

#pictureLent 2016

Family Activities

Program Overview

What is this all about?

Lent is a season of preparation to observe the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's a time for spiritual self-reflection: a chance to consider the ways we fall short of God's glory and remember that Christ came to reconcile God and humanity through his life, death and resurrection. Lent is a season of both sorrow for the darkness of the world, and hopeful anticipation of the Christ's shining victory over death. Your family can use these simple activities to strengthen your relationship with God and with one another this season.

How do I use the family activities?

There are two components of our family activities for Lent:

1) The **Weekly Activities** are hands-on ways for your family to engage in the theme and scripture focus of the week. We recommend doing these on Sunday to set the tone for the week's theme. Use the family activities along with the #pictureLent photo challenge for an engaging experience for the whole family. Be sure to post your #pictureLent findings on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag #pictureLent!

2) The **Daily Reflections** are designed to bring us back to the meaning of Lent, consider the theme and scripture for the week, and remind us to look for God at work every day. It is also a time to pray for others. Each day of the week, we your family can create space to light the Lenten candle and add a stone to the "desert." As you do, spend time in prayer and reflection together. **On Sundays, only light the candle - do not add a stone.** Instead, remember that God carries our burdens for us. Use the ideas as a guide along with your Light in the Desert calendar.

Lenten Family Calendar: A Light In the Desert

Supplies: Large glass bowl and sand to fill bowl halfway; 40 small stones; Medium-large jar or another small bowl; Small purple candle in glass votive or small purple pillar candle

Creating your Light in the Desert

Plan to gather as a family to create your Light in the Desert between Sunday, February 7th and Tuesday, February 9th. You will begin using the Light on Ash Wednesday (February 10th).

Gather your supplies.

Pour the sand into the bowl. The sand reminds us of the wilderness where Jesus was tempted, and the desert where the Israelites wandered after they were brought out of Egypt.

Nestle the purple candle and votive into the center of the sand.

Place the stones into the jar one at a time, counting them out as a family. There are 40 stones - each stone represents one day that Jesus was tempted, and one year that the Israelites wandered before entering the promised land. The 40 stones together represent the 40 days of Lent.

Place the bowl of sand and jar of stones in a prominent gathering place in your home, like your kitchen table.



The Bread of Life

Week One (beginning Ash Wednesday) (Feb. 10-13)

Feb. 10 (Ash Wednesday): Return / Joel 2:12-17

Feb. 11: Heard / Exodus 16:11-15

Feb. 12: Bread / John 6:30-35

Feb. 13: Full / Luke 9:12-17

Supplies: Light in the Desert, lighter, red paper, scissors, tape, notebook paper, pen/pencil, markers

Weekly Activities

Wonder: Think about how it feels when you eat a good meal after you have been hungry. How does God satisfy our souls like food satisfies our hunger?

Create: Cut a small heart out of red paper. Tape it to the sole of your shoe, where the heel goes. Use it as a reminder to share God's love with others during Lent.

Mission: Choose another family to bless with prayer throughout Lent. Call them and let them know you will be praying for them, and ask them if they have any particular prayer needs. Make a "Prayer Blessing" list of 40 ways to pray for them - think ways to pray for the whole family as well as each person separately. Decorate the list using the markers, and place it with your Light in the Desert prayer tool. Then, say a prayer for them each day of Lent using your list.

Pray: *Lord, we thank you for beginning something new in our hearts. Help us to follow you as we begin our Lenten journey together. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

Listen: Each day during the week, take time to light the purple candle and add a stone to your Light in the Desert bowl. As you do, read aloud one of the scripture passages for this week.

Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God at work today? Why? How?

How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created earlier this week.

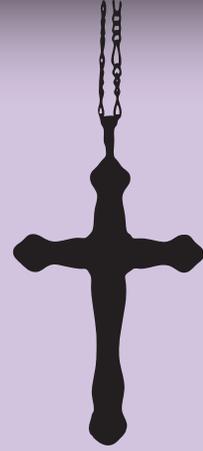
God of new beginnings, we thank you for the love and forgiveness that you show with each new day. Create in us a new heart, to share your love and forgiveness with each other, in our family, and in our world. Amen.



The Good Shepherd

Week Two (Feb. 14-20)

Feb. 14: Test / Luke 4:1-13
Feb. 15: Shepherd / John 10:14-15
Feb. 16: Ruler / Micah 5:2-5a
Feb. 17: Separate / Matthew 25:31-40
Feb. 18: Lead / Psalm 23:1-6
Feb. 19: Tend / Isaiah 40:9-11
Feb. 20: Watch / Acts 20:28



Supplies: Colored paper, markers, craft supplies, scissors, tape, yummy treat to give away, Light in the Desert, lighter, Prayer Blessing list from week 1

Weekly Activities

Wonder: Like a sheep trusts the shepherd, we trust God to care for us. Do a “trust fall” with someone else in your family. How did it feel to fall backwards when you couldn’t see where you would fall? How did it feel to be caught? How do those feelings remind you of God?

Create: Make a sign with the words “God is My Shepherd.” Decorate it with markers and other craft supplies. Put it up by the door your family uses most often, so you will see it when you leave home for the day.

Mission: Who do you trust to take care of you? Teachers? Firemen and Policemen? Your pastor? Make them a card saying “thank you” for their service and bring them a yummy treat this week.

Pray: *Lord, you are the Good Shepherd. It is wonderful to know we can trust in you. As sheep follow a shepherd, teach us to hear your voice, and to follow where you lead us. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

Listen: Each day during the week, take time to light the purple candle and add a stone to your Light in the Desert bowl. As you do, read aloud one of the scripture passages for this week.

Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God at work today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

God of guidance, we remember that we can trust you with our every need. Help us to be faithful to you, as you have been faithful to us. Give us courage to follow where you lead. Amen.



The Gates

Week Three (Feb. 21-27)

Feb. 21: Go / Luke 13:31-32

Feb. 22: Gate / John 10:7-10

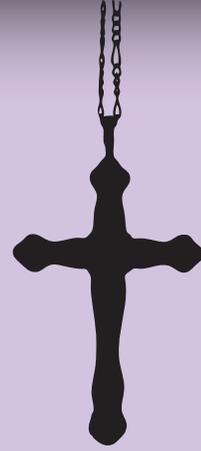
Feb. 23: Justice / Amos 5:14-15

Feb. 24: Listen / Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Feb. 25: Belong / Psalm 100:1-5

Feb. 26: Open / Isaiah 26:1-4

Feb. 27: Narrow / Matthew 7:13-14



Supplies: Craft Foam Sheets, Scissors, Hole-Punch, Markers, String, Post-It Notes, Pen, Light in the Desert, lighter, Prayer Blessings list

Weekly Activities

Wonder: When have you had to make a hard choice? Was there another choice that was easier, but wasn't the right choice? What did you do? How did you feel after making your choice?

Create: Make a key chain to represent your belief in God. Cut a 3x1 inch rectangle out of craft foam. Punch a hole in one end. Using a marker, write "I Will Follow God" on one side of the foam rectangle. Draw a gate on the other side, and decorate the other side with symbols that remind you of God. Cut a piece of string to 3-4 inches. Loop the string through the hole, and tie the ends around your key-ring or backpack handle to make a key chain. Whenever you see the key chain during the week, thank God for His love.

Mission: Help people to see that God is good by sharing God's love with others! Go to a nearby store, library, or park. Take along a pad of post-it notes and a pen. As you walk around, write kind thoughts or words of encouragement on the post-its, and stick them up in hidden places for people to find later!

Pray: *Lord, we believe that You are who You say You are. Lead us to through the narrow gate, even when the wide one seems easier. Give us courage to seek your face, and do not hide your face from us. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

Listen: Each day during the week, take time to light the purple candle and add a stone to your Light in the Desert bowl. As you do, read aloud one of the scripture passages for this week.

Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God at work today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

God of glory, we believe in your goodness and light. Help us to keep believing even when it is difficult. Give us courage step through the gate and to follow where your path leads. Amen.



The Light of the World

Week Four (Feb. 28 – Mar. 5)

Feb. 28: Produce / Luke 13:6-9

Feb. 29: Light / John 8:12

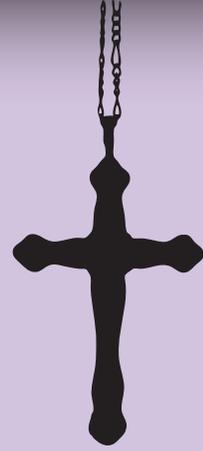
Mar. 1: Darkness / Isaiah 9:2a

Mar. 2: Life / John 1:4-5

Mar. 3: Fulfill / Psalm 56:12-13

Mar. 4: Fear / John 3:19-21

Mar. 5: Shine / Matthew 5:14-16



Supplies: Wax Paper, Masking Tape, Colored Tissue Paper, Yarn, Decoupage Glue, Foam Paintbrush, Light in the Desert, lighter, Prayer Blessings list, grocery items for donations

Weekly Activities

Wonder: Find a place in your house with no windows. Turn off all the lights, and think of the bad things in the world. Name some of them out loud. Then, turn the light back on, and think of the good things in the world - name these out loud too. How did it feel to come back into the light?

Create: Make a cross suncatcher to transform natural light into something even more beautiful! Outline a simple cross on a piece of wax paper using masking tape. Then, spread decoupage glue all over the inside of the cross. Tear colored tissue paper into pieces, and cover the inside of the cross. Add another layer of decoupage glue on top of the cross, then place another piece of wax paper. Press everything together firmly, and let dry. Then, cut out around the cross. Make a loop of yarn and tape it to the top of the cross to make a hook. Hang the cross from a window latch, and watch God's light shine through!

Mission: Be a light for God by meeting the needs of those who need help. Call a local help center or food bank and ask if they are in need of any particular food items. Then, as a family, make a special trip to the grocery store and bring those items to the help center for donation.

Pray: *Lord, as the night waits for morning, we long to see your light. Shine your glory upon us, so that we may share your light with the world. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

Listen: Each day during the week, take time to light the purple candle and add a stone to your Light in the Desert bowl. As you do, read aloud one of the scripture passages for this week.

Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God at work today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

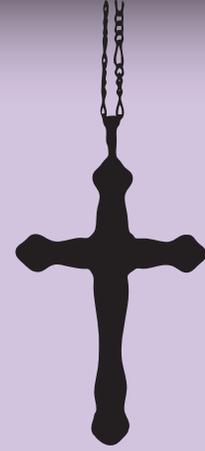
God of Light, we remember that you are all we need. Help us to come to You when the world seems too dark to bear. Give us courage to share your light with everyone we meet. Amen.



The Resurrection and the Life

Week Five (Mar. 6-12)

- Mar. 6: Found / Luke 15:11-24
- Mar. 7: Resurrection / John 11:25-26
- Mar. 8: United / Romans 6:1-5
- Mar. 9: First / 1 Corinthians 15:20-22
- Mar. 10: Witness / Acts 1:21-26
- Mar. 11: Seek / John 5:25-30
- Mar. 12: Pursue / Philippians 3:10-14



Supplies: Craft supplies, recyclable materials, small found objects, plastic grocery bag, Light in the Desert, lighter, Prayer Blessings list

Weekly Activities

Wonder: Have you ever broken something? How did you feel? Were you able to fix it? If so, how did you feel when it was fixed?

Create: In John 11:25, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will have life even if they die.” This week, work together as a family to bring new life to something by making an art project out of found objects and recyclable materials. As you work on your art project, think of how God is creating something new in your heart and in your life.

Mission: We have all made mistakes and bad choices that leave our hearts as a mess. But through the resurrection, God cleans up the mess for us with His forgiveness and love!

This week, help clean up someone else’s mess. Take a walk around your neighborhood or through the park, and pick up any litter that you see. Every time you pick up a piece of trash, tell God “thank you” for cleaning up your heart.

Pray: *Lord, thank you for being a God who loves me no matter what. Help me to know that nothing I do can keep me from your love. Create in me a new heart, filled with new life. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

Listen: Each day during the week, take time to light the purple candle and add a stone to your Light in the Desert bowl. As you do, read aloud one of the scripture passages for this week.

Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

Forgiving God of New Life, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts. Thank you for showing us the power of your love through the resurrection. Give us strength to love as you have loved us. Amen.



The Way, Truth, and Life

Week Six (Mar. 13-29)

Mar. 13: Have / John 12:1-8

Mar. 14: Way / John 14:1-6

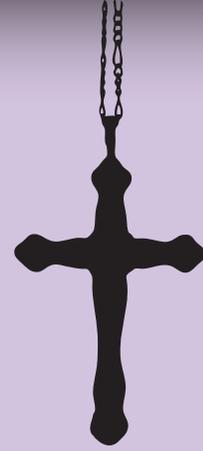
Mar. 15: Beautiful / Psalm 16:11

Mar. 16: Truth / John 8:31-32

Mar. 17: Beautiful / Psalm 25:5

Mar. 18: Life / John 3:16

Mar. 19: Spring / Psalm 36:9



Supplies: Soft pretzel recipe (search online) and necessary ingredients, Light in the Desert, lighter, Prayer Blessings list

Weekly Activities

Wonder: What do you think of when you hear the word “Way”? What about “truth” and “life”? What could Jesus have meant when he called himself these things?

Create: Did you know that the pretzel was originally created by a young monk as a special Lenten bread? The shape (upside down to how we usually think of it) was to remind the monks of arms that were crossed in prayer!

Look up a recipe for homemade soft pretzels online. Gather the ingredients, and bake some “prayer pretzels” together!

Mission: Sometimes we wait for people to tell us the ways they need help before we help them. Think of someone who is going through a hard time. Instead of asking someone if they need help, find something to do for them.

Pray: *Lord, we know that you are the way, the truth, and the life. We know you have great plans for our lives. Help us to notice where you are pointing and give us courage to go where you lead us. Amen.*

Daily Lent Reflections

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Ask: How did you see God today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

God of Truth, we know that Your way is the best way, Your truth the best truth, and Your life the best life. Help us to choose you every day. Amen.



The Vines

Week Seven (Mar. 20-27)

Mar. 20 (Palm/Passion Sunday): Shout / Luke 19:47-40

Mar. 21: Vine / John 15:1-8

Mar. 22: Revive / Psalm 80:14-19

Mar. 23: Servant / Isaiah 42:1-4

Mar. 24 (Maundy Thursday): Wash / John 13:12-17

Mar. 25 (Good Friday): Gave / John 19:25-30

Mar. 26 (Holy Saturday): Save / Psalm 31:15-16

Mar. 27 (Easter Sunday): Raised / Luke 24:1-7



Supplies: Black cardstock or construction paper, scissors, liquid glue, colorful tissue paper, paper, pens/pencils, envelopes, stamps

Weekly Activities

Wonder: This week is “Holy Week.” It includes Palm Sunday, when we remember Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. It includes Maundy Thursday, when we remember the Last Supper that Jesus spent with his followers. And, it includes Good Friday, when we remember Jesus’ death on the cross. Which of these stories stands out to you this week? Why?

Create: Cut a cross out of black cardstock or construction paper. Think about the dark parts of your life - your sadnesses, your fears, and your sins. Make dots of glue all over the cross. Rip pieces from colorful tissue paper, roll them into balls, and stick them to the glue dots. Continue until the whole cross is covered. As you work, thank God for the ways He has covered the darkness with beautiful things.

Mission: Think of someone who has shown you love recently. Write them a letter of appreciation to let them know that you remember their kindness, and that it meant a lot to you. Say a prayer for the person as you seal the envelope, then put it in the mail.

Pray: *Lord, we thank you for your great love. Help us to remember the great sacrifice you made for us. Amen.*

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Share: Share how you have seen the word of the day today.

Ask: How did you see God today? Why? How? How do you think you can be more like Christ tomorrow?

Pray: Say a prayer for the family you are blessing with prayer during Lent, using the list you created during Week 1.

God of ages past, we remember all that you have done for us. Like branches connected to the strong vine, you give us strength. Help us to stay connected to your love. Amen.

