

Living for Life

March's Theme: Lent

Introduction

Lent is a season in the church calendar. It begins on Ash Wednesday (this year was February 17) and ends on Easter Sunday (this year is April 4). We use this time to prepare for Easter, which celebrates Jesus' resurrection. It is also a time to assess our life. Are there ways we can live better? Are there habits we have that we don't like? Are there ways we can be better stewards of our planet?

Lent is a time to think about those questions and to address them in our daily living so that by Easter we are renewed in our faith and have grown as Jesus' disciples.

Package Contents

- Wondering Cards:** This package has six wondering cards. Use them for conversation starters when the family is together, such as over a meal, after watching television show if a card seems applicable to the story or riding in the car together as a way to pass the miles. Use them throughout the month. They can be used once or multiple times.
- Scriptures:** *(enter the color)* This package contains four scriptures all having to do with gratitude. Discuss at least two of the scriptures during the month. Find the scripture in the Bible and then discuss one or two of the questions on the reference sheet. You can rephrase the question if it will help them to answer the question. Also, you can revisit the scripture at another time during the month if you want to ask the other questions. Bear in mind that the answers are not clear cut, black and white. You can answer them too.
- Prayers:** *(enter the color)* If your family does not have a tradition for saying grace before meals, these are prayers you can use. Otherwise, use whatever your family says before meals.
- Activity Sheet:** *(enter the color)* The activity ties together this month's theme.

See the obverse side for Bible information.

Basic Bible User's Instructions

The Bible contains writings which are thousands of years old. It is a sacred book containing wisdom, although written long ago, it remains fresh as scriptures still can teach us how to live today. Some people call the Bible an operating manual for life.

The Bible contains "books." Each book has one or more chapters, and each chapter has verses.

When we reference a scripture, we cite the book, the chapter, and the verse or verses. Thus, if we see a reference to Luke's account of Jesus' birth, the citation would be Luke 2:8-20. It means:

- The Gospel According to Luke
- Chapter two
- Verses 8-20

Note that a colon separates the chapter and the verse(s).

Furthermore, the Bible we use as Protestants has two major sections: Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament has the same books as in the Jewish Bible (although in a different order). The section often called the New Testament is scriptures used by Christians to understand Jesus and our faith.

Books of the Bible

Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures		New Testament	
Genesis	Ecclesiastes	Matthew	Titus
Exodus	Song of Solomon	Mark	Philemon
Leviticus	Isaiah	Luke	Hebrews
Numbers	Jeremiah	John	James
Deuteronomy	Lamentations	Acts of the Apostles	1 Peter
Joshua	Ezekiel	Romans	2 Peter
Judges	Daniel	1 Corinthians	1 John
Ruth	Hosea	2 Corinthians	2 John
1 Samuel	Amos	Galatians	3 John
2 Samuel	Obadiah	Ephesians	Jude
1 Kings	Jonah	Philippians	Revelation
2 Kings	Micah	Colossians	
1 Chronicles	Nahum	1 Thessalonians	
2 Chronicles	Habakkuk	2 Thessalonians	
Ezra	Zephaniah	1 Timothy	
Nehemiah	Haggai	2 Timothy	
Esther	Zechariah		
Job	Malachi		
Psalms			
Proverbs			

Prayers

Lord's Prayer (different versions)

Our Father, 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, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers of Confession

O God, sometimes I'm confused. Sometimes I find myself paralyzed, unsure of what to do next. So, I figure it out myself, but it doesn't always work. I get into trouble. Help me, O God. Help me to trust in Jesus' teachings. Teach me not to always look for shortcuts. Forgive me for thinking I am wiser than you. Amen.

Though I think I am strong, O God, I am not. Temptations surround me. Sometimes I am strong enough to resist. Sometimes, I'm not. Please forgive me. Help me to accept that I am not as strong as I think I am. Strengthen me so I can resist temptation. Give me patience so I don't make a wrong decision. Amen.

Forgiving and loving God, I got in trouble today. I didn't mean to. I lost my head. I wasn't thinking straight. Forgive me. Help me to admit I was wrong. Help me to accept that I must apologize. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

O God, my heart is full of love. Open my heart. Let the love that's in it flow out into this world to make it a better place. Let my love touch my family and my friends. Let my love heal the hurts I see around me. Let my love bring hope and healing. Amen.

How can I make a difference in this world, O God? Set your Spirit upon me and lead me to take action to give, even one person, hope. Grant that Jesus' teachings will help me to understand the power of love to transform this world. Amen.

How would you describe a good person?

What can we do to be better citizens of the world?

What can you do to be better person?

What habits do you have that you wish to stop or to change?

What disappoints God?

What does it take to change bad habits? How long does it take?

Matthew 4:1-11

Questions:

- In this story the devil tempted Jesus. Who tempts you? What tempts you?
- The devil promised Jesus power over the whole world if he would only bow down to him. How strong do you think Jesus was to resist?
- When someone asks you to do something and you know it's wrong, what can you say to that person?
- What temptations did you face today?

About Matthew 4:1-11

Right after John baptized Jesus, he spent 40 days in the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. Although each slightly different, you can read this story in Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13. Following his 40 days, Jesus began his ministry.

Exodus 20:1-17

Questions:

- Which of these commandments is the hardest one to follow for you?
- What are some ways to honor your mother or your father?
- The Sabbath is a day of rest. It is one of God's laws. The Sabbath is one day a week when we rest or take a break from all the activities of the week. What would be a good way to rest on the Sabbath?
- Which law will you try hard to obey until Easter?

About Exodus 20:1-17

These are the Ten Commandments (also known as the Decalogue). Moses received these from God during Israel's time in the wilderness. Consider them a code of behaviors for the community.

The fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," is a hinge. The preceding commandments refer to our relationship with God. The following commandments refer to our relationship with each other. The fifth commandment refers both to God and the community.

Psalm 51:1-17

Questions:

- What are the things you do that you shouldn't do?
- What do you need to do to create a clean heart?
- How do you feel when you live right?
- What are ways we can put God first in our lives?

About Psalm 51:1-17

The psalms are poems. They cover the full range of our relationship with God. Psalms praise God as well as express our anger to God. Psalms give voice to our hopes and our laments.

This psalm asks God for forgiveness. It is a plea for God's help to end our sins.

Luke 10:25-37

Questions:

- We're in a hurry to get someplace. While we're traveling, we see someone who is seriously hurt and there is no one around to help. Why should we stop?
- If someone you don't like needs help, why should you help them?
- The innkeeper didn't know the Samaritan, yet he trusted that the Samaritan would return. How can we help strangers trust us?

About Luke 10:25-37

This is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Because Samaritans differed in their beliefs from the Jewish people, they were not accepted. The priest and the Levite were Jewish religious authorities.

When the lawyer answered Jesus, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind," he quoted the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:5), which is a highly revered verse in Judaism. That quote established the lawyer as a faithful Jew.

Activities

- Give up something you like until Easter, such as chocolate or cookies or television
- *Work to improve on some aspect of yourself that you wish to change, such as:
 - Not picking on your brother or sister
 - Becoming more tolerant and accepting
 - Argue less with your parents
- *Making positive personal behavioral changes
 - Do more chores around the house
 - Get out of bed on time
 - Read more
 - Say prayers daily
- *Make positive changes for justice
 - Use less water (such as shut off the tap while brushing your teeth or take shorter showers)
 - Be better with recycling
 - Turn out lights and shut off electrical equipment when you're not using them
 - Compost rather than throw out organic waste
- Read Mark 14:12-15:47 (The Passion¹) during Holy Week, which begins on Palm Sunday, March 28, and ends on Easter Sunday, April 4. *Reading this narrative helps us understand Easter's joy.*

*Ideally after Easter, these will become part of your daily living

Meeting On-line

We will meet with the children over Zoom on Tuesday, March 16 at 6:30 PM. We will meet for 15 – 30 minutes to check in and to do an on-line lesson. We will listen to and talk about a short story, The Three Questions, by Leo Tolstoy. We will publish the link below as it gets closer to the date:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81117543594>

Meeting ID: 811 1754 3594

¹ The Passion is the suffering of Jesus. It comes from the Latin word for suffering, *passio*.