

journeying through LENT

While the days begin to lengthen, we enter the season of Lent. While the light is returning we unsettlingly prepare ourselves for the darkest day in the Christian calendar: Good Friday. Lent is the 40 day season of reflection and preparation for the death & resurrection of Jesus. It starts on Ash Wednesday. The 40 days are symbolic of Jesus going into the wilderness for 40 days.

It is a time of repentance, considering how Jesus suffered, and how we are called to follow his example and take up our own crosses. Some people give up things as a sort of fasting, while others try to integrate something new into their lives. **It is a good season to rethink how we live and to let some things go, and maybe even develop some new holy habits.**

"AS LENT IS THE TIME FOR GREATER LOVE,
LISTEN TO JESUS' THIRST...
'REPENT AND BELIEVE' JESUS TELLS US.
WHAT ARE WE TO REPENT?
OUR INDIFFERENCE, OUR HARDNESS OF HEART.
WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE?
JESUS THIRSTS EVEN NOW,
IN YOUR HEART AND IN THE POOR --
HE KNOWS YOUR WEAKNESS.
HE WANTS ONLY YOUR LOVE,
WANTS ONLY THE CHANCE TO LOVE YOU."
~ BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA



Create a Lenten Prayer Space for Reflection in Your Home

Items to include:

- **candle** - symbolic of God's presence with us
- **empty bowl** - Explain that we fast to follow Jesus' example in the wilderness & so that we have more time or energy to remember to talk to God during Lent. Older children & adults can be encouraged to write down something they want to fast from and place the paper in the bowl.
- **a scripture, poem and/or prayer:** This can be written on cards that can be read liturgically (at dinner or breakfast works well). Psalm 23 is a wonderful image to meditate on with young children.
- **cross:** Take time to look at the cross together and talk about the crucifixion and resurrection.
- **a small stone:** Might there be a stony place in you that needs transforming? Some attitude or habit that, with a little attention, might even become a gift for you and others?

[Cultivating Conversation] | give your dinner table a conversation kick start!

What are some things we could fast from during lent (for a day, week, or weeks)? [ideas: screen time, texting, tattling, yelling, sarcasm, sweets, social media, television, soda, etc.]	Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days to be alone with God. Is it difficult or easy for you to sit in quiet with God?	The best part of my day today was ... The worst part of my day today was ...
One habit I would like to add during lent is ... [ideas: spending quiet time with God, prayer for someone, being generous, joyfully help with a chore, etc]	Close your eyes. Picture someone you know who needs to know they are LOVED. How can you help them feel loved?	What do you appreciate about your pastor(s)? Write a note of gratitude to your youth pastor, pastor, or small group leader!