

LENTEN

DEVOTIONS

AN ILLUSTRATED LENT FOR FAMILIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE HEART

We are thrilled to provide families with a resource for engaging their children in faith formation at home during Lent.

The theme is **Reflections on the Heart**. As we journey through this season of Lent together, families are invited to focus intentionally on the spiritual discipline of evaluating what the heart treasures. Some are physical treasures we can touch, hold, store, and give. Some treasures are invisible, yet still greatly matter and guide our lives. By exploring Gospel passages about treasures and matters of the heart, families will reflect on what kind of treasure matters to us, why we store treasures, and the power these treasures have in our lives.

Starting with Ash Wednesday and going through Easter, each weekly session will have a scripture and reflection, discussion questions with a coloring page, activities and a prayer.

Our Lent devotions are written for all ages. We believe you'll find appropriate questions and discussion topics in each devotion for your children, no matter the age. At the same time, feel free to tweak content and questions to work for your family. You don't need to do all the activities for it to be a meaningful experience. Take a look at the devotions, see what you think will work best for your family's schedule, and find time each week to gather together.

Holy Week | By Ann Weems from "Kneeling in Jerusalem"

Holy is the week...

Holy, consecrated, belonging to God...

We move from hosannas to horror
with the predictable ease
of those who know not what they do.

Our hosannas sung,
our palms waved,

let us go with passion into this week.

It is a time to curse fig trees that do not yield fruit.

It is a time to cleanse our temples of any blasphemy.

It is a time to greet Jesus as the Lord's Anointed One,
to lavishly break our alabaster
and pour perfume out for him
without counting the cost.

It is a time for preparation...

The time to give thanks and break bread is upon us.

The time to give thanks and drink of the cup is
imminent.

Eat, drink, remember:

On this night of nights, each one must ask,
as we dip our bread in the wine,

"Is it I?"

And on that darkest of days, each of us must stand
beneath the tree
and watch the dying
if we are to be there
when the stone is rolled away.

Lent: Living in an Awkward Season

Please do not skip over Ash Wednesday.....for your children's sake:

Local author Pam Hawkins refers to Lent as the "awkward season." It is a church season that starts on a Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) rather than a Sunday like most other Christian seasons and holidays. While the journey through the 40 days leads to the great Good News of Resurrection, it begins somberly with ashes on the forehead that remind us of our mortality. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Most adults find death a tough subject, a VERY tough subject with children, and almost impossible to talk about with preschoolers and younger. However, death is a part of life and is not under our control; the family pet dog dies, the class hamster dies over a spring break, an older neighbor or grandparent dies. The pandemic has reminded us how fragile life really is. We cannot get to the Good News of Resurrection without going through the death and darkness of Good Friday.

So back to talking with children about Jesus' death on the cross. Please take the opportunity that Lent offers to walk the whole family towards the cross and then forward to the celebration of Easter.

Author Peter W. Marty offers some insight about remembering that each new day is a gift from God and living in grateful response. This is a helpful foundation for children to think about life.

"First, it seems to me that understanding our lives as a daily gift is a huge part of discovering faith. This is different from appreciating life for its pleasures and joys or even reckoning with its pains and sorrows. To view life as a daily gift means there's a giver behind that gift; otherwise, gift is the wrong word to use. When someone gives a gift, especially one that exceeds all deserving, the most appropriate response is gratitude. What may not be apparent to people inclined to dismiss faith is that genuine gratitude always has particularity. Being thankful in general is like being married in general. It makes no sense in the abstract. Someone has gifted you with today, I like to say, and that someone is not you."

God gives us every breath we take and each day is a gift filled with treasure, to be opened and discovered.

With Love,

The First Presbyterian Church, Nashville Children's Ministry

We would love to hear what was helpful, what suggestions or comments you have!

And we LOVE pictures.....please send those to CMADMIN@fpcnashville.org