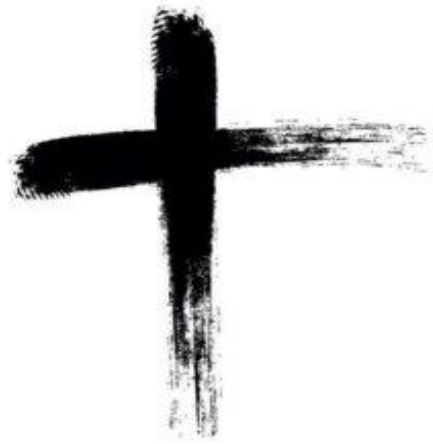


Lent 2021



Lent is a time of...

RETURNING • REMEMBERING • SHARING • PRAYING • GIVING • LIVING

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 1 – RETURNING (Feb 17-20)

Lent is a time of returning to God. To repent is to turn away from ourselves and return to God. Place a cross in a special place in your home (whether it's a photo or an ornament) where you will see it often and remember to turn towards God with your words and actions. Read Matthew 4:17. What should you turn from in order to turn toward God? Pray together as a family, asking God to equip you with the ability to turn towards Him and away from the things that distract you.

WEEK 2 – REMEMBERING (Feb 21-27)

Lent is a time of remembering our story. When we read the Bible we learn about God and his love for all of creation. We remember how much God loves us and learn to listen for the ways God works in the lives of people. When we read scripture, we remember that we belong to God's story, too. Every day is an opportunity to live out the story of God's love. Read Psalm 119:105. What can you do to be sure to remember the story of scripture and let it guide your way? Pray together as a family to ask God to let his word light our path to help us find our way.

WEEK 3 – SHARING (Feb 28-Mar6)

Lent is a time of sharing what we have with others. Though we don't always feel like sharing, we all have something we can share what we have with others. God calls us to live together as a community and share what we have. Sharing helps us remember all good things are from God. When we share, God blesses what we have and does greater things than we could ever do on our own. Read John 6:1-15. What would've happened if the boy didn't want to share his lunch? What are we hesitant to share with others? Pray together as a family to ask God what you can share with others this week.

WEEK 4 – FASTING (March 7-13)

Lent is a time of fasting or making space for God. When we give up something that we love like candy, video games or tv in order to focus on God, that is fasting. When we take on something like praying or reading our bible, that is fasting from the stuff we might have done otherwise. Fasting reminds us to leave space for God to change our hearts and minds to be more loving and grace-filled. When we make space for God, he guides us to be more like Jesus. Read Matthew 6:16-18 together. These words remind us not to complain about fasting. Instead, prayer to as God to change your heart to learn something new. Talk about what you learned together as a family.

WEEK 5 – PRAYING (March 14-20)

Lent is a time of praying. When we pray, we invite God into our thoughts and into our day. We make space for God's words from scripture to seep into our minds. We think about what God might say or do in our lives. Just like we talk to family and friends about our successes and struggles, we can talk to God in prayer and welcome his presence into our lives. This week, make time to pray in the morning, at meal times and before you go to bed. Pray together as a family to as God to prompt you to go to him in prayer when you see needs or when you simply want to express your love to him.

WEEK 6 – GIVING (March 21-27)

Lent is a time of giving to others. We are all blessed with many gifts. We have cool toys, smiles that can change someone's day, amazing talents and skills, money to buy what we need, and patience when others have lost their way. God gives us all these things out of endless love for each one of us. But, God does not want us to keep these things for ourselves. Instead, God wants us to give what we have to bless others. Read 1 Peter 4:10. What does this scripture say about giving to others? What special gifts do you have to give to others this week? Pray together as a family to invite God to show us not only what our gifts are but what opportunities we will have to use them.

WEEK 7 – LIVING (March 28-Apr 3)

Lent is a time of living as a disciple of Jesus our King. Purple is the colour of Lent. It is a royal colour and reminds us that Jesus is our King. To believe in Jesus as King is to live a life of love, grace and service to others. The story of Holy Week reminds us of Jesus' great love and sacrifice for us. Read the stories of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Talk together as a family about events of this special week. Which ones are new to you? How does the story of Holy Week change the way we live as disciples? Think about this season of Lent and how you might live or think differently. Pray together as a family, thanking him for what he did for all mankind when he chose to follow the way of the cross.

WHAT IS LENT? HOW DOES IT HELP US CELEBRATE EASTER?

Lent is the season leading up to Easter. During these forty days plus six Sundays, we remember the story of Jesus going off in the desert to fast and pray. We remember the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years. Why 40, you may ask?? Forty is a biblical number that stands for a time of testing or difficulty. So, Lent is a time to test ourselves and our faith. What do we think?

What do we believe? Does our faith actually change us?

While stores like Walmart would prefer we jump right to the celebration of Easter, we can't do that just yet. To truly celebrate Easter, we first have to know what we are celebrating and what was so important about Jesus' death and resurrection. The forty days of Lent help us to do this.

During Lent, we focus on certain things to prepare our hearts and minds for Easter. So much more than a time to give up candy or video games, Lent can be a time to recommit our lives to Jesus and turn from the things that distract us from living a faithful life.

We remember that faith in Jesus is not about salvation from sin, but towards meaningful life and love of God, self, and others.

This devotional guide is meant to be a tool to help your family focus on your faith during the season of Lent. Each week you will have scripture, discussion questions and prayer time to reflect on the theme for the week. By setting aside a time to focus on your faith throughout Lent, you will be better able to celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter. To put it another way, the empty cross will mean more to you than if you just jump straight into Easter Sunday.

Enjoy this special time as you journey through Lent together as a family