



Observing Lent as a Family

Lent is the period starting on **Ash Wednesday (this year that is February 17)**, lasting around 6 weeks, and ending on **Maundy Thursday (this year that is April 1)**, the Thursday preceding **Easter Sunday (this year that is April 4)**.

Lent is traditionally a time to prepare ourselves for the events of Good Friday and the joy of Easter morning. It is a time to repent (to admit our mistakes and ask for forgiveness) and to purify ourselves and pray. Often we symbolically purify ourselves by “giving something up for Lent”. But there are other activities we can do as a family that will help bring us closer to others and to God during these 40 days of Lent. Here are some ideas:

1. **Daily Prayer Time** | It’s important that kids grow up feeling that prayer is a natural thing. Each evening spend time in prayer on a certain topic of your choosing. (*ex. the health of loved ones, members of your church, people groups close to your heart, etc.*)
2. **Find Something to Give Away** | As a family, go through your possessions and find gently used (*or well loved but still good quality*) items, then pray about how you can bless others with those things. Or purchase extra groceries or supplies needed for the local food banks. Even in covid there are agencies that are accepting donations. You can call one of the ones we support and see what they might need (i.e. The Dam, The Open Door, The Salvation Army, Eden Food for Change)
3. **Encourage One Another Daily** | At a mealtime together, go around the table and take turns saying something nice or encouraging for each person present. Not just compliments like “has cool shoes” but work to build each person up.
4. **Reach out to someone else** | Whether by text, email, or handwritten card, choose a person today and send them a line or two of encouragement. An “*I’m thinking of you*” or “*we’re praying for you*” can mean more than you think.

Giving up things for Lent

Some Christians take the 40 days in Lent as a time to give up something. This reminds us of Jesus’ 40 days of fasting in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11). Some people choose to give up something they really love (chocolate or coffee!) others choose to give up a habit (too much screen time) so that they can do a “re-set” and focus their time on more important things like family and friends. Others choose to ADD something to their lives that will enhance their spiritual life (like prayer, meditation, mindful walks outside, reading the Bible or another book about our faith). Whatever you decide to do my prayer is that you will find support for your decision and that it will help bring you closer to God and enrich this important time in our church year.

Each Sunday is a mini-Easter

Something that is often forgotten is that Sundays are NOT included in the 40 days of Lent. Because every Sunday is a celebration of Christ’s resurrection they are always a time of joy and celebration and are never seen as a day of fasting in Lent.