

# Lent



## Lenten Practices for Families

Myers Park Baptist Church  
Charlotte, North Carolina

2019



## Lenten Practices 2019

40 days. 40 sunrises and sunsets. 40 days to decide to make a choice that will bring you closer to God.

Lent can be hard for children... and for adults. It can feel like we are trying to be something we are not. Yet it is also of time of accepting a challenge that can deepen our faith and our relationships.

As a part of ***Rituals and Relationships***, the Family Lenten Devotional is a once-a-week opportunity for your family to connect with each other. You are encouraged to have a candle, battery operated or traditional, and that is all you will need. These devotionals are written so that they can be done anywhere and anytime - around a meal, before or after school, right before bed. Let them be a guide for conversations for your family and for your own contemplation.

May these 40 days be a time of learning and growing.

Blessings,



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March 6, 2019

## Ash Wednesday and Our Lenten Promise

**Say:** The season of Lent is a time when we remember the promise we make God to live like Jesus did. With our Lenten promise, we either give something up or add something extra to our normal routine as a way of remembering what we have promised God and all of the good things God has promised us.

*You are invited to light your Lenten candle now as a way of remembering God's presence with you.*

**Read:** John 16:7-8, CEV

*But I tell you that I am going to do what is best for you. That is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you. The Spirit will come and show the people of this world the truth about sin and God's justice.*

**Ask:** What is your Lenten promise? Do you remember how long we are going to keep our Lenten promises?

**Say:** We will keep our Lenten promises for forty days. On Ash Wednesday, a day where we ask for forgiveness for the ways we did not live the way God wants us to, we make these promises as a way to remind us to live better lives. We wear ashes on our forehead or our hand in the shape of a cross as another sign of repentance and to remember the promise that Jesus will always be with us.

**Pray:** God, we are sorry when we don't live the way you want. Help us to be more faithful and give us the strength to keep our Lenten promises. Help us to live in such a way that everyone can know your love. Amen.



March 13, 2019

## The Promise That We Are God's Children



**Ask:** Did you keep your Lenten promise this week? What has been the hardest part about keeping your promise?

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**Say:** We are all God's children, and we are all created in God's image. Jesus was God's child as well. And Jesus knew how God wanted him to live. He loved people who weren't loved by others. He cared about the

poor and the hungry. He welcomed people who others did not welcome. Jesus showed us what it meant to be a child of God.

**Read:** Matthew 3:13-17, CEV

*Jesus left Galilee and went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John kept objecting and said, "I ought to be baptized by you. Why have you come to me?" Jesus answered, "For now this is how it should be, because we must do all that God wants us to do." Then John agreed. So Jesus was baptized. And as soon as he came out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. Then a voice from Heaven said, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him."*

**Ask:** What lets people know that you are a child of God?

**Say:** Baptism is one way that people let their church community know that they are a child of God. Jesus also loved others through his actions, and that is a great way that we can keep our promise to be faithful to God. All of these things are actions and signs that we are the children of God. These signs can help others know that they are God's children too and that God promises to always love them.

**Pray:** Thank you God for promising that we are your children. Help us live the way Jesus lived. Give us the courage to love others so that they can see we are your children. Amen.

March 20, 2019

## God Will Help Us Keep Our Promises



**Ask:** Did you keep your Lenten promise this week? What can we do to help each other keep our promises?

*You are invited to light your Lenten candle now as a way of remembering God's presence with you.*

**Say:** After Jesus was baptized, he went out into the wilderness for forty days where he was tempted to not live and love the way God asks. Just like Jesus we are making promises to God that are sometimes hard to keep. It is not always easy to live the way

God asks.

**Read:** Mark 1:12-13, CEV

*Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.*

**Ask:** What is temptation? How are you tempted?

**Say:** In the desert, Jesus kept his promises to God because God sent angels to protect Jesus and to help Jesus keep his promise to live a faithful life. God sends us protection as well. If we feel like we can't keep our promises or if we are tempted to do something wrong, we can pray to God, and God can give us the strength to turn away from those wrong things.

**Pray:** God thank you for forgiving us and protecting us when we do bad things. Teach us to love you more than we love our stuff. Remind us that when we need you, you give us strength. Amen.

## March 27, 2019

# God Promises to Forgive Us



**Ask:** Did you keep your Lenten promise this week? Is it getting harder or easier to keep your promise?

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**Say:** Do you know the story of Zacchaeus? The Bible says Zacchaeus was short, which people believed was a sign that he wasn't a very good person. Zacchaeus was also a tax collector, but sometimes he would take more money than he should and keep the

extra for himself. Despite all of the bad things Zacchaeus did, he still wanted to see Jesus and Jesus still wanted to talk with him. In fact, Jesus wanted to talk with Zacchaeus so badly, he invited himself over for dinner. But Zacchaeus changes after meeting Jesus.

**Read:** Luke 19:8-10, CEV

*Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus, "I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated." Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today you and your family have been saved because you are a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to look for and save people who are lost."*

**Ask:** Is it easy to apologize when we do something wrong? Is it easy to forgive when people have hurt us or were mean to us?

**Say:** Zacchaeus's whole life changed just from having one meal with Jesus. And Jesus reminds Zacchaeus that even though he did horrible things in the past, he can be forgiven. No matter who we are, Jesus loves us, even if we feel a little lost.

**Pray:** Thank you God for loving us so much. Open our hearts so that we can be changed like Zacchaeus was changed. Thank you for promising to always forgive us, even when we don't keep our promises to you. Amen.

April 3, 2019  
**God Promises to Listen to Us**



**Ask:** Did you keep your Lenten promise this week? How can we help each other keep our promise?

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**Say:** Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, just like we learn how to pray from our parents and at church. When we pray, we are having a conversation with God. Whatever is on our mind, even if it doesn't make sense to say out loud, God will listen

to us.

**Read:** Matthew 6:9-13, CEV

*You should pray like this: Our God, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

**Ask:** Why is praying important? Do you know what this particular prayer is called?

**Say:** When we pray and talk with God, God promises to always listen. That doesn't mean that God will always answer right away, but God still listens to everything that we say because God cares about us. It is comforting to know that God will always listen to us.

**Pray:** Thank you God for always listening when we pray to you. Help us to remember to keep your promises to you and to love you as we should. Amen.

April 10, 2019

## We Promise to Remember God's Love



**Ask:** How have you kept your Lenten promise this week? What are you struggling with in keeping your promise?

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**Say:** When we have communion at church, we are remembering how much God loves us. Before Jesus was arrested, he had one last dinner with his disciples and friends. He broke bread and drank wine and told his disciples that every time they broke bread

and drank wine together, they were to remember that how much God loves the world.

**Read:** Mark 14:22-26, CEV (adapted)

*During this meal, Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this. It is my body." Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples, and they all drank some. Then he said, "This is the cup of new life that shows the world how much God loves them.*

**Ask:** What is a symbol? What are some symbols that you see at church? At school? At home?

**Say:** Communion is a symbol of God's love. It is a way that we come closer to God. As you share communion as a family, think about the symbols that unite your family together. Communion is one of the symbols that unites all people as children of God. When we take communion, we make a promise to God that we will remember just how much God loves us.

**Pray:** God, we thank you that we can be reminded of your love and all ways in which you bring us closer to you. We promise to remember how much you love us every time we take communion. Amen.

April 17, 2019

## God Gives Us Promises for the Future



**Ask:** On Sunday, we can celebrate keeping our Lenten promise for forty days. Are you excited to celebrate keeping your promise? What has been hard about keeping your promise? What has been easy?

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**Say:** On Palm Sunday, we celebrate Jesus coming to Jerusalem, just like the citizens of Jerusalem celebrated when Jesus entered the city. They recognized Jesus as the

Messiah, but they had very different expectations. For them, Messiah meant someone who would come in to the capital city and take over so he would be in charge. Jesus knew he was the Messiah, but he knew that his role as Messiah would be very different. Instead, Jesus knew that everyone would know he was Messiah by the way he loved everyone. Jesus came to Jerusalem to bring us closer to God.



**Read:** John 12:11-13, CEV

*The next day a large crowd was in Jerusalem for Passover. When they heard that Jesus was coming for the festival, they took palm branches and went out to greet him. They shouted, Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!*

**Ask:** Why do we celebrate Jesus's coming to Jerusalem?

**Say:** Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. Tomorrow we will celebrate Maundy Thursday, and Friday we will celebrate Good Friday. This is the week that we prepare for the good news of Easter and all the celebration that will bring.

**Pray:** Jesus, we are glad that you are the Messiah and that you came to bring us closer to God. We thank you that we can celebrate the good news of your resurrection this week. We are so excited for Easter to come! Amen.

April 18, 2019 – Maundy Thursday  
**God's Promise of Protection and Freedom**

**Say:** When Jesus had the last supper with his disciples, they are celebrating a Jewish tradition known as Passover. Our Jewish friends celebrate Passover as a way of remembering a long time ago when they were in slavery in Egypt and were set free through the wisdom of Moses and God's protection. Jesus celebrates this freedom with his disciples and reminds his disciples that God will always protect them.

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a way of remembering God's presence with you.*

**Read:** Exodus 12:8-11, CEV-adapted

*God told the Israelites, "That night the animals are to be roasted and eaten, together with bitter herbs and thin bread made without yeast. Don't eat the meat raw or boiled. When you eat the meal, be dressed and ready to travel. Have your sandals on, carry your walking stick in your hand, and eat quickly. This is the Passover Festival in honor of me, your Lord."*

**Ask:** When have you needed God's protection?

**Say:** God protected the Hebrew people and kept them safe as they escaped slavery in Egypt. God protected the disciples after Jesus was arrested. And God will protect us too whenever we need protection. Having protection from God doesn't mean that bad things won't happen, but it does mean that whatever happens God promises to be with us, just like God was with Jesus on his journey to the cross. Today we remember Jesus's arrest. Jesus was very scared about what was going to happen, and he cried when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane right before the soldiers arrested him, but he also trusted God. Trusting God is part of God's protection for us.

**Pray:** God thank you for protecting us and keeping us safe. When we are scared or when we feel alone, thank you for being with us. Amen.

## April 19, 2019 – Good Friday

# God's Promise to be With Us

**Say:** People could go to the Temple and be near God, but no one could go in God's room. It was called the Holy of Holies, and it was separated from the rest of the Temple with a big, thick curtain. Special priests could only go there on certain special days. But when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain separating the room where all the people worshipped from God's room tore in two. We don't have to be separated from God anymore!

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**Read:** Matthew 27:45-51, CEV

*At noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until three o'clock. Then about that time Jesus shouted, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, "He's calling for Elijah." One of them at once ran and grabbed a sponge. He soaked it in wine, then put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus. Others said, "Wait! Let's see if Elijah will come and save him." Once again Jesus shouted, and then he died. At once the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split apart.*

**Ask:** If Good Friday is the day that we recognize Jesus's actual death, why do we call it Good Friday?

**Say:** There are many reasons why we call today Good Friday. When the curtain was torn in the Temple it showed the people that nothing kept them from God any more. Our churches became open to all and closed to none! That's really good! Good Friday is also a good day because Jesus showed all of us how much he loves us. He was showing the world that even though people were hurting him, he was going to show forgiveness and kindness. This is the Good News of Good Friday!

**Pray:** God, we are so glad that we can be with you now. We know that even though this is a sad day, it is also good because we are reminded of your love for us. We can celebrate being with you whenever we want to be. We can celebrate opening our hearts and our homes to all of those who you created because we are all your children. Thank you for your promise to be with us. Amen.

## Sunday, April 21, 2019 - Easter God's Promise of Light

**Ask:** Have you been changed by your Lenten promise like Zacchaeus was changed by his dinner with Jesus? Do you understand God's promises to you better?

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**Say:** Happy Easter! A long time ago, early this morning, some of Jesus's disciples like Mary and Joanna came to the tomb to check on Jesus. Instead of seeing Jesus, they saw two men and an empty tomb. These two men were angels who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. These women were the first people to carry the good news of the Gospel, and they carried it straight to the other disciples.

**Read:** Luke 24:1-10, CEV

*Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared. When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance, they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, and they did not know what to think. Suddenly two men in shining white clothes stood beside them. The women were afraid and bowed to the ground. But the men said, 'Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive? Jesus isn't here! He has been raised from death. Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you, "The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners who will nail him to a cross. But three days later, he will rise to life." Then they remembered what Jesus had said. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb. When they returned they told the eleven apostles and the others what had happened.*

**Ask:** What do you think the good news of the Gospel is?

**Say:** The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus brings light into the world that will last forever. The light that we talked about entering the world at Advent is now shining brightly for everyone to see. It is lighting the whole world. God loves us, and God promises to always be the light in the darkness through the love that Jesus Christ showed on the cross! More importantly, that light that came down at Advent is now inside all of us, and we can share it with everyone, especially those who don't know how much God loves them.

**Pray:** Thank you for the light of Advent and Easter that is now in me. Help me to shine my light in the world so that others will see your love and know better who Jesus is because of that love. Thank you for the good news of Easter! Amen.







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