

"ABC'S...123'S...A PLACE TO START"

Lent – Not From Your Dryer

Lent is a forty-day period before Easter when we prepare ourselves and remember Christ and the change that He made in the world. Many people follow the tradition of “giving up” something during Lent to remind them of Christ’s suffering. Children need ways to understand the concept of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Listed below are a variety of suggestions to help children celebrate Lent. These can be adapted for all ages.

1. **LENT BAGS:** Create Lent Bags for each child with some of the following:

CONTAINER OF ASHES: Ashes are used in the Bible when persons have done something wrong and they are sorry. Ashes are placed on the forehead of people on Ash Wednesday – the first day of Lent.

PRAYER PRETZEL: Prayer is an important part of Lent. The pretzel is shaped like arms folded in prayer. This is the way people would pray during Lent to remind us of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

LENT BOOK MARK: Your book mark may be placed in your Bible to remind you of the 40 days plus 6 Sundays of Lent.

TREAT: You will find something delicious in your Lent Bag. Don’t eat it! Wait until Easter Sunday. Lent is a time to give up something or to keep away from temptation.

BIBLE READINGS: Lent is a time to read the Bible with your family. Take time to read together your Bible during Lent. (Give a list of Bible verses to read.)

TABLE BLESSING: Make a sheet with prayers on one side and explanation of Lent on the other. Encourage families to say the prayers together and talk about Lent.

OFFERING CONTAINER: Give each child a jar and ask them to fill with coins during Lent and then return it to the church. Put a coin in when you read your Bible, pray, give up a bad habit, start a good habit, etc.

2. *WEAR PURPLE* the first Sunday in Lent. Talk about what purple signifies. Have armbands that each person can wear for the day.
3. *PLANT A BULB* and discuss symbolism of bulb (life comes from something that appears dead; Jesus was dead and came back to life – resurrection.)
4. *MAKE A WIRE CROSS* to be filled with fresh flowers on Easter Sunday. Ask the congregation to bring flowers for the cross.
5. Use the trunk of old Christmas trees to form a *ROUGH CROSS* on Good Friday.

6. *KINDNESS TREE*: Anchor a branch in a bucket of sand or soil. Tie 3x5 cards on the tree with acts of kindness. Ask persons to take a card from the tree and do the act of kindness during Lent.
7. *LENTEN TREE*: Use a branch, small tree, or bush to create a Lenten Tree. Place the Lenten Tree in the sanctuary and during the Children's Moments, talk to the children about the items placed on the tree. Ideas for these items are:
 - 1st Sunday – Purple Cloth
 - 2nd Sunday – Bible
 - 3rd Sunday – Pretzel
 - 4th Sunday – Heart (Good Deeds as we share God's love.)
 - 5th Sunday – Cross
 - 6th Sunday – Palm Leaf – Palm Sunday
 - Easter Sunday – Egg (Symbolizes new life)
8. *RESURRECTION EGGS*: Give each child a plastic empty Easter egg. Ask them to go outside and find something that reminds them of Jesus' love. Bring them inside and share. Keep one egg empty to represent the empty tomb.
9. Make a *LENTEN WREATH* – similar to the Advent Wreath but you may want to use pink and purple ribbons to decorate it. Use 5 purple candles, one pink for Palm Sunday and one large white candle for Easter. On the first Sunday light all the candles and during the meditation extinguish one purple candle. On the second Sunday, light all the candles and extinguish two, and so one until Easter when they are all lit and remain lit.

RESOURCES

Side by Side – Families Learning and Living the Faith Together by Delia Halverson
Abingdon Press

Teaching the Christian Year – Seasons of Faith by Marcia Joslin Stoner
Abingdon Press

Sharing the Easter Faith With Children by Carolyn C. Brown
Abingdon Press

Children's Activities for the Christian Year by Delia Halverson
Abingdon Press

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