



Children and Family Ministries NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Episcopal Diocese of New York Christian Formation Commission: Children and Family Ministries Committee
c/o The Reverend Philippa A. Turner, Church of the Heavenly Rest, 2 East 90th St. , New York, NY 10128

Lent, Easter, and Pentecost 2006 In this issue:

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Resources for Teachers and Books
for Children

Lent, Holy Week, Easter &
Pentecost through the eyes
of a child

Ideas for Shrove Tuesday/
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Establishing New Traditions
for Lent

Craft , ideas, and practical ways to
help children think about the
season of Lent

Super-Simple Ways for Families to
Pray at Mealtimes during Lent

Please feel free to copy and distribute this
newsletter to others that may be interested!

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Lent, Easter & Pentecost 2006

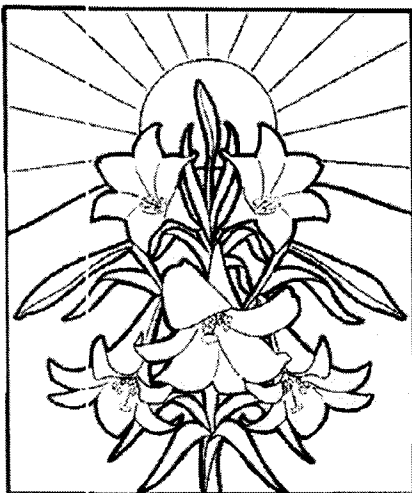
Save the date...

for the Children and Family Ministries' Spring Conference: Saturday, April 29th, 9am-4pm at St Bartholomew's Church, 109 East 50th Street, New York, NY. "Enriching the Sunday Morning Experience for Children: A Workshop for Teachers and Parents"

Keynote Speakers: the Rev. Dr. Jerome Berryman, author of "The Complete Guide to Godly Play", Volumes 1-5, and Linda Clapp, Director of Christian Education at St. John's, Stamford, CT.

Cost is \$20 per person and registration is due by April 21st. Look out for a special brochure coming soon in the mail!

For more information, call The Rev. Canon Patricia S. Mitchell at (212) 316-7433 or pmitchell@dioceseny.org



Preparing for Lent and Easter: Resources for Teachers and Books for Children

by Vicki Hall, St. James' Church, Manhattan
Teacher Resources

Resources that cover the entire liturgical year:

Peanut Butter Paper & Paste: Classroom Crafts and Recipes for the Seasons of the Church Year, by Brenda Gilliam, Creative Communications for the Parish.

God's Kids Celebrate: Sunday School Activities for All Seasons, by Sheryllyn Johnson Burgdorf, Augsburg Fortress.

We Remember Jesus: Projects Featuring Recycled Materials by Carolyn Willmore, Abingdon Press.

Growing Together: Celebrations for Your Entire Church Family, Volumes 1 and 2. Living the Good News, Inc. (volume 2 includes Shrove Tuesday, Lent, Easter, Pentecost)

Resources for Lent and Easter:

Ash Wednesday through Easter: Devotions for Children by Elaine M. Ward, Educational Ministries, Inc.

Creative Ideas for Lent by Robert G. Davidson, Educational Ministries, Inc. (divided into: All Church activities, Youth activities, and Children's activities)

Before and After Easter: Activities and Ideas for Lent to Pentecost by Debbie Trafton O'Neal, Augsburg.

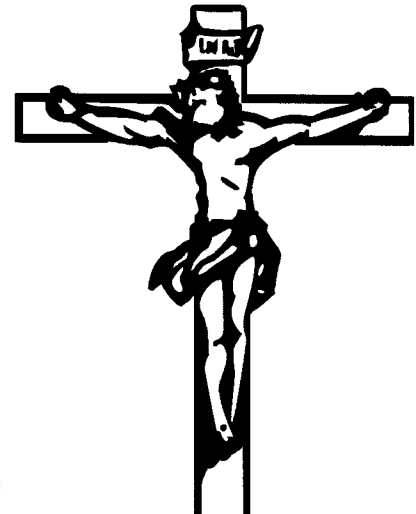
Things to Make & Do for Lent & Easter by Martha Bettis Gee, Bridge Resources.

The Easter Mural: a project to be shared by children and adults during Lent and Easter, C. E. Visminas Co.

An Easter People: Family Devotional Activities for Lent and Easter by Debbie Trafton O'Neal, Augsburg Publishing House.

A Time of Hope: family celebrations and activities for Lent and Easter by Ehlen-Miller, Miller, VanderVeen and VanderVeen, Morehouse-Barlow Company, Inc.

Creative Ideas for Lent, Volume 2 by Robert G. and Linda S. Davidson, Educational Ministries, Inc.



Welcome in this season of Light, as the days

become steadily longer and we await the Season of Lent and preparation for Easter and new life. In this Lent/Easter/Pentecost newsletter you will find plenty of resources to help you share the story with your children and youth. From an article on Lenten Devotions in the Home, to ways to celebrate Shrove Tuesday, to Lenten and Easter activities at church, home and school, we hope that in these pages you will find creative and helpful ideas as you plan your journeys with the families of your parishes. Please copy this newsletter and distribute it to your teachers and anyone who might find it useful. Also, please do update us with the correct person to whom this should be sent if it is incorrect.

Blessings,
The Committee

continued on page 2

The Stations of the Cross for Children: a dramatized presentation by Rita Coleman, The Liturgical Press.

Children's Books

Bible Stories for the Forty Days by Melissa Musick Nussbaum. Liturgy Training Publications.

The Life of Jesus adapted from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Illustrations by Dorothee Duntze. The Liturgical Press.

The Easter Story by Brian Wildsmith, Alfred A. Knopf.

Jesus by Brian Wildsmith, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers

The Tale of Three Trees: A traditional folktale retold by Angela Elwell Hunt, Lion Children's Books.

The Story of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross for Children by Mary Joslin, Loyola Press.

One Morning in Joseph's Garden: An Easter Story by Barbara Younger and Lisa Flinn, Abingdon Press.

The Easter Story retold by K. S. Rodriguez and Mary Hogan, Inchworm Press.

What Is Easter?: a lift-the-flap story by Lillie James, HarperFestival.

Sing Alleluia! An Easter Story for Children by Daphna Flegal, Abingdon Press.

Jesus is Alive! a coloring book, American Bible Society.

Lenten Paper Prayer Chain

by Vicki Hall

From construction paper, cut equal sized strips in the following colors. Create a paper chain with the colors in the order given. Write a prayer on each link of the chain.

Colors for the 40 days of Lent:

- Ash Wednesday - black
 - Thursday-Saturday - purple
 - Sunday - yellow
 - Monday-Saturday - purple
- continue this through Lent until
- Mourning Thursday - brown
 - Good Friday - Black
 - Holy Saturday - gray
 - Easter - White with glitter!

Assemble chain.

Beginning: on Ash Wednesday, take a link off each day, pray that day's prayer and count down to Easter.

Lent, Holy Week, Easter & Pentecost Through the Eyes of a Child

by Vicki Hall

The following are taken from *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education*, published by Seabury Press for The Episcopal Church. I use them to help me put adult ideas into words, thoughts and phrases that children will understand.

Lent Through the Eyes of a Child

Lent is:

- a time for looking at the things we do that are wrong or that tempt us, asking God's and other people's forgiveness;
- a time for giving up things that keep us from being loving people;
- a time for doing extra things that will help us grow closer to God;
- a time to be more aware of what it means to love as God loves us;
- a time to ask God to help us to be more loving, remembering that God is always ready to strengthen us.

Holy Week Through the Eyes of a Child

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, the people who greeted him expected a powerful hero. They did not understand that Jesus' power was not physical strength, but loving and caring.

Jesus showed us that we are to remember him and follow his example of caring for and serving others. We remember him in the Eucharist when we know he is present with us. We see his example of humbly serving others in love in his washing of the disciples' feet.

Jesus proclaimed God's forgiveness from the Cross in spite of what happened in Holy Week. He forgave Peter who denied him, and those who caused his death, and he will forgive us. That's why Good Friday is good.

Easter Through the Eyes of a Child

Jesus is risen from the dead! Easter has brought us everlasting life because of Jesus' resurrection.

God's love is stronger than anything, even death. Because of God's love, we do not have to be afraid of death.

Easter is about new life, coming from what we thought was death, that brings us unexpected possibilities and surprises.

We received new life at our baptism, and during Easter we think about what being baptized members of Christ's Church means in our lives.

Pentecost Through the Eyes of a Child

God is always with us – this is his promise.

There is strength within us – the power of the Holy Spirit – like wind, which we can feel even though we cannot see it.

God wants us to help to bring all the people of the world, whom he loves, back to him. The Holy Spirit strengthens us to do this.



Ideas for Shrove Tuesday/Mardigras/Carnival

by The Rev. Philippa Turner, Church of The Heavenly Rest

Shrove Tuesday, from the word “Shrive” meaning “to be forgiven”, is known in French as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday”) and in Spanish, Carnival, (also from the Latin, “farewell to the flesh”). It is a celebration before the fast, the final fling before the penitential season begins. The term Mardi Gras comes from the tradition of eating all the fat in the house before the Lenten fast begins. Carnival has the same connotation being the last night one should eat meat until the Easter feast. The term shrove is from the ancient tradition of the faithful confessing their sins to prepare for Ash Wednesday. Here are some fun ideas to celebrate Shrove Tuesday in your parish and in your home:

- Have a pancake party (traditionally a way to consume all the fat in one’s home) and even a pancake race (running and flipping at the same time...)
- Make or decorate masks with sequins, pens etc.
- Games and skits are always fun. We have done bingo which is always a hit and skits are great if you get enough volunteers to help plan.
- face painting continues the mask theme and can help remind us of who or what we wish to let go of during Lent and who or

what we hope to take on in terms of character and activity.

- Piñatas have been a huge hit in our parish and allow the children to release the energy from eating all the pancakes!
- the word “Alleluia” can be drawn and decorated, and then ‘buried’ or hidden by the children, (you could obtain a special box for this purpose and even fill it with sand so that they can literally bury the word) to be discovered again on Easter morning. See Vicki Hall’s notes on page 7 for more ideas.
- Shadow Puppeteer: we have a parishioner who has found and paid for a wonderful shadow puppet show, which fascinates younger children.
- A trumpeter: We have a parishioner who plays the trumpet and leads the children from the pancake supper down to the art activities and games which is a wonderful and joyful way to make the transition.

Many of the supplies needed for the above activities can be ordered from Oriental Trading: 1.800.228.2269, www.orientaltrading.com. Creative Communications also has wealth of devotional supplies for throughout the year, 1.800.325.9414, www.creativecommunications.com.

Establishing New Traditions for Lent

by The Rev. Kristin C. Kopren, Chaplain of St. Hilda’s & St. Hugh’s School in Manhattan

In our school community, we’ve added two traditions that help us mark the beginning of Lent each year—the burning of the palms, and the distribution of Lenten calendars for children and parents. During our Chapel service on Shrove Tuesday, we burn and bless the palms from the previous year’s Palm Sunday (or Monday, in our case!) observance, which enables the students to make the visual connection between the living fronds that welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem and the ashes that will then remind us of our mortality as we begin the Lent and Holy Week cycle once again.

Following our Ash Wednesday services the next day, we provide a children’s Lenten calendar for all interested students. Adult calendars are also made available for parents and faculty. These simple handouts provide another tangible reminder of the season that we’ve entered, along with prayer, study and service suggestions for the 40 days.

These are but two of the many ways that parishes, families and other faith communities can begin their observance of Lent. A variety of resources is available through Episcopal and other church publishers, Christian bookstores and online websites. Some of the many internet resources include:

Creative Communications for the Parish (www.creativecommunications.com), where we buy our Lenten calendars; Channing Bete (www.faithguides.com) and; Christian Tools of Affirmation (www.ctainc.com).

The first steps we take during Lent set the tone for the rest of our journey to Holy Week, Easter and beyond. These simple traditions have helped us to deepen our spiritual understanding of the season and to enter more fully into its gifts and promises.

Lenten Prayer Candles

by Vicki Hall

Candles can be used for lots of different things. Here is one way to decorate and use candles to help children remember to pray. The decorations can be made from wax that will mold onto the candle, wax decorating pens that write and draw on candles, or any other medium that you know of for applying color, symbols and words to candles.

Think about some of the symbols for Lent (*you can use the list of Lenten Symbols on the right side of this page*). Design your candle using one or more symbols for Lent. Take your time and carefully make your candle as beautiful as you can. You will use your candle during your Lenten prayer time.

For Home Use

Lent provides us 40 days before Easter to look for new ways to act like Jesus and try to be more loving and better helpers. Prayer was an important part of Jesus' life, so during Lent many people focus on prayer.

Each day during Lent, choose a time and a place to have your family prayer time. Light your candle – which can remind you of 'the Light of Christ'. Focus on the flame of the candle as a way to center and calm yourself for these few minutes. Have your time of prayer and then gently snuff out your candle.

Lenten Symbols

Cock crowing – Peter

Chalice – the Last Supper

Bread – Jesus as the bread of life, one of the elements at communion.

Crown of Thorns – mockery crown placed on Jesus' head

Bag of Coins – Judas' 30 pieces of silver

An Ear – Malchus

3 Crosses – 3 prisoners hung the same day

Totally dark area – darkness at noon

Rock with Praying Figure – Jesus praying in Gethsemane

"Father forgive them" – a few words spoken from the cross

An Egg – "beginning," holding new life within its shell. The roundness is a symbol of eternal life.

Lilies – the bulb stands for the tomb of Jesus, the blossom for life after death.

Palm Frond – carried by Jesus' people rejoicing on Palm Sunday

Nails – symbols of Jesus' physical suffering

Egg or Cocoon – symbol of new life, new being, because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' body was wrapped in linens and placed in a tomb – the new life of a baby chick is "entombed" in a shell and comes out a living creature; the caterpillar is "entombed" in the chrysalis and comes out a living creature.

Empty Cross – symbolic of Christ and his resurrection

Palm Branches – People waved palm branches during Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Ashes – made from Palm Sunday palms to represent humility

Candles – Jesus is the light of the world

Pomegranate – The bursting pomegranate symbolizes resurrection because Christ bursts from the tomb on Easter.

Green – is for new life, growth, and good luck

Purple – for royalty, and the liturgical color for Lent

Yellow – is the sun and imitates gold

Red – is blood without which there is no life

Lenten Bracelets for Children

by Vicki Hall

Materials needed:

9" cord with a knot 4" from the end
one purple, red, gold, and green bead

(The colored beads will help children remember the stories of Jesus.)

String a purple bead for Jesus, the King.

— talk about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

String a red bead for Jesus who died for all.

— talk about Good Friday – Jesus died on the cross on a Friday, and every year we remember his death on the day we

call Good Friday. The word "good" comes from an English word that means "god." We can think of this day as "God's Friday." Thinking about Jesus' death doesn't make Good Friday a happy day. But we know that because God loves us so very much, he gave his only Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Our faith in this turns a sad Friday into Good Friday. This bead is red to remind us of Jesus' blood, his suffering and death.

Read John 3:16. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

String a gold bead for the bright light of the angel at the empty Easter morning tomb.

— share the Easter story in brief in a way

that sounds like you are sharing a secret with them, with more to come at Easter!

String a green bead for the new life we are given through Jesus' resurrection.

— We are all given new life because Jesus died and rose again on Easter. Imagine that this green bead is a little seed that will grow and grow and grow. That's like what God's love can do, too. It can grow in us every day, so we can know God's love and share it with others.

Make another knot to hold the beads in place and tie the Lenten lace on your wrist.

When others ask you about the beads, tell them the stories of Jesus!

We Will Make Our Table an Altar: "Super-Simple Ways For Families to Pray at Mealtimes during Lent"

by Kathy Bozzuti-Jones, Ph.D., St. Bartholomew's Church, Manhattan

Making the connections between church and home need not be a chore for parents — building faith at home is more about intention and attention than it is about being "reverent." The following activities to do at your table are intended to model how natural it can be to call on God in the midst of our dailiness. By returning to or adapting these simple suggestions (whenever you possibly can!) during Lent, you and your young children will have opportunities to share feelings, to create worship space, to pray in different ways, to celebrate, to set some goals, to learn about our faith, and to experience communion with God's children beyond your table. What better way to prepare to celebrate the Mystery of Easter!

ASH WED

Let's begin the season of Lent by choosing a special glass or goblet that will be your family "Blessing Cup." When everyone is seated before your meal, fill the cup with juice and pass it around the table. When it gets to you, offer a simple blessing (maybe something like this: "God, bless my mom today; I want her to know I am thankful for her love" or "I ask a blessing for my brother, who is studying for a big test tomorrow.") You might want to begin every family dinner or special occasion during the season of Lent in this way.

THU

Carry something to the table that reminds you of God's love. Before eating, go around and give everyone a chance to talk about their choice. (Ex. "I brought my favorite CD because when I think of God's love, it makes me want to dance!") Arrange all the objects together in the center of the table — that's a lot of love!

FRI

Everyone wear something purple at the table. Purple is the color of the season of Lent, the color of preparation. We are getting ready for the celebration of Easter. Play a word game: How many things can you name that are purple? What's your favorite shade of purple? Talk about purple things that you might see in church this Sunday (hint: check the altar cloth, clergy vestments, pulpit, and lectern.)

SAT

Take a few moments to talk about something Jesus taught us. He taught a lot about sharing and giving, didn't he? Go around the table and tell about a time when you gave away something that you really wanted to keep. How did that feel? Sometimes a loving action can feel good and hard at the same time.

1st WEEK OF LENT

SUN

Place a candle in the center of the table before the meal. Call the family together around the candle, light it and say, "Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world.' Sit in silence for a moment and watch the light shine. I wonder what Jesus meant when He said He was the light — What do you think?" (Oh, and did you notice anything purple in church today?)

MON

Say your favorite family blessing. Begin to eat your meal. Imagine that this is the first meal you have ever eaten. Describe what you see, how it smells, how it tastes, and how it feels in your mouth. We don't usually pay attention like this when we eat, do we? Imagine if we practice paying attention (like this) to the ways God is calling us to love like Jesus?

TUE

Pass your special family Blessing Cup around before dinner, filled with whatever your family likes to drink. Take a sip — and before you pass it, turn and say to the person on your right, "I love you and God loves you." Then pass the cup. When everyone has had shared from the cup, say a loud "AMEN!"

WED

The first person who spills something today gets a special blessing: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests!" (If no one spills today, invite your parents to practice saying this whenever the milk goes flying during Lent!)

THU

Go around the table and tell about a time that someone "stood up" for you, when no one else would. Tell about a time when you stuck up for someone. Was it hard to do? Jesus did this a lot; when someone needed him to tell the truth and offer help, he was there. Often, it wasn't easy, either.

FRI

Play background music during mealtime today. Something quiet or gentle to set a reflective tone. Invite everyone to eat slowly and thoughtfully, to match the tempo of the music. (Selections from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* or Rutter's *Requiem*, world lullabies, any family favorite.)

SAT

Bring an extra plate to the table. Put a dime-sized drop of oil in the center. Pass it from person to person, inviting them to dip in their thumbs and bless the person beside them, saying this blessing: "Remember that all you do is holy./ Do your best./ And honor God."

2nd WEEK OF LENT

SUN

Go around the table and tell about somebody in your life who made you feel really special (maybe a parent, brother or sister, teacher, a friend, a relative, clergy). What did they say? Remember how good it felt inside to hear it? I wonder if that person taught you something about God's love...and I wonder if we are like God for others, when we make others feel special. After you talk about it, turn to the person on your right and let it rip: "What I love best about you is..."

MON

Invite the oldest child to make place-cards for everyone before the family meal, and set them out. On the front of the card goes the person's name. On the back of the card goes one segment of the Lord's Prayer (The "Our Father"). When everyone is together, look on your cards. The person with the opening line, "Our Father, who art in heaven," begins the prayer. Everyone else follows, reading the part of the prayer written on their place-card. All say, "Amen." Resolve to make more room for God every day.

TUE

Let us pray today: "God bless this food. God bless our Love. Bless those who have no food. And those who have no Love." (Say it a few times until everyone learns it.) Then, make a family plan to shop for some canned goods this week; talk about what foods might be good to buy for someone who is really hungry. Remember to drop them at church during the week or on Sunday, for families who don't have the food they need.

WED

Before the meal today, make sure that every member of the family participates in some way (one to help cook, one to set the table, one to pour the glasses, one to ring a dinner bell, and so on). When you are all together at the table, thank each person by name for the task they did and pray to God for a world community where everyone has a chance to participate and to feast.

THU

When you set the table today, set an extra place and add an extra, empty chair. During your meal, let the empty

place remind you of the people in our world who are "left out" or go unnoticed (for example, somebody unpopular at school, somebody new in the neighborhood who has no friends yet, somebody we may have seen lying down on the sidewalk with no blanket and no home.) Notice how there is always room at your table for one more. Pray together, "Lord, help us to see how we can care better for those who need us. Amen."

FRI

Bring to the table today something that you've been thinking about, worrying about, or something that is making you feel a little sad. Share it with your family. While you are talking, no one will respond, but, instead, practice 'holy listening.' That means that they will pay close attention, trying not to take it personally or try to fix anything. When you are finished, thank everyone for listening to you, then touch the shoulder of the person next to you to show that they may begin to share.

SAT

Who is sitting directly across from you at table today? Taking turns, say two things that you especially love about him or her. Then, say one thing you are sorry for, if you have hurt their feelings recently. We need to tell the people in our families that we love them for who they are. And we need to say we are sorry to them and to God, when we have been hurtful.

3rd WEEK OF LENT

SUN

After everyone is seated at table, stand up again, at your place. Turn to your right and walk slowly around the table in silence. This is a 'walking meditation.' As you are walking, think words like these in your heart, with each step: "Jesus, help me to change my heart and my actions. I want to be more like you." When you have gone 3 times around the table, sit down — in a different place than you usually sit!

MON

Place a small bowl of uncooked rice in the center of the table. Pass it around the table when all are gathered. When it comes to you, say two things that you are thankful for. When all have spoken, say a special prayer for poor parents who have no food to give to their hungry children today.

TUE

No talking at all today... You can only laugh and sing at the table — (just this once!) Maybe you could sing, "Please pass the potatoes...oh, this is delicious...Thank you, Dad...thank you, Mom" (or something like that!). Lent is a serious time, but God does love to celebrate with God's beloved children!

WED

Set the table with a small sheet of paper, a colored crayon or marker, and a thumb tack at each place. Allow a few minutes for each person to write or draw one kind thing or special act of love that they commit to do for someone tomorrow. Share them, then excuse yourselves to go and tack the page where you will see it upon waking. Come back together at the table for a story. Improvise the story of the prodigal son. Read aloud the ending from the Gospel of Luke: "So the younger son set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him."

THU

Place a single flower or bouquet of flowers in a vase in the center of the table. Place beside it a photo (or photos) of someone you love who is no longer living. Take some time to talk about what you miss about this person and how s/he showed you something about God's love.

FRI

Agree, ahead of time, to skip dessert. When your meal is finished, offer prayers of thanksgiving to God ("Thank

continued on page 6

you, God for your gift of ____.”) You can even offer your desire for dessert to God. God knows well that sacrifice is not easy and appreciates it when we choose small sacrifices as a way of saying, “You have given your whole life to me, Jesus – I am so thankful that you love me so much.”

SAT

Place a Children’s New Testament on the table. Invite someone to read Luke 18: 15-17. Think together about these questions: What can a child do to change the world? Do you think Jesus believes children can teach grownups a thing or two about peace-making? About leading and following? About being gentle?

4th WEEK OF LENT

SUN

Place a small surprise at each person’s place setting (a flower, a chocolate, a cross, a wrist band; a secret message, or some such thing). Say, “God is a God full of surprises. Every day in hundreds of ways, God can be found in the most ordinary places. Sometimes, we get so busy that we forget to notice the holiness all around us.” Go around the table and ask, “How was God present to you today?” or “Where did you notice God surprising you today?”

MON

Let’s make up a new table blessing (or ‘grace’) for today, using the A-3-C’s. Go around the table, as many times as it takes to thank God for something starting with A, B, C, D...

TUE

Place a Children’s Bible on the table, nearest a child who likes to read. Help the child turn to Psalm 105, verse 4: “Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.” See if your translation is different from this one and talk about what the verse means for you individually and as a family.

WED

Place a bowl of water at the center of the table. Invite one person to demonstrate what happens when you drop a small stone into the center of the bowl of water. See the ripples of water moving outward? You can do a ripple-prayer like this: Start by praying together about people and situations close to you (at home, in your building), and move slowly outward (your church, your school), then out beyond your normal thinking (your city, your state, your country, your hemisphere) until you are praying for the whole world.

THU

Tonight we want to think about ways to live more simply, so we will eat a simple meal of soup and bread. What else can we do to live more simply and share our resources with people in need?

FRI

Set the table backwards today – fork on the right, glassware near your elbow, spoon on the left, etc. Have a talk about how Jesus’ idea of the Kingdom of God is an “upside down kingdom” and about how difficult it can be to follow Jesus. Ask: Why do you think Jesus said that the first would be last? Love your enemies? How would this change our world?

SAT

Pass around your family Blessing Cup filled with 1/2 cup of water; be sure everyone gets a sip. Remember that there are many places in the world that don’t have enough water. Ask God to bless the people there and to help you think of ways to help them. Sing or say together the simple tune a few times (or as a round if you know it): “Jesus, I adore you. Lay my life before you. How I lo-ove you.”

5th WEEK OF LENT

SUN

Before you begin to eat, talk together about what you heard in church today. Do you remember anything about the Gospel story? Was there something about Sunday School that you especially liked?

MON

Here’s a new prayer for your family to learn. Let’s learn it together and then give each one a chance to say it alone. It has motions and goes like this: “May I come to this table (touch the table) with clear thoughts (touch forehead), kind words (touch mouth), and a peaceful heart (place palm on heart). Amen.”

TUE

Have an indoor picnic! Prepare a simple meal that can easily be moved to a large cloth or picnic blanket on the floor (a breakfast picnic?) Sit in a circle. Invite Jesus to join the circle and be your guest on the floor – as you eat, notice how it feels. After you finish eating, take a few minutes to talk to Jesus (in your heart) about something that you want to try to do better. Know that Jesus is always ready to listen – it doesn’t matter if we’re angry or sad or happy or confused!

WED

Before your meal, invite everyone to begin with a ‘heartbeat meditation.’ Explain that in a heartbeat meditation everyone covers their ears and quiets down as much as they can, until they can hear (and feel) their heart beating. After a minute or so of practice, imagine that there are hearts all over this world beating to the same quiet rhythm as your heart. Feel your deep connections to all of God’s children.

THU

Eat your meal by candlelight this evening. Immediately after your meal (before clean-up), take a short night walk as a family. Do some star-gazing. Notice the moon’s phase. Look ahead to some family weekend time together and begin to plan.

FRI

Today we look forward to sharing our hidden talents. That means that everyone should come to the table ready to read or tell a poem or story, sing a song or offer a talent waiting to be expressed! You may want to invite friends or neighbors to join in the sharing.

SAT

During mealtime, today, check-in with each other about your day. After everyone has had a turn, recall funny or happy memories of the past week. (You can tell it or act it out for the whole family to enjoy.)

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUN

A silly game: When someone “clinks” or drops their fork or knife today, everyone point and shout (loudly) the words that the crowd said when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

MON

Place a cross (the largest you have) at the center of the table. Place next to it one small rock (beach stone or any small object) for each person at the table. Invite each person to take up a stone and simply hold it, while listening to the story of what went wrong when Jesus came to Jerusalem. Read or adapt the following:

“You know, there were people who didn’t like Jesus or the message he was teaching. Some thought he was going to take over Jerusalem and some thought he was just making trouble. These were the ones who planned to have Jesus killed. So, while he was praying in a garden, soldiers came and took him away. Jesus and two other people were taken to a hill and hung on a cross. This is what the

word “crucifixion” means (that you die on a cross.) After Jesus died, one of his friends was given permission to take down Jesus’ body and bury him properly. So, he put Jesus’ body in a tomb, which is like a cave, and closed it up with a big rock.”

TUE

Today’s way of praying comes after the meal – the “dish-clearing prayer,” the “dishwashing prayer,” the “sweeping prayer,” the “finish-your-homework-without-complaining prayer,” and the “ask-what-you-can-do-to-help prayer.” Know that, when done lovingly and without complaining, ordinary chores can become a way of honoring our parent/s and welcoming God into our homes. Ordinary chores become “holy tasks.”

WED

Hold hands around the table and pray silently (in your heart) for a minute. Starting with the youngest person, say 2 things that you are afraid of or talk about a time when a friend let you down. How did it feel? Imagine how Jesus must have felt when he knew he would be captured by soldiers and punished unfairly.

MAUNDY THU

Place the family Blessing Cup (perhaps filled with grape juice) and a small loaf of bread (or pita round or slice of bread) on the table. Say: “Today, we remember when Jesus and his friends shared their last supper together.” Pass the bread around for each person to break off a piece and eat. Remind them about what Jesus said – I’ll be there with you, when you share bread together this way. Then, pass the cup around. Remind your family what Jesus also said – I’ll be there with you when you share wine this way. Pray: “Thank you, Lord, for inviting us to the table with you here in our home, in our community of faith, and all over the world.”

GOOD FRI

When all have come to the table, set a timer for 3 minutes. During that time, agree to eat your meal in silence. Listen to the sound of the silence. When the timer rings, and it is time to talk again, instead of serving your own plate, offer to serve someone else. When the meal is finished, sing or say the Taize chant, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

HOLY SAT

Set a candle in the center of the table. Before sitting down to dinner, kneel beside your seats and sing together, “Let us break bread together on our knees. Let us break bread together on our knees. When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, O Lord have mercy on me.”

EASTER DAY

Lent is over. Set a bright-colored tablecloth on the table today! Wear special clothes to supper. Play joyful music – and see if someone would like to offer a dance as a blessing! At the center of the table, place as many symbols of spring and new life as you can find – eggs, flowers, butterflies, and more. Put your hands over your heads and shout with joy, “Jesus is alive — go and share the Good News. Alleluia!!

C-E-L-E-B-R-A-T-E!!!

Happy Easter and hooray for your family! Good for you for making time to prepare your hearts and home for the joyful Mystery of Easter! C-E-L-E-B-R-A-T-E your love!

Crafts, Ideas, and Practical Ways to Help Children Think About the Season of Lent

by Vicki Hall

During Lent, there is a lot of focus on the Cross. Here is one simple way to make a cross that children can then carry in their pockets, wear as a necklace, hang on their bedposts or door to their room.

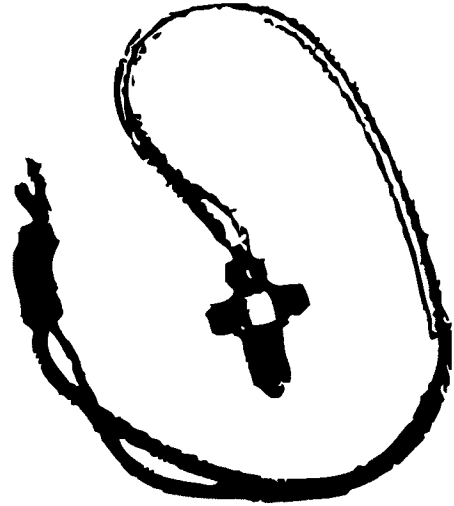
Bead Cross

Materials:

- 1 yard of cord
- beads — 6 clear & 1 gold
- one wooden bead (if you choose to use it)

Directions

- Fold cord in half.
- Tie knot at folded end.
- String 3 clear beads onto double cord.
- String gold bead onto double cord.
- Split cords and string 1 clear bead onto each cord. Thread cord back through the gold bead and pull it snug.
- String the last clear bead onto double cord.
- Tie knot close to final bead. OR String your wooden bead through the double cord to serve as your knot.



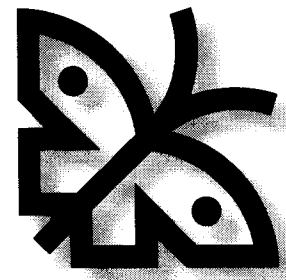
here's another idea ...

Butterflies in Cocoons

1. Cut out 2 butterflies. Decorate them with crayons and markers.
2. Glue the 2 butterflies to one popsicle stick — one on each side. (the stick becomes a handle)
3. Fold a pipe cleaner into a V-shape and glue it to the head of the butterfly.
4. Fold the wings of each butterfly outward.
5. When dry, put into cardboard tube.
6. Cover the tube with tissue paper and tie each end with yarn.

As larvae are transformed into butterflies, we too can be transformed into new life at Easter if we live the Lenten season.

Keep your wrapped tubes until Easter when you can release your butterflies as signs of new life.



Farewell to Alleluia

On Shrove Tuesday or some other day before Lent begins, take the time with the children to make one large Alleluia banner to represent the entire parish or small individual banners that each child can hide for themselves.

“Alleluia” is one of the Church’s favorite words because it expresses joy and gives praise — it means “Praise the Lord.”

The Episcopal Church has the custom of not speaking or singing the word “Alleluia” during the season of Lent. So, our Alleluia banner will remain hidden away until Lent is over and the joyous Easter celebration begins.

On Easter, carry the large banner or have the children carry their individual banners in the opening processional.

