

# *Fasting and Feasting During Lent*

Make more room for God this Lent by choosing **not** to do some things (fasting) and by choosing to **do** other things (feasting).

## *Fasting*

Fasting is an integral part of Lent. Traditionally it has included reducing the amount of food we eat and abstaining from meat. We fast to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger, our need for God. The purpose of fasting is to turn our attention to both God and others.

Things to fast from...

- watching television
- cussing or using foul language
- buying new things: clothes, music, magazines, jewelry
- snack or junk foods
- spending money on entertainment
- being angry at other people
- holding resentments
- gossiping
- being dishonest

## *Feasting*

The dictionary defines a feast as “something that gives unusual or abundant pleasure.” Jesus tells us what gives us the most real and lasting joy: it is sharing ourselves in love for others, for our friends, our family, and also for our neighbors in need. During Lent, we pay attention to feasting on joy, compassion, service, and hope so that we might grow in faith all year long.

Things to feast on...

- prayer
- acts of kindness to others
- forgiveness
- participating at Church
- participating in liturgy and Eucharist
- giving our time in service
- participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- acts of service and charity
- giving money or food/clothing to people who are hungry or in need

# *Lenten Ideas for Children*

## Fasting

- ✓ Give up one TV show today and spend that time helping a family member.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Woman at the Well in chapter 4 of the Gospel of John, verses 5-30.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Blind Man in chapter 9 of the Gospel of John, verses 1, 6-11, 35-38.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of Lazarus in chapter 11 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-7, 17-44.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Good Shepherd in chapter 10 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-18.
- ✓ Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and spend a few minutes praying for the needs of others.
- ✓ Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and donate 25¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up going to a movie or other fun activity and donate the money from this activity to your Operation Rice Bowl box or other people in need in your community.
- ✓ Think about a bad habit that you would like to change, like telling a lie, yelling at others, getting angry, or putting people down, and choose to avoid that habit and do something positive instead.
- ✓ Think about someone you are angry with or who has hurt you. Ask God for the courage to forgive and pray for that person each day. Think about one thing that is good about them.
- ✓ Share lots of smiles today.
- ✓ Give a hug to everyone in your family.
- ✓ Compliment each person in your family some time today.
- ✓ Give up complaining, frowns, and negative thoughts today.

## Praying

- ✓ Read the story of Palm Sunday, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, in the Gospels of Matthew 21:1-11 or Mark 11:1-10 or Luke 19:28-40.
- ✓ Read the story of the Last Supper of Jesus in chapter 13 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-15.
- ✓ Read the story of Easter chapter 20 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-9.
- ✓ Pray the "Our Father" three times today – in the morning when you get up, at noontime, and when you go to bed.
- ✓ Say a prayer for someone who is sick today.

- ✓ Pray for a forgiving heart and ask the people you have hurt to forgive you.
- ✓ Participate in Ash Wednesday services with your family.
- ✓ Participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent.
- ✓ Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent.
- ✓ Rent the video, *The Prince of Egypt*. Watch the video and read the story of Moses from the Book of Exodus, chapters 2-15. Try to read one chapter each day. Be sure to read the story of the Passover in chapters 12 through 13:22.
- ✓ List three blessings you have been given. Say a prayer to God, giving thanks for the blessings in your life.
- ✓ Pray for the children and families who are homeless, and think about ways you and your family might help them.

## Serving/Almsgiving

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- ✓ Show an act of kindness to each family member today.
- ✓ Show an act of kindness to a friend and to someone who is difficult to like.
- ✓ Together with your family, spend time serving others during Lent. Work at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Visit elderly people who are in nursing homes or are shut-ins.
- ✓ Bring food or clothing to the parish or community food pantry, food bank, or homeless shelter.
- ✓ Do someone else's chores one day this week.
- ✓ Donate a new item of children's clothing to the local homeless shelter or clothing center.
- ✓ Go through your closet and find some clothes in good shape to give away to other children who are in need of clothes.
- ✓ Write a letter or create a card for someone who is sick or might be lonely.
- ✓ Buy a can of food to give to a food bank or homeless shelter.
- ✓ Talk with your family about eating one simple meal each week of Lent and putting the money you save in the Operation Rice Bowl box or giving the money to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.

# *Lenten Ideas for Adults*

## Fasting

- ✓ fast from watching television one night each week so that you can spend time on a Lenten practice, such as praying, reading the Bible, serving others
- ✓ fast from one movie during Lent and give the money... and the time in service to others
- ✓ fast from using foul language and put-downs and start affirming the good in other people
- ✓ fast from buying new things like clothes, music, magazines, or jewelry and make a donation...
- ✓ fast from spending money on entertainment and make a donation of time or money that serves others
- ✓ fast from holding resentments and start practicing forgiveness
- ✓ fast from gossiping or being dishonest and start the practice of always being truthful and honest
- ✓ fast from a favorite snack food or drink and set aside the money you would have spent to donate to a special charity
- ✓ fast from being angry or upset with people who have hurt or offended you, and pray for the courage to forgive them
- ✓ fast from feeling guilty and angry at yourself for things you have done wrong, instead remember God's great love for you

## Praying

- ✓ read the Lenten Scripture readings through Lent; here's a list for each week of Lent:
  - (1) Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (Ash Wednesday)
  - (2) Matthew 4:1-11 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)
  - (3) Matthew 17:1-19 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)
  - (4) John 4:5-42 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday)
  - (5) John 9:1-41 (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)
  - (6) John 11:1-45 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)
  - (7) Matthew 21:1-11 (Passion Sunday)
  - (8) John 13:1-15 (Holy Thursday)
  - (9) John 18:1 – 19:42 (Good Friday)
  - (10) John 20:1-9 (Easter)
- ✓ participate in Ash Wednesday services
- ✓ participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent
- ✓ participate in the Lenten Sunday liturgies
- ✓ participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent
- ✓ spend fifteen minutes a day praying during Lent: give thanks to God for all your blessings, pray for a specific personal need prompted by the day's experience, and pray for those who are in need or suffering in your community and the world

# Serving/Almsgiving

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- ✓ donate personal possessions, such as clothes, books, shoes, to people in need
- ✓ dedicate time for service during Lent, e.g., working at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, helping people in your neighborhood such as the elderly
- ✓ donate food or money saved by fasting to the parish or community food pantry, food bank, or homeless shelter
- ✓ cook a meal for the soup kitchen or homeless shelter, gather some friends to help
- ✓ volunteer at a local soup kitchen, homeless shelter or nursing home several hours per week during Lent
- ✓ support organizations that provide direct relief to people in need:
  - *Catholic Relief Services*, 209 West Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-3403
  - *Heifer Project International*, P.O. Box 808, Little Rock, AR 72203
- ✓ support the work of Habitat for Humanity, a Christian housing ministry, that has built or renovated over 60,000 low-cost houses since 1976 for families in need. Donate money or your time to build a house. A gift of \$20 purchases a 50-pound box of nails, \$35 helps to purchase a living room window, \$50 helps to pay for an interior door. Call 912-924-6935 or write 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709-3498 for more information about their work and how you can be involved.
- ✓ learn more about feeding the hungry by contacting Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301-608-2400)
- ✓ learn more about addressing human rights violations around the world by contacting Amnesty International, 322 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., New York, NY 10001; 212-807-8400 (amnesty.org)
- ✓ volunteer to read books and magazines to the elderly who are no longer able to read
- ✓ help others learn to read by becoming a literacy trainer or volunteer to tutor children
- ✓ work to change the structures of injustice by joining the work of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby at 801 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20003-2167 (networklobby.org)
- ✓ work to overcome child sweatshops by supporting the work of Free the Children, which builds rehabilitation and educational centers for children freed from sweatshop labor, (FTP, 603 N. Oak St., Falls Church, VA 22046, 703-534-7045)
- ✓ support the work of the hospice movement to provide compassionate low-cost, in-patient and at-home care for the terminally ill, contact the National Hospice Movement at 1-800-658-8898
- ✓ give the gift of sight by donating old eyeglasses or unused frames to the local Lion's Club who recycles them to the poor
- ✓ support the national work of Covenant House as they house and care for homeless youth (P.O. Box 731, Times Square Station, NY, NY 10108-0731)

# *Our Family Lenten Pledge*

Ways we will pray during Lent...

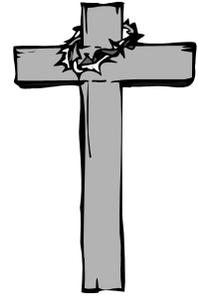
Ways we will fast during Lent...

Ways we will serve and give alms during Lent...

# Lenten Scripture Readings

	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle C
<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
<b>First Sunday of Lent</b>	Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11	Genesis 9:8-15 1Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15	Deuteronomy 26:4-10 Romans 10:8-13 Luke 4:1-13
<b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	Genesis 12:1-4 2Timothy 1:8-10 Matthew 17:1-19	Genesis 22:1-2, 9:10-13,15-18 Romans 8:31-34 Mark 9:2-10	Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18 Philippians 3:14 – 4:1 Luke 9:28-36
<b>Third Sunday of Lent</b>	Exodus 17:3-7 Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 John 4:5-42	Exodus 20:1-17 1Corinthians 1:22-25 John 2:13-25	Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 1Corinthians 10:1-6,10-12 Luke 13:1-9
<b>Fourth Sunday of Lent</b>	1Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41	2Chronicles 36:14-17,19-23 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21	Joshua 5:9, 10-12 2Corinthians 5:17-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
<b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>	Ezekiel 37:12-14 Romans 8:8-11 John 11:1-45	Jeremiah 31:31-34 Hebrews 5:7-9 John 12:20-33	Isaiah 43:16-21 Philippians 3:8-14 John 8:1-11
<b>Passion Sunday</b>	<u>Processional</u> Matthew 21:1-11	<u>Processional</u> Mark 11:1-10	<u>Processional</u> Luke 19:28-40
<b>(Palm Sunday)</b>	Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Matthew 26:14 – 27:66	Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Mark 14:1 – 15:47	Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Luke 22:14 – 23:56
<b>Holy Thursday (Chrism)</b>	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21
<b>Holy Thursday Lord's Supper</b>	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15
<b>Good Friday</b>	Isaiah 52:13-53, 12 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1 – 19:42	Isaiah 52:13-53, 12 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1 – 19:42	Isaiah 52:13-53, 12 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1 – 19:42
<b>Easter Vigil</b>	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15 – 15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32 – 4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Matthew 28:1-10	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15 – 15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32 – 4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Mark 16:1-8	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15 – 15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32 – 4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Luke 25:1-12
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9

# *My Lenten Pledge*



*Ways I will pray during Lent...*

*Ways I will fast during Lent...*

*Ways I will serve and give alms during Lent...*

*When I arrive at Easter, I hope to see the following changes...*

# *A Guide to Prayer*

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Adapted from *The Way of Prayer* by Michael Pennock  
(Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987). Used with permission.

## A Prayer Time

Set aside time for prayer: ten minutes a day is a good start; twenty minutes is better. Set aside a regular time: morning, noontime, before dinner, or before going to sleep at night.

When I will pray: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Prayer Place

We can pray anywhere. We all find places that are special to us, that help us to pray. Jesus did give us wise advice, though, when he taught us to withdraw to our rooms to pray. Find a place to pray in our room or in a special corner of the house. Make it your own personalized prayer space—keep a Bible, a crucifix or special picture, or a candle nearby.

Where I will pray: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Prayer Posture

If we can pray anywhere, we can also pray in any position. Sometimes we have to experiment to discover the prayer posture that works best for us, such as lying down, kneeling, sitting.

How I will position myself for prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Prayer Mood

The Lord instructs us to “be still and know that I am God.” We cannot pray well unless we slow down and create the proper mental climate. We must first relax. Creating a relaxed mood for prayer is the last preliminary to praying—after we have made time, found a place and assumed a comfortable position for our prayer. Here are three popular methods for relaxing before prayer:

- ▷ **Awareness of our senses.** Sit on a straight chair. Assume a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, hold it momentarily, and then let it go. Relax your body. Begin with your neck muscles, then your shoulders, your chest and back, your arms and legs. Feel the clothes on your shoulders and back, the press of your legs on the chair. Note your posture. Be aware of your legs, your feet, your hands. Feel the heat or coolness of the room.

Repeat this pattern of awareness a second and third time. Feel the tension drain out of your body. Dwell on the part of your body that is most tense. Relax the forehead,

the jaw, the neck. Let your arms and legs rest. Come to total stillness. Now you are ready to pray.

- ▷ **Breathing.** Take a relaxing position, seated or lying down. Let the tension drain from your body. Now focus on your breathing. Observe your breathing. Note how fast or slow it is. Notice the air as it comes in and goes out. Don't try to control your breathing. Just observe it for a few quiet, peaceful moments. Be aware of how it comes in to fill your lungs, and how it goes out of your nostrils. After a short time spent observing your breathing, begin to count your breaths silently. Count "one" as you inhale; "and" as you exhale. Count "two" as you breathe in again; "and" on the exhalation. Continue your count to 15 or 20.
- ▷ **Listening.** Take a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Relax the tension in your body. Feel the tightness drain from your face, your neck, your shoulders, your arms and legs. Feel the air on your skin. Be aware of each breath that you take in and let out. Block your ears with your thumbs. Listen to each breath as you take it in and let it out. After ten breaths, let your hands rest on your lap. Now be attentive to all the sounds around you. Hear them all, the ones close to you and the ones in the background, the big sounds and the little noises. After a bit, listen to the sounds blend together. Let them penetrate you. Continue with this until you are at rest and ready to turn to prayer.

How I will relax myself for prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Variety of Prayer Styles

There are a variety of prayer styles to use in your prayer life.

Prayer styles I will use: \_\_\_\_\_

### Examples:

#### Prayer as Meditation

- Relax: Find a peaceful place and posture.
- Observe: What is this? What is here?
- Reflect: What does this mean?
- Listen: What is this teaching me?
- Resolve: What can I do?

#### Scriptural Prayer

- Select a Scripture passage.
- Read God's Word prayerfully.
- Meditate and reflect on God's Word: Observe—step into the story and become part of it; Reflect—on the meaning of the passage for your life; Listen—what is God saying to you?
- Make a resolution: Resolve to do something about the insights you gained.

#### Prayer as Contemplation

- Relax: Find a peaceful place and posture.
- Center: Perhaps use a word like Jesus to drive away distracting thoughts. The goal is to empty the mind of all thoughts.
- Rest: Sit calmly in the presence of the Lord.

#### Prayer as Recollection

- Focus: Relax.
- Insight: Ask the Holy Spirit for enlightenment.
- Evaluate: Think about the past day.
- Forgiveness: Ask the Lord for forgiveness.
- Thanksgiving: Thank God for all that you have been given.

# Children's Prayer Experiences

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Use the following prayer activities to offer children-specific prayer experiences or to modify the following prayer experiences to make them better suited for children. You can use the following suggestions in conjunction with many of the prayer experiences.

For additional prayer ideas consult: *Ways to Prayer with Children* by Barbara Ann Bretherton (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995). See "Imaginative Prayer" (pages 24-32), "Prayer in Action" (pages 40-47), and "Creative Movement" (pages 48-52). See also *Friend Jesus – Prayers for Children* by Gaynell Bordes Cronin (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999).

## Morning and Evening Prayer

The practice of morning and evening prayer begins in childhood. Each Home section in *Generations of Faith* contains morning and evening prayers for each month of the year. Select the morning and evening prayer for the month you are currently in. Pray these prayers with the children and explain how important it is to open and close the day in prayer. Then guide them in personalizing the prayers for the months of Lent. There are a variety of ways for the children to do this, e.g. drawing a special picture or symbol on the prayer or re-writing the prayer in their own words and illustrating it with symbols and pictures.

## Lenten Prayers

The Lent Home section contains Lenten table prayers and daily prayers. Involve the children in preparing Lenten prayers for use in their homes. Prayer several of the Lenten prayers together and talk about how they can lead their family in prayer each day. Here are several ways to engage the children in preparing Lenten prayers.

- Illustrate a Lenten Prayer Booklet for the family.
- Select individual prayers and create prayer cards. Engage the children in creating their own prayer and prayer card.
- Create a placemat of Lenten prayers. (Laminate the placemat.)

## Prayer Collage

The natural creativity of young children means they enjoy expressing their feelings and ideas through art. Provide of a variety of art supplies. Invite the children to use the materials to create a collage that expresses a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer of praise, or a prayer of petition or intercession. You can invite the children to ask you to write a prayer on their collage that they dictate to you.

You can also use pictures cut from magazines to make a prayer collage. You can preselect pictures or allow the children to find pictures that represent their prayer: thankfulness, praise, petition or intercession.

**Materials:** art supplies such as colored construction paper, crayons, markers, scraps of lace, ribbon, trim, sequins, colored chalk, paper doilies, glue, scissors, transparent tape, magazine pictures, etc.

## Prayer Banner

The banner may be a prayer of adoration. You might talk first about parts of God's world that reminds the children of the greatness of God. Then, each child may make his or her own banner selecting one of these things as the center of the design, or you may incorporate several ideas into a group banner.

The banner may be a prayer of thanksgiving. This naturally follows conversations about things for which we are thankful. They may be people, God's world, experiences, foods, etc. Help children become more aware of God's blessings by writing a title such as "Thank You, God, for..." at the top of a large sheet of paper (newsprint or butcher paper). Encourage each child to draw pictures or write the names of things for which they are thankful.

The banner may be a prayer of petition or intercession. Concern for others can be a center focus of a banner. This becomes an intercessory prayer. It may follow a study of persons in another country or people in need in your own community.

**Materials:** butcher paper or newsprint, pencils, crayons, markers, glue, magazine pictures, scissors, etc.

## Prayer Mobile

A prayer mobile is a useful experience in prayer that can be taken home and serves as a reminder as the child prays each day. Young children will need assistance in assembling a mobile, but they can take part in the selection of the items to make up the mobile. A prayer mobile may have objects or pictures that are symbolic of the subjects for which the children will pray, or it can be made up of the words that will be used in the prayer itself. If you are drawing pictures or using symbolic objects, talk about what the objects or pictures tell us about the subject. Young children may search for pictures to cut out that remind them of what they want to pray about. If you are using words, encourage the child to think of his or her own words.

A prayer mobile can combine prayers of praise, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession.

**Materials:** coat hangers, string or yarn for hanging objects, construction paper, scissors, glue, etc.

# Praying with Scripture

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Praying with Scripture can be done alone or with others. When done with others, it can be a means of sharing more deeply the faith that you attempt to live out day by day. We believe that one of the ways God is manifested to us is through the Scriptures. When we prayerfully read the Scriptures, we open our minds and hearts to the Spirit of God. We can be both challenged and affirmed by the Word of God.

In this prayer experience the participants will be introduced to several methods of praying with Scripture. In the time allocated, the presenter can lead the participants through two or three methods. Choose from the suggestions below.

**Lenten Suggestion:** Use the Lenten Lectionary Readings to teach or demonstrate each of these prayer methods. (See the one page chart at the end of Prayer Experience Two.)

## Prayer Activities

### Option One

The following steps will help you to use the Scriptures in prayer. They can be done alone or when you gather as a group.

- **Choose a passage of Scripture**, about five to ten verses in length. You might choose one of your favorites, part of the Scriptures from the previous or coming Sunday readings, or, use an index to help you locate a passage that seems to be appropriate for the time or occasion.
- **Choose a comfortable place** where you can be uninterrupted and uninhibited.
- **Light a candle.** Take a few moments to get your body in harmony with your spirit. Sometimes it helps to take a few deep breaths or stretch the body and then relax.
- **Acknowledge God's presence with you.** Ask God to send the Spirit to be with you and guide you in this time of reflection.
- **Read the passage** you have chosen slowly, listening carefully to it. You might want to pause after a sentence or phrase.
- **Speak aloud the words** or phrases that struck you. Do not discuss them, just speak them.
- **Read the passage a second time**, slowly and prayerfully.
- **Consider the message** the passage might have for you – a challenge, an affirmation, an insight. If doing this with others, you could invite them to share what comes to mind.
- **Read the passage a third time**, slowly and prayerfully.
- **Pause** for about ten minutes of silence and allow the Spirit to speak to you. If no words or thoughts come, just sit in the silence. Sometimes God touches us in ways that we cannot know.

- **Consider how the passage calls you to action** following the time of prayer. Is there something you need to do to make the Scripture alive for you here and now?
- **Close with a brief prayer** of thanksgiving or praise to God for the gift of the Spirit.

## Option Two

Select a Scripture passage and then read it slowly and deliberately while the participants identify lines or phrases that stand out for them. Read the passage once, and then ask the participants to simply call out the word or phrase that “jumped out at them.” Read it again, and invite them to call out a new word or phrase. Conclude with a third reading. Afterward, invite the participants to spend a minute or two in conversation with God about what God is trying to say to them in the passage.

## Option Three

Take a passage of Scripture and make it a first person reading, as if the lines were being spoken personally to the individuals. For example, take **1Corinthians 13** (“Love is patient, love is kind) and personalize the reading by inserting people’s names into the reading – (person’s name) is patient, (person’s name) is kind..., etc.

## Option Four

Create a “dialogue” between a passage of Scripture and a story or article from today’s world in a newspaper or magazine. One way to present this is using a relevant newspaper or magazine article. Select an article that deals with the same topic or issue as the Scripture passage or vice versa. Read part of the article; then read part of the passage. Return to the article and then back to the passage. Invite the participants to name their thoughts and feelings of how the Scripture passage relates to current realities.

## Option Five

Read **2Corinthians 4:6-7**. Give each person a small clay gardening pot as a symbol of themselves, and suggest that they write a prayer asking God to come and dwell in them. Provide them with markers (or paint) to draw and write their prayer on the pot. Play quiet instrumental music while the young people decorate their clay pots.

## Option Six

Pray the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31 or Matthew 22:37-39 or Luke 10:27) by making each part of the commandment a prayer reflection. For example:

- Read, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart” and pause for everyone to think about how they love God and how they experience God’s love. Ask them to write down their reflections.
- Read, “Love the Lord your God with all your soul” and pause for silent reflection.
- Read, “Love the Lord your God with all your mind” and pause for everyone to think of ways God’s word has touched their lives. Ask them to write down their reflections.

- Read, “Love the Lord your God with all your strength” and pause for everyone to think of all the ways they do what God asks of them. Ask them to write down their reflections.

## Option Seven

Place a lighted candle in the center of the circle. Dim the lights. Read **John 19:17-18**. Pass a simple wood cross around a circle of people gathered for prayer. Ask each person to hold the cross for a minute, to touch it and look at it. Ask them to share one word that comes to mind when they think of Christ crucified. Play quiet instrumental music while the young people reflect and share.

## Conclusion

At the conclusion of the various methods, ask the participants to spend one or two minutes in “conversational prayer” with God about the experience they just had. Instruct them to simply talk to God as they would to a friend and tell God what they are feeling or thinking.

After the experience, invite the participants to share their feelings and thoughts about the prayer experience.

## Lenten Lectionary Readings

	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle C
Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20—6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20—6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Joel 2:12-18 2Corinthians 5:20—6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
First Sunday	Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11	Genesis 9:8-15 1Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15	Deuteronomy 26:4-10 Romans 10:8-13 Luke 4:1-13
Second Sunday	Genesis 12:1-4 2Timothy 1:8-10 Matthew 17:1-19	Genesis 22:1-2, 9:10-13, 15-18 Romans 8:31-34 Mark 9:2-10	Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18 Philippians 3:14—4:1 Luke 9:28-36
Third Sunday	Exodus 17:3-7 Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 John 4:5-42	Exodus 20:1-17 1Corinthians 1:22-25 John 2:13-25	Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 1Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12 Luke 13:1-9
Fourth Sunday	1Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41	2Chronicles 36:14-17, 19-23 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21	Joshua 5:9, 10-12 2Corinthians 5:17-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
Fifth Sunday	Ezekiel 37:12-14 Romans 8:8-11 John 11:1-45	Jeremiah 31:31-34 Hebrews 5:7-9 John 12:20-33	Isaiah 43:16-21 Philippians 3:8-14 John 8:1-11
Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)	<u>Processional</u> Matthew 21:1-11  Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Matthew 26:14—27:66	<u>Processional</u> Mark 11:1-10  Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Mark 14:1—15:47	<u>Processional</u> Luke 19:28-40  Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Luke 22:14—23:56
Holy Thursday (Chrism)	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21	Isaiah 61:1-3, 6:8-9 Revelation 1:5-8 Luke 4:16-21
Holy Thursday (Lord's Supper)	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 1Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15
Good Friday	Isaiah 52:12-53 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1—19:42	Isaiah 52:12-53 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1—19:42	Isaiah 52:12-53 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1—19:42
Easter Vigil	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15—15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32—4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Matthew 28:1-10	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15—15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32—4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Mark 16:1-8	Genesis 1:1-2 and 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Exodus 14:15—15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 Isaiah 55:1-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32—4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-28 Romans 6:3-11 Luke 25:1-12
Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9	Acts 10:34, 37-43 Colossians 3:1-4 or 1Corinthians 5:6-8 John 20:1-9

# Scripture Meditation

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## Prayer Activity

1. Introduce the Scripture Meditation activity using the following information (feel free to put this in your own words): *Christians believe that the Bible is the living Word of God. For this Word to speak to us, though, we must read and reflect on it. We must hear what the Lord is saying to us through the particular Scripture reading. Meditation uses the mind and the heart to help us hear the word of the Lord. It engages the faculties of thinking and imagination (our minds), the love we have for God (our hearts), and also the resolutions we make to live better Christian lives (our "hands and feet").*

*St. Ignatius of Loyola taught an approach to mediating on the Scriptures. He deeply believed in the value of fully engaging our imaginations in our reading and reflecting on the meaning to be found in the Bible. This is the practice Ignatius called "Application of the Senses." The pray-er "applies" each of his or her senses to the reading, using imagination to "hear" the words and sounds of the scene, to "see" the sights, to "smell" the smells, to "taste" the food, dust, and drink, and to "feel" textures, dirt, skin, etc.*

2. **Select a Scripture passage.** Choose a Scripture passage or story. Lenten Lectionary readings are highlighted with a ★. The following passages are especially conducive to meditation.

The Young Jesus (Luke 2:41-50)

★ Temptation in the Desert (Matthew 4:1-11)

Calling of the First Disciples (Luke 5:1-11)

Calming of the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)

The Woman in Simon's House (Luke 7:36-50)

Jesus Instructs the Disciples (Mark 6:7-13)

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

Miracle of Cana (John 2:1-12)

"Who Do People Say I Am?" (Matthew 16:13-17)

Curing of the Blind Man of Jericho (Luke 18:35-43)

The Miracle of the Loaves (John 6:1-13)

★ Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

★ The Woman at the Well (John 4:5-42)

★ The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)

★ Raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

The Rich Young Man (Matthew 19:16-22)

★ Driving Out the Money Changers (Mark 11:15-17)

★ Washing the Apostles' Feet (John 13:1-20)

★ The Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46)

★ The Crucifixion (Luke 23:33-49)

The Disciples on the Way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

3. **Settle down.** Take a few minutes to help everyone settle down in the place of prayer. Encourage them to sit with their spine straight, feet on the floor, knees slightly apart, hands on your lap, eyes closed. Ask them to breathe deeply and slowly; to be aware of the sounds around them; to quiet themselves and be still. Play some quiet instrumental music to set a prayerful environment.
4. **Pray to the Holy Spirit.** Remind the group that they are in God's presence. Ask them to feel the warmth and the love. As they slowly inhale and exhale, ask the Holy Spirit to help them pray and to hear what the Lord is saying to them.
5. **Read the Scripture passage slowly and meditatively.**
6. **Meditate on the Scripture passage.**
  - ▶ **Observe.** Ask everyone to step into the story and become a part of it. Imagine yourself as one of the disciples traveling with Jesus. What is happening? What kind of day is it? Who is with Jesus? What is Jesus doing? What does he say? What is the crowd or individual saying or doing?

Depending on the passage or story selected, ask everyone to imagine themselves as the person who encounters Jesus. Why do you approach Jesus? What does Jesus say or do to you? What happens to you? What are your feelings? What do you do after your encounter with Jesus? etc. Invite them to write their observations in a journal or on paper.
  - ▶ **Reflect.** Invite everyone to reflect on the meaning of the passage or story. What does this story mean? What is Jesus saying to us? What is his challenge to us? What is the Gospel author stressing in this story? What strikes you as the main point? etc. Invite them to write their reflections in a journal or on paper.
  - ▶ **Listen.** Invite everyone to apply the story or passage to their lives. What word is being spoken to you in this Bible passage? Are you willing to listen to Jesus' answer? Prayerfully ask, "What, Lord, are you saying to me in this reading?" Invite them to write their response to the question in a journal or on paper.
7. **Make a resolution.** Now invite everyone to resolve to do something about the insights they have gained. Whatever the resolution, ask them to thank the Lord for the moments he spent with them and for any insights they received. Invite them to write their resolution in a journal or on paper.
8. **Reflect together on the experience.** Invite everyone to share their feelings and reflections on the meditation experience.

## *Example: Luke 17:11-19*

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1. Select a Scripture passage: Luke 17:11-19.

2. Settle down.

Take a few minutes to help everyone settle down in the place of prayer. Encourage them to sit with their spine straight, feet on the floor, knees slightly apart, hands on your lap, eyes closed. Ask them to breathe deeply and slowly; to be aware of the sounds around them; to quiet themselves and be still. Play some quiet instrumental music to set a prayerful environment.

3. Pray to the Holy Spirit.

Remind the group that they are in God's presence. Ask them to feel the warmth and the love. As they slowly inhale and exhale, ask the Holy Spirit to help them pray and to hear what the Lord is saying to them.

4. Read the Scripture passage slowly and meditatively.

5. Meditate on the Scripture passage.

► **Observe.** Step into the story and become a part of it. What is happening? What kind of day is it? Hot? What is the road like? Dusty? Who is with Jesus? Imagine yourself as one of the disciples traveling with Jesus. You can't wait to get to town to get a drink of water. See the diseased men, the sores on their arms and faces. They cover their faces. Perhaps they ring a bell to warn travelers away. Then, suddenly, you hear them cry out to Jesus. He looks at them. What is his reaction? Does he approach them? What is your reaction? Do you want your friend and teacher Jesus to shy away from them? Are you afraid he will catch their disease? Are you afraid that you will? Listen to his words. What do they mean? Do you think the men will be cured? What is their reaction? How are the other disciples reacting?

Now imagine that you are one of the sick persons. You walk away to go to the priests when suddenly you are cured. What do you do? Do you come back and thank Jesus? If you don't, what do you do? Why?

Now focus on the Samaritan. He grabs Jesus' feet. He cries with joy. He thanks Jesus and praises him. Listen to Jesus' words. Does he sound disappointed with others who were also cured? What does he mean when he says, "Your faith has saved you"?

Invite them to write their observations in a journal or on paper.

► **Reflect.** What does this story mean? Is it about physical sickness or spiritual sickness? Does it focus on the mercy of Jesus, his compassion for the rejected ones? Is it a call to faith? Is it about gratitude? courage? obedience to the word of the Master? What is Luke stressing in

this story? What strikes you as the main point? Invite everyone to write their reflections in a journal or on paper.

- ▶ **Listen.** What word is being spoken to you in this Bible passage? Do you have a spiritual sickness eating away at you that Jesus wants to touch and cure? Do you have the courage to approach Jesus to ask for his help and salvation? Are you willing to listen to his answer? What you need for the cure? Are you weak in faith? Do you need Jesus to strengthen your faith? Or perhaps he is telling you to say thank you for all that you have been given. Will you be like the Samaritan who came back to offer thanks? Or are you like the ones who take their healing for granted? Prayerfully ask, “What, Lord, are you saying to me in this reading?” Invite everyone to write their response to the question in a journal or on paper.

## 6. Make a resolution.

Now invite everyone to resolve to do something about the insights they have gained. Perhaps they will acknowledge that they are a sinner who needs to approach the Lord and ask for his forgiveness. Perhaps they will resolve to thank God for their good health. Perhaps they will think of a person who has done something for them, and will now take an opportunity to make some gesture of thanks to this person. Whatever their resolution, invite the young people to thank the Lord for the moments he spent with them and for any insights they received. Invite them to write their resolution in a journal or on paper.

## 7. Reflect together on the experience.

Invite the participants to share their feelings and reflections on the meditation experience.

### *Additional Scripture Example: John 8:1-11*

Another good passage to use is: **John 8:1-11 – The Woman Caught in Adultery**. Call the participants to imagine details such as the dust in the wind, the feeling of dirt under fingernails (when Jesus bends over to draw in the sand), the look on the faces of the men who drag her forward, and the “thud, thud” of the rocks hitting the ground.

# Intercessory Prayer

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“If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

## Advance Preparation

On a very large sheet of paper (two newsprint or poster board sheets attached) draw four concentric circles. Be sure the innermost circle has plenty of room inside. Label the innermost circle: family; the second circle: friends; the third: local community; and the fourth: world.

## Prayer Activity

1. Use the following introduction to set the context for the prayer activity (use your own words): *One of the time honored kinds of prayer is that of petition or asking God for what we and others need. Intercessory prayer challenges us to recall our dependence on God. We cannot get along without God. We believe that God knows our needs even before we ask. Yet, we offer prayers of petition because it helps us remember that we need God above all. When we offer prayers of petition, we do so with a spirit of openness, trusting that God will hear and answer our prayers in the way that is best. Sometimes it seems like the answer never comes or it comes in ways that we do not anticipate. However, we trust in the promise of Jesus, “ask and it will be done for you.”*
2. Prayerfully read Matthew 7:7-11 or Luke 11:9-13.
3. Give each person four post-it notes (2x3 size) – one for each of the four circles. Make available additional post-it notes if needed. Invite each person in silence to write at least one prayer for the needs or concerns of people in each of the four circles. Play some quiet instrumental music in the background while participants write their prayers.
  - Write a prayer for the needs or concerns of your family that you want to remember.
  - Write a prayer for a friend or group of friends that you want to remember.
  - Write a prayer for the needs and concerns of your local community that you want to remember.
  - Write a prayer for the needs and concerns of people in our world.
4. As they complete their prayers, ask the participants to attach their prayers to the appropriate circle. Then invite the participants to share one (or two) of their prayer petitions. After each prayer petition, ask the group to respond, “Lord, hear us.”
5. Close by inviting the participants to share feelings or thoughts about the prayer experience.

# Prayer of Forgiveness

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## Advance Preparation

This prayer activity is built around the video, *A Father and Two Sons*, which is a music video (MTV style) of the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Purchase this ten minute video from the American Bible Society (800-322-4253). It costs \$9.95 and is item #ABG105495.

You will also need a small piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each person, a candle(s), and matches and a container to burn the paper.

## Prayer Activity

1. Create an environment for prayer: a Bible open to Luke 15, a lighted candle(s), a container for burning paper, etc.
2. Use the following introduction to set the context for the prayer activity (use your own words): *One of the well established kinds of prayer is offering words of sorrow for our wrongdoing. In prayers of contrition we acknowledge that we are imperfect, that we make mistakes, that sometimes we choose wrong behavior that affects us and our relationship to God and others. It is important to take time out to say we are sorry, to ask forgiveness of one another and of God. It is also important for us to let those we live with know that we forgive them for the hurts we have endured. God's love is greater than we can ever dare to imagine. God forgives us before we even ask. However, we need to acknowledge that we are sorry, that we intend to do better, and that we need God in our life to help us choose the right behavior.*
3. Introduce the video by saying in your own words: *In this prayer activity we are going to use a music video to engage our senses and experience of forgiveness. Show the video: A Father and Two Sons (American Bible Society)*

**Alternative:** If you chose not to use the video, prayerfully read Luke 15:11-32.

4. Give each person a small piece of paper (3x5) and a pen or pencil. Guide them through the following reflection process adapted from St. Ignatius of Loyola. Play quiet instrumental music throughout the prayer reflection.

**Step 1: Focusing.** Begin by using one of the relaxation techniques that you find effective. Invite the young people to be aware of God's loving presence; to think of the gifts God has granted you during this past day and week; and to thank God for these gifts.

**Step 2: Insight.** Call upon the Holy Spirit to enlighten both the minds and hearts of each person and to help them appreciate that they are children of a loving and generous Creator.

**Step 3: Evaluation.** Ask the participants to look at their life this past week (or day) in the light of the life and teaching of Jesus. Ask them to reflect on these questions:

- What thoughts, words and actions of your past week (or day) conformed best to the life modeled by Jesus?
- What thoughts, words and actions of your past week (or day) reflected a failure to love as Jesus loved?
- How can you improve tomorrow?

**Step 4: Forgiveness.** Invite the participants to ask God to touch them and forgive their failings of the past week (or day). Ask them to make a promise to do better in the coming week. On the small piece of paper ask each person to write one thing they want God to forgive. Collect each piece of paper in a container and then burn the paper while praying a prayer asking for God's forgiveness and strength to do better tomorrow.

**Step 5: Thanksgiving.** Close by thanking God – Creator, Son and Spirit – for being with the group and helping everyone to be honest. Thank the Triune God for the gift of life, the gift of honesty about self and the gift of God's deep love for us.

5. Close by inviting the participants to share their feelings or thoughts about the video and prayer experience. Emphasize that everyone can use this reflection process daily or weekly as part of their own prayer life.

The Prayer Activity is adapted from *The Way of Prayer* by Michael Pennock (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987), pages 46-47. Used with permission.

# Prayers of Praise

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## Advance Preparation

Everyone will need a Bible or a copy of Psalm 103.

## Prayer Activity

1. Introduce this prayer experience by saying: *Many of us pray when we want to ask God for something either for ourselves or someone else. Sometimes it is difficult to just give compliments to God. Prayers of praise give praise to God for being good, for the mystery and majesty of God. Prayers of praise can be a challenge for us to think about God in terms of someone who deserves our praise. It forces us to not take God for granted. Prayers of praise reflect our own attitude and ability to recognize others for their goodness, especially our ability to just praise God for being God.*
2. Explain to the group that they will be using Psalm 103 as a Prayer of Praise. Psalm 103 is one of those priceless treasures that becomes more precious as we spend time with it in reflection and contemplation. The Psalm has four main parts:
  - Personal blessings received from God (1-5)
  - National blessings received from God (6-14)
  - A reminder of our human frailty and utter dependence upon God (15-18)
  - A declaration that all creation praises God (19-22)
3. Pray the Psalm with the group. (You may want to reproduce the Psalm so that everyone can pray it together. You can also organize the participants into two groups. Ask group one to read verses 1-5 and 15-18; group two reads verses 6-14 and 19-22.)

### Psalm 103 (NRSV)

- <sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.
- <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his benefits—
- <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,
- <sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- <sup>5</sup> who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD works vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.

<sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to Moses,  
his acts to the people of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> He will not always accuse,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.

<sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

<sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west,  
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup> As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

<sup>14</sup> For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

<sup>15</sup> As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
they flourish like a flower of the field;

<sup>16</sup> for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.

<sup>17</sup> But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,

<sup>18</sup> to those who keep his covenant  
and remember to do his commandments.

<sup>19</sup> The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,  
and his kingdom rules over all.

<sup>20</sup> Bless the LORD, O you his angels,  
you mighty ones who do his bidding,  
obedient to his spoken word.

<sup>21</sup> Bless the LORD, all his hosts,  
his ministers that do his will.

<sup>22</sup> Bless the LORD, all his works,  
in all places of his dominion.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

4. Ask the participants to use Psalm 103 to write their own psalm of praise to God. Invite them to use the four-fold structure of Psalm 103 in their own prayer. Remind them that prayers of praise give praise to God for being good, for the mystery and majesty of God. Prayers of praise can be a challenge for us to think about God in terms of someone who deserves our praise. It forces us to not take God for granted. Prayers of praise reflect our own attitude and ability to recognize others for their goodness, especially our ability to just praise God for being God.

Give them several minutes to compose their prayer.

5. After the individuals have composed their prayer of praise to God, ask them to take a few moments to reflect (and perhaps talk) about how it felt to offer God praise.
6. Gather in a circle around a lighted candle. Dim the lights. Invite the participants to share their psalms of praise.

# Praying with the Psalms

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## Advance Preparation

Select five to eight Psalm passages in advance. The passages can reflect a common theme, or they could be diverse. Participants should have Bibles or you will need to write the passages on a sheet of newsprint or on a transparency or provide copies of the Psalms on a handout. It is important to identify each passage with a brief excerpt from the Psalm so that the participants will have some basis on which to make a choice. To make this a Lenten activity use the Lenten psalms from the Lectionary.

Provide each person with a sheet of paper, and pen or pencil.

## Prayer Activity

Guide the participants through the following steps, explaining each step using the information below and giving participants time to complete the instructions.

1. Select one of the Psalm passages that you feel most comfortable with. (Allow time for the participants to reflect on and respond to the passage.)
2. Read the Psalm passage you selected in quiet. Read every word, pausing when necessary in order to let every word present itself to you. Read the words as if you had never read or heard them before. Be open to new insights that may come. Read the words as if they were the words of your own prayer. Whenever you read "I," "my," "me," etc., read it as if that meant *you*.
3. From the passage you have read, select a phrase, a verse or two verses to be the words you will use to begin your own prayer. Write those words down and then continue writing an additional sentence or two of your own continuing the thoughts and feelings begun by the words of the Psalmist.
4. Let us now spend a few minutes in prayer sharing the words of the Psalmist we selected and the words of prayer we have written. (Individuals read their prayers aloud as they feel motivated to share.)

## Potential Psalms to Use:

Psalm 8:1-7	“What is man, that you think of him?”
Psalm 11:1-7	“I trust in the Lord for safety.”
Psalm 16:1-11	“I am always aware of the Lord’s presence.”
Psalm 23:1-6	“The Lord is my shepherd.”
Psalm 25:1-14	“Keep your promise, Lord, and forgive my sins.”
Psalm 30:1-12	“Lord...I will give you thanks forever.”
Psalm 32:1-11	“Happy are those whose sins are forgiven.”
Psalm 62:1-12	“God alone protects and saves me.”
Psalm 63:1-8	“O God....My whole being desires you.”
Psalm 86:1-13a	“Teach me, Lord what you want me to do.”
Psalm 103:1-14	“Praise the Lord, my soul!”
Psalm 121:1-8	Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do.”
Psalm 139:1-12	“Lord, you have examined me and you know me.”

## Lenten Psalms

	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle C
<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17	(same)	(same)
<b>First Sunday</b>	Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17	Psalm 25:4-9	Psalm 91:1-2, 10-15
<b>Second Sunday</b>	Psalm 33:4-5, 18-22	Psalm 116:10, 15-19	Psalm 27: 1, 7-9, 13-14
<b>Third Sunday</b>	Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9	Psalm 19:8-11	Psalm 103:1-4, 6-8, 11
<b>Fourth Sunday</b>	Psalm 23:1-6	Psalm 137:1-6	Psalm 34:2-7
<b>Fifth Sunday</b>	Psalm 130:1-8	Psalm 51:3-4, 12-15	Psalm 126:1-6
<b>Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)</b>	Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24	(same)	(same)
<b>Holy Thursday (Chrism)</b>	Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27	(same)	(same)
<b>Holy Thursday (Lord’s Supper)</b>	Psalm 116:12-18	(same)	(same)
<b>Good Friday</b>	Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25	(same)	(same)
<b>Easter Vigil</b>	Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35 Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20-22 Psalm 16:5, 8-11 Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13 Psalm 19:8-11 Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3-4 Psalm 51:12-14, 18-19 Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(same)	(same)
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(same)	(same)

# Praying through Music

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Music is a great way to guide people into prayer. This prayer experience utilizes Lenten music and Lenten Scripture readings. Select music that is appropriate for your group. (For children, you may want to investigate children music with Lenten themes.) You may want to also find contemporary music (and Christian music) to combine with the Lenten music suggested below. CDs are preferred because you can find the particular song you want easier. You will need a CD/cassette player. It would be helpful to give the participants paper and pen/pencils for journaling. (For children, you may want to give them crayons or markers and paper for drawing during the journal time.)

## Prayer Activity

Adapt this prayer process for each particular age group.

- 1. Select a theme.** Select one or two Lenten themes (repentance, forgiveness, conversion, new life, etc.) to focus your music and Scripture selections. Identify a theme which connects with your target group. Using the theme as a guide, select one or two songs *and* an accompanying Scripture reading. You may want to select a contemporary song which would appeal to the musical tastes of your group and connects with your theme. Be sure to select a contemporary song whose words are easily understandable on the recording. It will detract from the prayer activity if the words cannot be understood.
- 2. Settle down.** Take a few minutes to help everyone settle down in the place of prayer. Encourage them to sit with their spine straight, feet on the floor, knees slightly apart, hands on their laps, eyes closed. Ask them to breathe deeply and slowly; to be aware of the sounds around them; to quiet themselves and be still.
- 3. Pray to the Holy Spirit.** Remind the group that they are in God's presence. Ask them to feel the warmth and the love. As they slowly inhale and exhale, ask the Holy Spirit to help them pray and to hear what the Lord is saying to them.
- 4. Play one or two songs on your theme.** Ask everyone to listen to the words and to pay attention to the feelings and images the songs stir up in them. After each song, ask the participants to reflect on the song and record their reflections in a journal or on paper. (For children, you may want to talk about each song rather than write or draw.) Ask: What is this song saying to you? How does it speak to your life right now? How can you apply its meaning to your life? What might God be saying to you through this song?
- 5. Share the Scripture reading.** Share the Scripture reading which accompanies your music selections. Invite everyone to reflect on the Scripture passage and its connection to the music. Ask: What is this passage saying to you? How does it speak to your life right now?

What is God (or Jesus) saying to you through this passage? How can you apply its meaning to your life? How does this passage deepen the message you heard in the songs?

6. **Make a resolution.** Invite each person to resolve to do something about the insights they have gained from praying with music. Whatever the resolution, ask them to thank the Lord for the moments he spent with them and for any insights they received. Invite them to write their resolution in a journal or on paper.
7. **Reflect together on the experience.** Invite everyone to share their feelings and reflections on the praying with music experience.

### Music Suggestions

This is only a partial list of songs for Lent. You can find these songs on CDs and in hymnals published by GIA (Gregorian Institute of America) and OCP (Oregon Catholic Press). Be sure to also check-out the youth hymnal from OCP: *Spirit and Song – A Seeker's Guide for Liturgy and Prayer*. All of the songs in *Spirit and Song* have been produced as a boxed set of CDs.

All You Who Are Thirsty – Michael Connolly (GIA)  
Amazing Grace – Traditional  
Anthem – Tom Conry (OCP)  
Be with Me, Lord – Michael Joncas (OCP)  
Christians, Let Us Love One Another – Sr. Claudia Foltz (OCP)  
Come and Let Us Drink of That New River – Kenneth Smith (GIA)  
Come to Me – Gregory Norbert (OCP)  
Come to the Water – John Foley, SJ (OCP)  
Forty Days and Forty Nights – George Smyttan (GIA)  
Hear Us, Almighty Lord/ Attende Domine (GIA)  
I Am the Bread of Life – Suzanne Toolan (GIA)  
I Heard the Voice of Jesus (OCP)  
I Know That My Redeemer Lives – David Haas (GIA)  
I've Just Come from the Fountain – African-American Spiritual  
Keep in Mind/ Acordate de Jesucristo – Lucien Deiss, CSSp (World Library Publications)  
Lead Me, Guide Me – Doris Akers (GIA)  
Lift High the Cross (GIA. OCP)  
Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days (GIA)  
Now We Remain – David Haas (GIA)  
O, Healing River – Michael Joncas (GIA)  
On Eagle's Wings – Michael Joncas (OCP)  
Remember Your Love – The Dameans (GIA)  
Ride on, Jesus, Ride – African-American Spiritual (GIA)  
Seek the Lord – Roc O'Connor, SJ (OCP)  
Shall We Gather at the River – Robert Lowry (GIA)  
Somebody's Knockin' at Your Door – African-American Spiritual (GIA)  
Song of the Body of Christ – David Haas (GIA)  
The Glory of These Forty Days – Traditional (GIA)  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is – Henry Baker and A. Gregory Murray (GIA)

The Lord is My Shepherd – Joe Wise and Marty Haugen (GIA)  
The Lord is Near – Michael Joncas (OCP)  
The Lord is Near – The Dameans (GIA)  
There is a Balm in Giliad – African-American Spiritual (GIA)  
There's a Wilderness in God's Mercy – Frederick Faber (GIA)  
Tree of Life – Marty Haugen (GIA)  
We Are Called – David Haas (GIA)  
We Remember – Marty Haugen (GIA)  
Yes, I Shall Arise/Si Me Leventare – Owen Alstott (OCP)

# Lenten Chain Activity

This handout has 38 individual ideas that is formatted into strips of paper with one idea on each strip. The handout is meant to be cut into individual strips with one activity per strip. Make one copy of the handout for each child. (Consider copying the handout onto purple or lilac colored paper so that it is more decorative.) For each person, cut the ideas into strips and place them in the plastic sandwich bag.

Explain that each day of Lent the user should pick out one activity to do. As they do each of the Lenten activities they should create a Lenten Chain. Tell them that all they have to do is to assemble the first two strips with tape and then continue to add a strip every time they do an activity. They should put the Lenten Chain in their room or in a special place in the house.

## **Alternative**

The learners can assemble the Lenten chain during the session. Instruct them to tear off a link of the chain at home each day of Lent and read the activity for the day. Ask them to put the completed activities in a special container. As Easter draws nearer, the chain gets shorter.

## **Alternative Format: Family Lenten Chain**

Give concrete expression to Lenten resolutions by making a "Lenten Chain." Pass out strips of white paper, approximately one by six inches in size, to each family. As families move through the three learning activities for praying, fasting, and almsgiving, they create their Lenten Chain by writing one idea on each piece of paper. (Instead of the chain, some families make a large cross and tape pledges to it. Others fashion a Lenten calendar).

# Lenten Chain Ideas

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Give up one TV show today and spend that time helping a family member.

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Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Woman at the Well in chapter 4 of the Gospel of John, verses 5-30.

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Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Blind Man in chapter 9 of the Gospel of John, verses 1, 6-11, 35-38.

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Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of Lazarus in chapter 11 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-7, 17-44.

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Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Good Shepherd in chapter 10 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-18.

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Read the story of Palm Sunday, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, in the Gospels of Matthew 21:1-11 or Mark 11:1-10 or Luke 19:28-40.

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Read the story of the Last Supper of Jesus in chapter 13 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-15.

Read the story of Easter chapter 20 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-9.

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Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and spend a few minutes praying for the needs of others.

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Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and donate 25¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.

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Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.

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Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.

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Give up going to a movie or other fun activity and donate the money from this activity to your Operation Rice Bowl box or other people in need in your community.

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Think about a bad habit that you would like to change, like telling a lie, yelling at others, getting angry, or putting people down, and choose to avoid that habit and do something positive instead.

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Think about someone you are angry with or who has hurt you. Ask God for the courage to forgive and pray for that person each day. Think about one thing that is good about them.

Pray the "Our Father" three times today – in the morning when you get up, at noontime, and when you go to bed.

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Do someone else's chores one day this week.

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Say a prayer for someone who is sick today.

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Share lots of smiles today.

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Go through your closet and find some clothes in good shape to give away to other children who are in need of clothes.

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List three blessings you have been given. Say a prayer to God, giving thanks for the blessings in your life.

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Write a letter or create a card for someone who is sick or might be lonely.

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Buy a can of food to give to a food bank or homeless shelter.

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Give a hug to everyone in your family.

Compliment each person in your family some time today.

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Pray for the children and families who are homeless, and think about ways you and your family might help them.

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Give up complaining, frowns, and negative thoughts today.

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Pray for a forgiving heart and ask the people you have hurt to forgive you.

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Participate in Ash Wednesday services with your family.

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Participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent.

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Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent.

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Rent the video, *The Prince of Egypt*. Watch the video and read the story of Moses from the Book of Exodus, chapters 2-15. Try to read one chapter each day. Be sure to read the story of the Passover in chapters 12 through 13:22.

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Talk with your family about eating one simple meal each week of Lent and putting the money you save in the Operation Rice Bowl box or giving the money to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.

Show an act of kindness to each family member today.

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Show an act of kindness to a friend and to someone who is difficult to like.

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Together with your family, spend time serving others during Lent. Work at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Visit elderly people who are in nursing homes or are shut-ins.

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Bring food or clothing to the parish or community food pantry, food bank, or homeless shelter.

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Donate a new item of children's clothing to the local homeless shelter or clothing center.

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# MY LENTEN CALENDAR

			1 ASH WED Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	2	3	4
5 1 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY Read the Gospel	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 2 <sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY Read the Gospel	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 3 <sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY Read the Gospel	20	22	23	24	25	26
27 4 <sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY Read the Gospel	28	29	30	31	32	33
34 5 <sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY Read the Gospel	35	36	37	38	39	40
PALM SUNDAY Matthew 21:1-11 Mark 11:1-10 Luke 19:28-40				HOLY THURSDAY John 13:1-15	GOOD FRIDAY John 18:1—19:42	EASTER VIGIL Matthew 28:1-10 Mark 16:1-8 Luke 25:1-12

# MY LENTEN CALENDAR

LENT WEEK 1	LENT WEEK 4
LENT WEEK 2	LENT WEEK 5
LENT WEEK 3	LENT WEEK 6
LENT WEEK 7—HOLY WEE	

# Calendar-Making Options

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Preparing in advance for the calendar-making will help this activity run smoothly and meaningfully for the participants and the leaders. Choose one of the following options for creating Lenten Calendars.

## Option 1: Construction Paper Windows

This option requires advance preparation.

### Objective

Create a construction paper Calendar with 40 “windows” in which can be placed personal Advent preparation ideas.

### Supplies Needed

- Construction paper (Include purple for Lent)
- Exacto knife or scissors
- Glue

### Decoration Supplies (for use during the activity)

- Markers
- Magazines
- Stickers
- Glue
- Glitter

### Instructions for Creating the Calendar

1. You will use two sheets of large construction paper per calendar, one for a cover and one for the back.
2. Using scissors or an exacto knife, cut 40 “Windows” spaced throughout the cover. The windows can be approximately 1” high and 1” wide. The size of the window opening should match the size of the blank squares on *My Lenten Calendar*. Cut the window on three sides, creating a flap at the top and a window which opens at the bottom.
3. Number the windows 1 to 40.
4. Place glue on the outside edges of the back sheet of construction paper and adhere the front “window” cover to the back sheet.

### Instructions for Participants during the Calendar Activity

1. Select a construction paper Calendar.
2. Cut your calendar ideas into squares 1-40.
3. Glue the calendar idea squares inside the corresponding “window.”
4. Decorate your calendar using the available supplies; be careful not to cover or glue down the window flaps.

## Option 2: Poster with Post-Its

This option requires no advance preparation.

### **Objective**

Create a poster with 40 post-it notes covering the personal Lenten ideas.

### **Materials Needed**

- Poster boards for each participant
- Post-it notes: 2 ½" square, multicolored, including purple, if possible (40 notes per participant)

### **Decoration Supplies** (for use during activity)

- Markers
- Magazines
- Stickers
- Glue
- Glitter

### **Instructions for Participants during Calendar Activity**

1. Select a poster and a pad of post-it notes (you will need 40 notes).
2. Cut your calendar ideas into squares 1-40.
3. Glue the calendar notes onto the poster leaving 2" as a border between each idea.
4. Cover each preparation idea with a post-it note.
5. Number the outside of the post-it note to match the corresponding number for the idea.
6. Decorate the notes and the poster – be sure not to cover or glue down the post-it notes.