

# Lenten Action Guide

This guide contains many suggestions of ways your family can observe Lent by giving time in service to others. This guide can be used by families of any age or size and can supplement the Lenten Family Worship Center Guide. Many of the ideas here came from FaithFormationJourney.org. You may also choose to engage in service projects of your own.

Be sure to enter the hours you've donated to the church on the church website.

**Have a collection jar on your counter and have each person put a quarter in a day and then donate the money at the end of Lent to a favorite charity.**



Knit a hat, scarf, or mittens to be handed out at the Food Truck.

**If you get a springy day (or if you are tough and can go out in the cold), do a service to your neighborhood by taking a walk, noticing things around your neighborhood and praying about them. You can pray for specific people that you know or don't know as the case may be. You can give thanks for the beautiful things in your neighborhood and for mercy on the broken places. Be creative! Get outside! Have some fun! You may see your neighborhood in a new way.**

Reach out to a family member, friend or church member you have not talked to in a while. Send them a card, note, email, or phone call. If you live close and it's your thing, bake them a goody and maybe say I'm contacting you at a certain time so we can share the goody and some time together. Have the kiddos (if you have kiddos or Grand kiddos) make something you can mail to someone your reaching out to. Share your heart and love.

**Another day, shovel snow for someone, be a good steward of the earth.**

There are many places that need shoes. Find a place in your local community that is collecting shoes. Some churches taking mission trips in the summer may be collecting shoes to take with them (or other items). Donate a pair of new or gently used shoes. Pray over the shoes for the feet and the person that will walk in your gift.

**Record yourself or your children singing a song, playing a musical instrument, or reading a story and send it to a friend or relative you haven't seen in awhile to brighten their day.**



As a household choose someone who is not in your immediate household and plan a deliberate act of love for that person (or people). It could be taking a meal to someone who is recovering from an illness, someone who is grieving, or for someone who is at home with a new baby. You could help a neighbor with a spring yard project, or offer to babysit for some parents who could use a night to unwind. It can be almost anything

Spend some time talking about prayer with your household! First make a list of times to say a quick prayer, and make sure that there is a mix of prayers. There should be concerns as well as joys. Prayers for help as well as prayers of thanks. Some ideas are before bed, before meals, whenever you hear a siren, when you see something good or beautiful, when you see someone who is homeless or in need, etc. Pick two or three prayer ideas each day and keep an eye out for them in the world around and say a short prayer when you see (or hear) them.



Help at the Food Truck.



It is often easy to be caught in our own troubles or joys and forget what might be going on with the people around us. This week, be intentional about showing an extra measure of kindness to people who seem to be agitated or upset. Practice being forgiving and kind, and treat everyone the way that you would want them to treat you, no matter what they do!



Look for things that need cleaning in our world this week and then do something about it! It can be as simple as picking up trash as you walk around your neighborhood, or putting things away in your house. Or it can be a larger effort in your local area.

Volunteer to do a children's message, special music for a service, or be a liturgist.

What have you received without payment? A birthday gift? A hug from a friend? A friendly smile? The air you breath? Be conscious this week of the little gifts that make all the difference in your day. Someone holding a door, a friendly "hello," or the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. Then ask what you have to give back! What can you do to make the world better for your neighbor? Remember, the littlest things count!



Take a moment and think about the people that Jesus spent time with, think about the people Jesus healed. Jesus' ministry focused on healing and love for the outcasts, the sick, the sinful and the weak. Find a shelter or a food bank in your community and see how you can help. See if you can do more than donate food or clothes. Go help them organize, go talk to their clients, go serve a meal!

Surprise someone with an unexpected good deed. Maybe you take a neighbor fresh baked muffins, a new plant, or a latte. Maybe you shovel their walk, or pick up downed limbs in their yard. Maybe you just call someone you haven't seen for awhile and listen.

Have some fun together! Get out some string or yarn or a bandana and "yoke" yourself to another person--either wrists or feet. Experiment--how do you walk together? How do you move together or pick up things together? How is this experience funny or hard? Who are you yoked with in your daily life? As you spend time with family and friends think and pray about how you are connected--ask God to lift the burdens and to bless the joys. When you meet someone new or encounter a stranger this week, say in your mind that we are also yoked together through Christ with those in need or those we do not know. Say a prayer for this person or reach out in some way if there is a need (hold the door, donate items or money, carry something heavy for another person, etc.)



Embroider a few Chrismons for our trees and wreaths at church.

Fear is also a prevalent theme in our lives. Fear seems to be all around us, threatening to be the all-consuming emotion that drives many of our actions in our daily lives. But when we realize that we are not alone in our fear and that taking a "step of faith" is not just about ourselves but about everyone around us, fear loses its power. This week, read through the news as a household. Pray for all of the frightening situations in your local community and in the world. Write an encouraging note to someone in your congregation/community/neighborhood who might feel alone and afraid reminding them that they are loved by God and by the community.

Make a list of those in your community that do things for others either as a job or as a volunteer. For example, firefighters, police officers, nurses, homeless shelter workers. Pick one or more of these and take them a plate of cookies, or send a thank you note.



God is at work in each of us to care for one another and for God's whole world. We grow, change and do new things so that everything we do in our lives points to God. To help us remember that God is always at work making us new, plant a flower or plant seed in a small pot (something quick growing like beans are a good choice). Decorate the pot with symbols that remind you of God's love growing in you. Water and care for the plant and each day as it grows remember that God is changing and growing you too! Say a prayer of thanksgiving for that growth of the plant and you! When the plant is blooming or sprouting, give it someone to remind them that God is making them new too!

Through Jesus we are able to imagine beyond what we ourselves are capable of believing. Belief is not so much a state of mind or even a state of heart but a state of being willing to have one's eyes opened to the spiritual realities in our everyday life. Take a piece of paper and draw or cut it into a large heart. Try to use the largest paper you can and post this in your home in a good spot for all to see. Write the words God's Love shining Through and throughout the week record where you have seen acts of love or where you have given acts of love. At the end of the week take a flashlight and shine it behind the heart so that it 'lights up'. Circle around the heart and pray together for God's presence in your life. End with blessing one another.



**Contact one of the teams at church and offer to help with any upcoming projects.**

Contact your local food bank or shelter and ask for a list of what is needed most at this time. This might also be online. Make a list for your family. Additionally you can involve your friends and neighbors by making them a list and attaching them to the bags. You can invite other people to do this too.



**Make a list together of the things that regularly need to get done at home and who does them. Examples might be: taking out trash & recycling, laundry, setting/clearing the table, yard work, taking care of pets, picking up toys, etc. If you have young children try to think of even the most simple things like wiping off a table or counter. Talk about why it's important that everyone helps and why the things on this list are important to your family. Trade tasks for a week, then discuss any new perceptions of the task you may have developed.**



This week start thinking about school supplies and getting ready for school, VBS, or worship centers. Find out how you can pick up extra supplies for someone at your school or in your community.

Keep your eyes open for little things that are out of place or people that need just a little help. Run and hold the door for a person carrying too many things. Stop and get that trash can that blew into the street. Grab the other side of that heavy box that someone is trying to carry. Take a few moments of your own time to help make two or three little things better every day this week.

Provide a meal for a family that you haven't seen in awhile.



Find a neighbor who may need help walking or playing with their pet. Or go and volunteer at an animal shelter. Or donate supplies to an animal shelter



Take a walk around your house and notice what you are thankful for. Have each person pick a room or spot in the home that is special to them. Take a candle to each place and pray together for what is important about that room and then pray for those who need a room or space of their own. Take a second walk around your house and find ten things you can give away.



Knit a prayer shawl.

Find a park near you or in a part of town that needs some tender loving care. Walk around the park and pick up any trash or dog waste that has been left. Now that you have noticed the ugly in the park, take another walk around and notice something beautiful you did not see before. Take a picture to capture this moment of service together and post it on the families' page.

This week dwell in the joy of what it means to live in God's kingdom. Get out a map and pick a place you do not know about. Go online and research this place and find out if there is an organization in need of donations to help, and/or put a candle on the map and gather around the candle in prayer for that part of the world. Prayer is a true service of the heart and a connection with God. Express your joy and your sorrow knowing that Christ is present through the cross and resurrection.



Research a natural wonder in the world that you have never seen, like the Amazon Rain Forest or the Galapagos islands. It can be whatever you want to explore or see. Is your natural wonder threatened by anything like climate change, invasive species, urbanization, etc? Find out how to help and make a plan. Rejoice in knowing that you can help make something better that you have never seen.



Recycle.

Habitat for Humanity builds homes for people! Check out their website [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org) for local chapters. Use these suggestions to save money to donate to Habitat or another local organization. You will need coins and a collection jar. Continue collecting as long as there is a need.

Monday: Every year in home = 25¢

Wednesday: Rain gutters = 50¢, downspout = 25¢

Friday: Living Room = \$1

Tuesday: Roof leak = \$1; no leak = \$2

Thursday: Each room in house = 25¢

Saturday: Bathrooms = 75¢ each