sacrificial gift, Jesus Christ.

Want to dig deeper into giving sacrificially? Read [John 3:16](#), [Ephesians 3:17–19](#), and [Psalm 103:11](#). Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* [The Order of the Gator](#) episode.

CHALLENGE

Talk with your family about ways that you can save extra money between now and Easter, and how you might give it away. Maybe it means not spending your allowance on candy or not eating out as a family. Maybe you can even raise money by doing extra chores.

Then decorate a small jar or box and place it where your whole family will see it every day. Add the money you are saving to it.

When thinking about how you can give the money away, you'll realize you've got lots of options. Maybe you can give it to your church, a local ministry, or a family in need. You might even decide sacrificial saving is something you want to continue doing. If so, you can talk as a family about supporting a child through [Compassion International](#) (www.compassion.com) or a similar organization. Perhaps your family might provide a poor family in another country with a goat or school supplies (www.crwrc.org). There are many opportunities to give to others in Jesus' name. Find one that you can do with your family.



“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:12

PREPARING FOR EASTER:

BUILDING COMMUNITY

“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” This is a good thing when it comes to friends! Friends can bring much needed strength in hard times. Can you think of a time when a friend supported you in a difficult situation?

Jesus had many friends. Some, like his disciples, went everywhere with him. Some of Jesus' best friends, Martha, Lazarus, and Mary, had Jesus and his disciples stay at their house ([Luke 10:38-45](#)). Jesus gave special responsibilities to Peter, James, and John, and even brought them up a mountain to witness his transfiguration ([Luke 9:28-36](#)).

Just like Jesus and his friends, today we rejoice with our friends, cry with them, bear each other's heavy burdens, and worship God together. Do you ever talk with your friends about what you are learning from God? Lent is a great time to focus on building-up your spiritual community. When we are connected to other Christians, Satan cannot easily break us, because friends look out for each other and pray for each other. When we are in community with other Christians, we grow—in more ways than we can count!

Dig deeper into living in community in [Psalm 133:1](#), [John 17:20-23](#), and [Colossians 3:14](#). Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* [Circle of Friends](#) episode.

CHALLENGE

Show that cords of three (or more) strands are not easily broken. During Lent, make friendship bracelets for yourself and for your friends to remind you of your strength together. There are lots of how-to videos and ideas online. Have fun showing your friends how important they are to you!



“Love . . . keeps no record of wrongs.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5

PREPARING FOR EASTER: CONFESSION

What if you could make a list of every sin you had ever committed? How do you think that would make you feel? Imagine a teacher who kept a list of every mistake his students made. Eventually, the students would dread going to school. Psalm 130:3-4 says that if God kept a record of all sins, no one would be able to stand before him. Thankfully, the Bible also says in 1 John 1:9 that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us.

When we confess our sins and accept God's forgiveness, God promises to “forget” our sins. He never holds past sins against us. Is there something you've done wrong and kept a secret? Confess that sin to

God. Lent is a good time to also confess sins to family members or close friends. This can be scary to do, but pray and ask God's Spirit to help you; confession clears your conscience and gives others the opportunity to forgive! When we experience forgiveness from others, it helps us understand even better what Easter and God's forgiveness are all about.

Would you like to dig deeper into how God wants us to confess our sins and to forgive? Read 1 John 1:9, James 5:16, Hebrews 8:10-12, and 1 Peter 4:8-10. Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* Forget About It episode.

CHALLENGE

Is there a sin that has been making you feel bad? Confess it to God. Write it on a piece of paper and then rip it up into tiny pieces. God won't hold that sin against you any more!



“The right word at the right time is like precious gold set in silver.”

PROVERBS 25:11 CEV

PREPARING FOR EASTER: GIVING RESPECT

In John 13, Jesus' disciples didn't want to wash each other's feet. Feet are smelly, and after a dusty day outside, they need a good cleaning. Washing feet was a servant's job. But just one day before Jesus gave his life on the cross, he taught his disciples an important lesson: to honor other people by being a servant. He did this by washing everyone's feet! "Then he said: 'Do you understand what I have done? You call me your teacher and Lord, and you should, because that is who I am. And if your Lord and teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other. I have set the example, and you should do for each other exactly what I have done for you (John 13:12-16).'"

During Lent, look around and think about the different people in your life. Each one of them is created in the image of God. "The image of God" is not just about what someone looks like. It means that each person reflects in some way what God is like. You get to know God better with every person you meet. So how should this information change the way you act? You can start by showing all people respect. You can show that you are a Christian by using respectful words and by treating others as more important than you (Philippians 2:3-4). The world would be very different if everyone did that!

Dig deeper and read these scripture verses about how to treat other people: John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Hebrews 12:14. And listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* Mr. Weisenheim episode.

CHALLENGE

Everyone needs to learn how to talk to other people. Good habits and manners, such as a how to make a proper introduction and how to speak clearly, will help you feel confident and make other people feel comfortable. Genuine compliments can also make people feel honored and valued. Practice with your family or friends by saying "Hello" with eye contact, a smile, and a handshake. Act out conversations by asking polite questions and by telling short stories. Then, think about and practice compliments you can give your friends or family members. Find a time this Lent to use these new skills to help another person feel valued as a person made in the image of God.



“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

JOHN 8:32

PREPARING FOR EASTER:

TELLING THE TRUTH

2 Kings 5:1-16 tells the story of Naaman, a rich and powerful general who God healed of leprosy. Naaman offered Elisha a gift of thanks. Elisha would not take the gift. But his servant Gehazi had a different idea. Gehazi thought that if he told a lie he would get all of Elisha's gifts. Gehazi thought he got away with it and even lied to Elisha. But he was found out and punished, losing everything, even his health.

Telling lies is never worth it. You might get something you want right now, but you lose the trust of other people. And even if *they* don't know you lied, *you* know you did. God knows too and that sin affects your relationship with him.

The Bible shows that the world is broken by sin and that this brokenness is not the way things are supposed to be. With any sin, you need to call out the action and not

the person. Just because someone lied once does not make them a liar. How can you talk about the lie so that you can work toward forgiveness and make things better? If you are the one who has lied, how can you earn back trust?

One way to talk about the lie is to explore why the person lied. Did they want something? Did they not want to be embarrassed? Were they scared? See the lie. Talk about the lie. Find the reason for the lie. The reason does not excuse a lie, but discussing it can help you find a way to forgive and build trust again.

Dig deeper and read these scripture verses about telling the truth: Psalm 33:4 ; John 14:6; Proverbs 12:22; Psalm 25:4-5. Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's Tall Lizard Tale* episode.

CHALLENGE

As you prepare for the coming of Easter, pray this prayer to God about telling the truth.

Heavenly father, your word is right and true. You are faithful in everything. Jesus, you even called yourself “the truth.” I searched my heart Lord, and I know that you hate lying. But you are a friend to people who are trustworthy. Show me your ways Lord, and teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth. For you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Amen.

Make a promise to your friends or family: “If any of us lies to the other, we promise to confess the lie within three days.” Fight lies with truth and find ways to build trust.



“Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you.”

[COLOSSIANS 3:13 CEV](#)

PREPARING FOR EASTER: **FORGIVING**

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” ([Luke 23:34a](#)). These are the words that Jesus spoke from the cross on the very first Good Friday. Even as he suffered, Jesus longed for each and every one of us to be forgiven.

It's a lot easier to say that you forgive someone than to actually *do* it. If you “forgive” a friend but keep reminding them about what they did, that's not forgiving. If you forgive and feel proud of yourself for being so kind, that's not really forgiving either. Our model for forgiveness

should be God. When we trust the Easter message, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, we know that God forgives us completely and forever. In fact, after he forgives us, he doesn't even see our sin anymore! [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says that when God looks at us, he sees us as being as righteous as Jesus Christ. Praise God!

Want to dig deeper and learn more about God's forgiveness? Check out [Psalm 103:8](#), [Psalm 103:10](#), and [Psalm 103:13-14](#). Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's The Champion* episode.

CHALLENGE

On this Good Friday, make a cross shaped bookmark. On one side, write the word “Forgiven.” On the other side, write the word “Forgive.” Decorate it to reflect how thankful you are that God has forgiven your sins. Keep your bookmark in your Bible to remind you to forgive others as well.



EASTER

SUNDAY • APRIL 9, 2023

“Unless Christ was raised to life, your faith is worthless, and you are still living in your sins”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:17

EASTER:

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

He has risen! He has risen, indeed! In 1 Corinthians 15:17, Paul explains that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then nothing else you believe matters. The resurrection is a central part of God's rescue plan for us.

Many have tried to explain away Jesus' resurrection, but the Bible clearly proclaims that he rose from the dead. Then, Jesus spent forty days after his resurrection talking to people! Paul wrote that Jesus appeared to more than 500 believers—many of whom were still alive during Paul's time to testify (1 Corinthians 15:6). That meant that more than 500 witnesses said Jesus was indeed alive!

Jesus' resurrection also completely changed the lives of many people.

- James was Jesus' half-brother. He did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah...until Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection. After that, James became a major leader of the Christian Church.

- Paul hated everything to do with Jesus; he even hunted Christians down...until he met Jesus himself. For the rest of his life, Paul traveled the world preaching and writing letters proclaiming that Jesus is alive!
- The disciples were so afraid the night Jesus was arrested that they ran away. They weren't brave, they weren't bold at all about telling God's story...until after Jesus rose. For the rest of their lives, they boldly proclaimed the good news of Jesus' salvation to everyone.

Only a truly living Jesus could inspire such a huge change in these people's lives!

Want to dig deeper and learn more about Jesus' resurrection? Check out John 20:11-18, Matthew 28:11-15, and Luke 24:13-35. Also, listen as a family to *Kids Corner's* Risen Indeed episode.

CHALLENGE

Jesus died for your sins. That is an amazing thought! Take a blank piece of paper and cut out a cross. Then, using paints, washable markers, or a washable ink pad, color your thumb and make a thumbprint on the cross. As you do, think about one of the sins that Jesus took on for you! Repeat with another color. As you fill your cross with colorful prints, think about all the sins Jesus has taken care of for you and how very much he loves you—so much that he was willing to die on the cross for you! Once your cross is beautifully colored, write the words “Jesus is alive! He loves me!” Display your cross where others will see it. Share this wonderful story with one or two (or more!) other people.

HAPPY EASTER

FROM *KIDS CORNER!*

