

*Lenten  
Activities  
For CRE Families*

40  
  
days  
of Lent

## **Introduction**

Lent is the 40 days, not counting Sundays, before Easter. The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday gets its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of repentance. The ashes used are gathered after the palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned.

For some Christians, Lent is traditionally a period of fasting and repentance in preparation for Easter. Many churches however do not observe Lent significantly. Few people nowadays fast for the whole of Lent, although some do still fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and many believers give up certain foods or ██████████ as a form of self-discipline.

## **Why is it called Lent?**

Lent is an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning to lengthen. The Anglo-Saxon Lent is observed in spring when the days begin to get longer.

## **Why 40 Days?**

When you read your Bible you can't help but be impressed by the significance of the number 40 whether it is 40 days or 40 years.

Here are some examples:

- In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.
- Moses was 40 years as a shepherd before he saw the burning bush.
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
- The Israelites wandered the desert of 40 years before reaching the Promised Land.
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry. Most Christians regard Jesus' time in the wilderness as the key event for the duration of Lent.



## **Why is Sunday not included in the forty days of Lent?**

From about 325 AD, it began to be common for people to fast for forty days following the model of Jesus. Fasting then was rigidly observed and meant only one meal a day. Meat and fish were totally forbidden. The forty days were continuous, but because Sundays could never be fast days the forty days were extended. Adding four days onto Lent made the beginning Ash Wednesday.

Sunday was not considered a fast day because Sunday is a weekly reminder of Jesus' resurrection during which the Holy Communion was celebrated. He said "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?"  
(Mark 2:19, NIV)

*Do note that eastern churches count the 40 days differently. They include Sundays and they start Lent on the Monday of the 7th week before Easter and end it on the Friday 5 days before Easter. Eastern churches call this period the 'Great Lent'.*

## **Should we observe Lent?**

Like the observation of the Advent, Lent is more a tradition of the Roman Catholic and other liturgical churches. There is no command, inference or example in Scripture that institutes such a practice. Most Protestant and non-liturgical churches celebrate Easter but they don't observe Lent. What about you? Should you?

For many of us, Easter, unlike Christmas, just sneaks upon us. Good Friday is not a public holiday here in the States. Even if our church observes Palm Sunday, the next the church meets is Easter Sunday. Good Friday is almost glossed over if the family doesn't make an effort to think about it!

## 10 Activities for Catholic Families During Lent and Holy Week

### Attend Mass on Ash Wednesday

Wear your ashes out into the world as a witness of our faith

### Attend Some of the Holy Week Masses and Activities at Your Parish

### Make at least one of your meatless Friday meal together as a family.

This can be a great testimonial for younger children as you remember, together, one of the unique features of our Faith.

### Commit to reading the Bible (even if it's a Children's version) every day together as a family.

### On Holy Thursday, do a foot washing with your family members.

### Have a pancake dinner the night before Ash Wednesday or Make a King Cake

This day is known as Mardi Gras as well as Shrove Tuesday. Pancakes were a traditional dish for this day to use up things that weren't allowed during Lent. Here is a recipe for a King cake:

<http://bit.ly/XWq78G>

Use this printable Lenten calendar to track the season:

[catholicicing.com/  
printable-lenten-  
calendar-for-children/](http://catholicicing.com/printable-lenten-calendar-for-children/)



### Attend Stations of the Cross (especially one for children, if you have small children)

### Make cards of encouragement to those in your parish's RCIA program - After a lot of study and prayer, most of them will be received into the Church at the end Lent.

### Choose a Lenten Sacrifice to Do As a Family.

Is there something your family can sacrifice that might help another family in need? Consider donating what you might spend on a meal out to a food pantry instead.



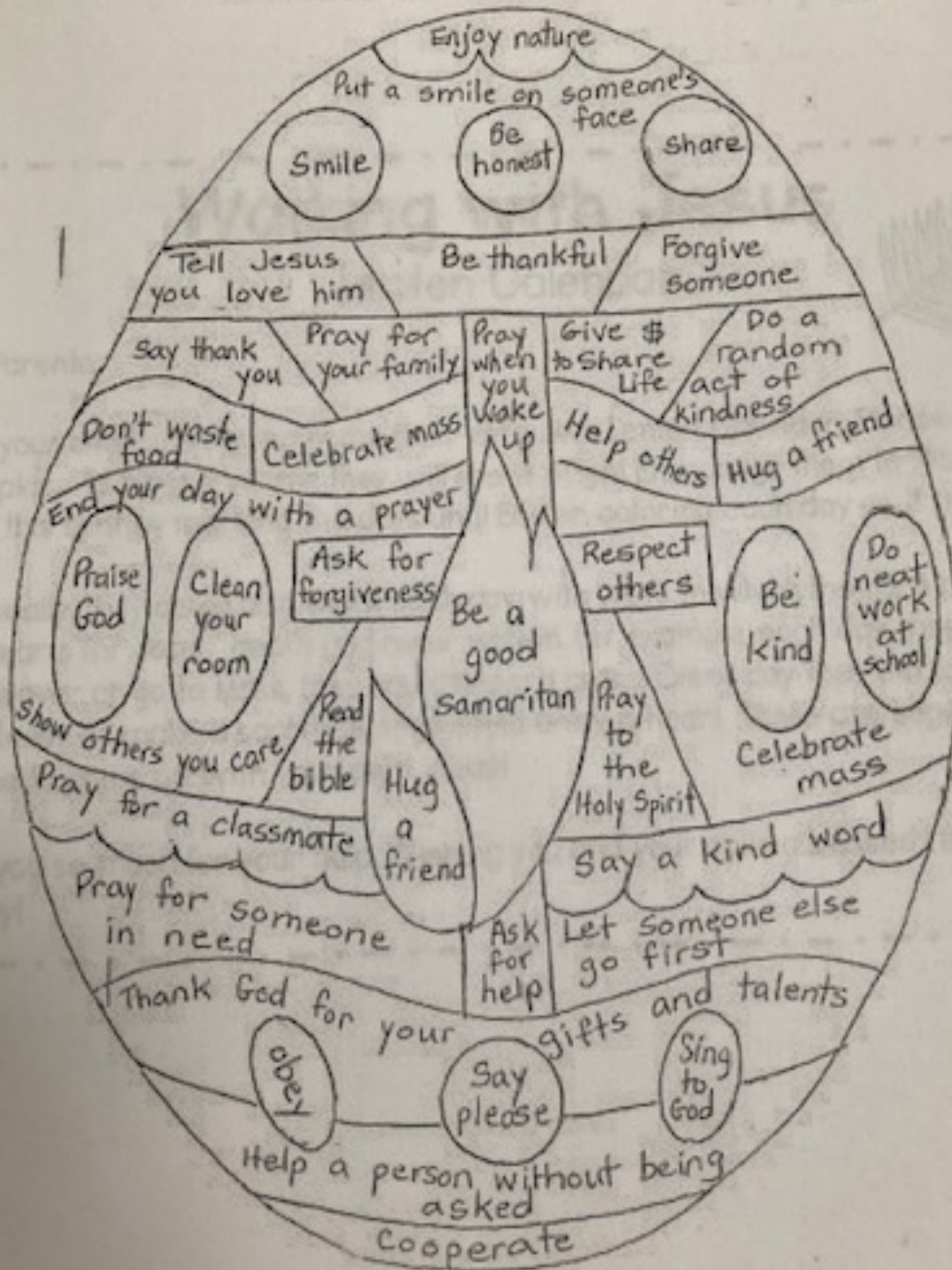
# My Lenten Good Deeds Chart

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



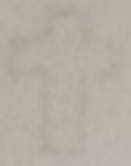
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# Lent is For Loving

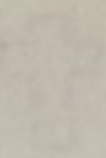


Spirit of God, fill me with Jesus' life





# Walking with Jesus Lenten Calendar



## Walking with Jesus Lenten Calendar



Dear Parents,

Today your child is bringing home their very own Lenten Calendar. Please help them find a place to hang it where they will see it often! Encourage them to "Walk with Jesus" this Lent by marking the days until Easter, coloring each day as it passes.

Additionally, they could also mark each day with ways in which they are preparing their hearts for Jesus' death and resurrection. For example, each day they say an extra prayer or go to Mass, they could draw a cross. Every day they perform an act of kindness or make a sacrifice, they could draw a heart. These are suggestions – feel free to come up with your own ideas!

Thank you so much for your help. Wishing you and your child a blessed Lenten journey!

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29	30	31	1	2	3	4
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Easter Sunday  
Christ is Risen! Alleluia!








# Walking with Jesus

## Lenten Calendar



S M T W Th F S

40 Days of Lent		1 Ash Wednesday 	2	3	4	
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent	5	6	7	8	9	10
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent	11	12	13	14	15	16
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent	17	18	19	20	21	22
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	23	24	25	26	27	28
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	29	30	31	32	33	34
Palm Sunday 	35	36	37	38 Holy Thursday 	39 Good Friday 	40 Holy Saturday 



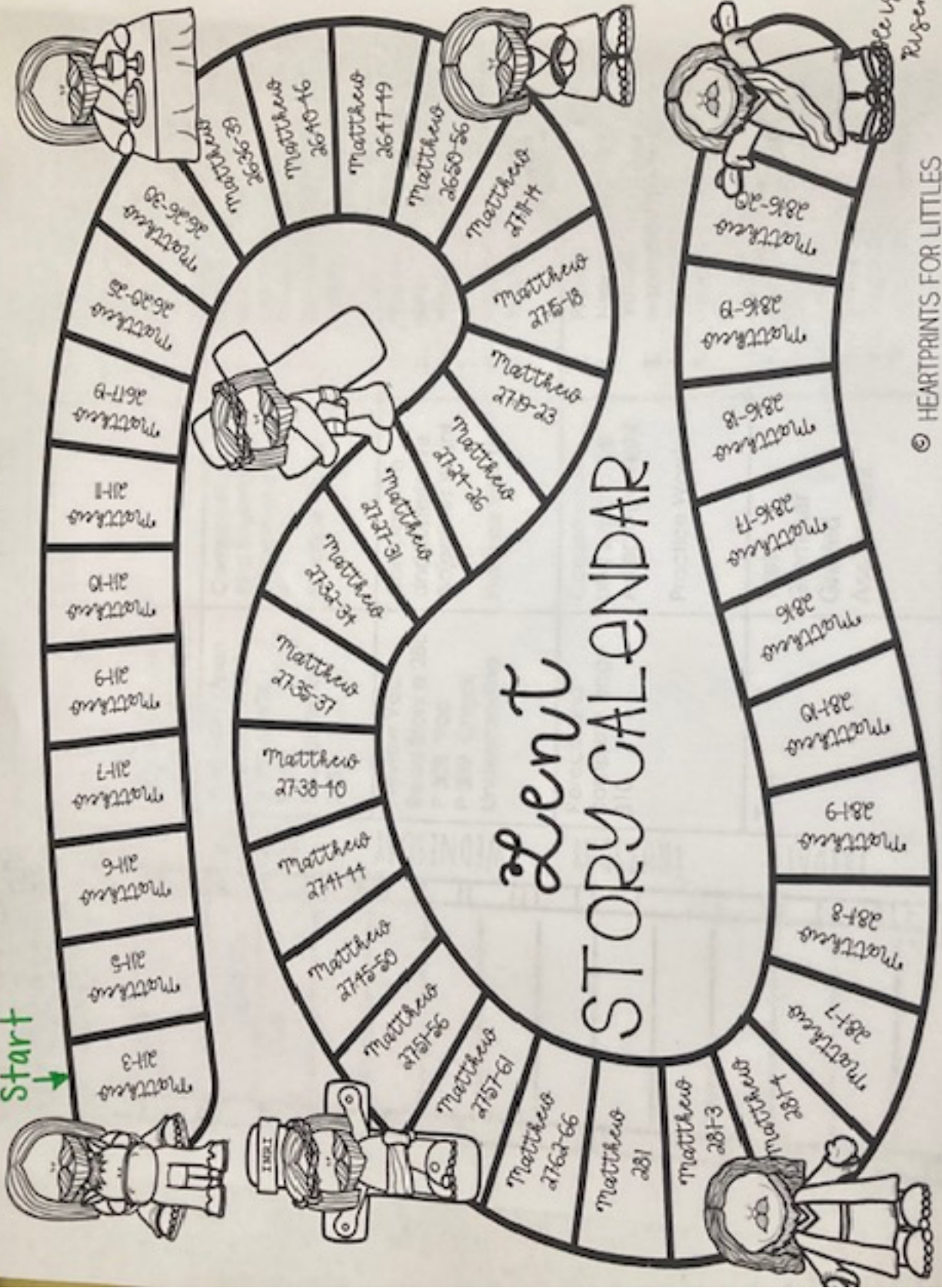
Easter Sunday  
Christ is Risen! Alleluia!



Classed Creations



Start



**Fasting during Lent** has always been a popular religious practice.

- Fast from fast food.
- Fast from TV one day a week.
- Fast from electronic games one day a week.
- Fast from using the computer and spend that time with your family.
- Fast from buying anything that is unnecessary during Lent.
- Fast from bad habits that need to be changed/given up. Work on a virtue.



## Family Stations of the Cross

Basically, the Stations of the Cross can be said anywhere though in a church or at outside Stations is most customary. It would be an inspiring family devotion to make simple stations and arrange them in the home during Lent; perhaps along a hallway or around the walls of the living room. Consider using the Holy Card Shrine directions. To pray The Way of the Cross requires only that you meditate at each station.

A family way of the cross could be said every Friday afternoon (for home schooling families), Saturday afternoon (for school-going families) or one station each evening if that suits the children's attention span and family activities better. It can be a simple quiet prayerful interlude or an opportunity for conversation, sharing each other's thoughts and meditations about the station.

Before each station you say: "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world." After each station you say an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be...

Here is a simple series of meditations for a **family Stations of the Cross**. If you click on a picture, you will go to a full page image of two stations, suitable for coloring or for creating stations for your home.

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, take me along that holy way you once took to your death. Take my mind, my memory, above all my reluctant heart, and let me see what once you did for love of me and all the world.

### First Station:

#### Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus is brought to stand in front of Pontius Pilate, the judge. He is innocent but Pontius Pilate condemns him anyway and sentences Him to death.

It is really our bad thoughts, mean words, and angry actions that you are being punished for, Jesus. We are praying the Stations of the Cross to tell You that we are sorry for all our sins.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...



### **The Second Station:**

#### **Jesus Takes His Cross**



Jesus has been beaten by the soldiers. He has been laughed at and spat upon. Now he must pick up the heavy cross and carry it while the crowd yells. He is so tired and sad, but no one cares.

We care that you are tired, Jesus. We are sorry that you are sad. We would like to help You carry Your cross with our prayers.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **Third Station:**

#### **Jesus Falls The First Time**

The cross is too heavy. It is so heavy that Jesus falls down under its weight. The blood from the crown of thorns is running into His eyes and His back aches from the scourging. People are still screaming and throwing things at Him. His heart must be as heavy as the cross He carries.

It is our sins that make your cross so heavy, Jesus. We are sorry. We love you and we try to be good for You with our prayers and with our lives.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...



### **Fourth Station:**

#### **Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother**



Suddenly, Jesus sees His Mother. She is standing at the side of the road surrounded by the crowd. Her eyes fill with tears when she sees Jesus. She wants to help Him but she can not. Both their hearts ache at the other's pain.

Jesus, You and your Blessed Mother help us whenever we ask. Our hearts ache too with the pain of the Stations of the Cross. We promise to pray to you both often, for help in our lives.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...



### **Fifth Station:**

#### **Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus Carry the Cross**

The soldiers are in a hurry. They grab Simon of Cyrene out of the crowd to carry the cross and make Jesus go faster. Jesus was grateful to Simon for his help.

Simon did not know he was blessed when he was carrying Your cross--he only felt how heavy it was. Praying the Stations of the Cross will help us to remember that carrying our crosses helps You too.



Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **The Sixth Station:**

#### **Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

Jesus' face is covered with sweat, blood and dust. It is itchy and uncomfortable. In pity, Veronica runs out to the road to wipe the dirt from Jesus' face. This small act of kindness is all she can do to help Him.

Jesus, we want to see and touch Your face, shining in glory in Heaven. We know that our small acts of kindness and our prayers help us grow closer to You and Your Father in Heaven.



Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **The Seventh Station:**

#### **Jesus Falls the Second Time**

The road is so long and the cross is so heavy. Exhausted, Jesus falls down again. The soldiers yell at Him and whip Him to make him get up. Don't they know that they are hurting Him more? Jesus knows that He is suffering for the sins of the world. He gets up and keeps walking.

Jesus, sometimes we get tired, discouraged and impatient with the world. When we fail and fall into sin, it hurts You more. We are sorry and we ask You to help us be as patient and brave as You.



Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **Eighth Station:**



#### **Jesus Speaks to Women of Jerusalem**

Next, Jesus meets some of the women he taught. They are crying. They are crying for Jesus, and for their own loss -- what will they do without Jesus? Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, but for all the sinners of the world.

Jesus, you told the women of Jerusalem to weep for us. Even in your pain, You remembered us. Thank you. We will pray for sinners too.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **Station Nine:**

#### **Christ's Third Fall**

Jesus reaches the last hill before Calvary. He looks up to see how far he has to go. When he sees the hill where He knows he is going to die, His strength leaves Him and He falls to the ground. There is still more pain, still more sorrow to endure. But Jesus loves us, so He keeps going.

Jesus, You kept going even though you were tired, scared and sad. You loved us then, and You love us now. We offer our prayers to tell you that we love you, and want to comfort you in Your great sacrifice.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...



### **Tenth Station:**

#### **Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**



The crowd has followed Jesus and the soldiers to the top of Calvary hill. Now they laugh as the guards pull off his clothes - His robe has stuck to the blood on His back. The guards push and shove Jesus. They do not care Who He is, they only see that He is a object of scorn.

Jesus, even wounded, bleeding, roughly treated by the guards and mocked by the crowds, You were and are still our King. We ask you to remember us in Your Kingdom.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...



### **The Eleventh Station:**

#### **Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

Is this the worst? The feet that carried the message of God's Love and the hands that healed are pierced with nails as Jesus is nailed to the cross. More wounds, more pain and more humiliation for Jesus.

Jesus, they tried to stop your hands and feet from doing Your Father's work by nailing you to a cross. You endured the pain of it for us, as you gave your whole life for us. We thank you and we love you.



Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **The Twelfth Station:**

#### **Jesus Dies upon the Cross**

The sword that Simeon prophesied has pierced Mary's heart. The hopes of the Apostles are crushed. The veil of the Temple, symbol of the old covenant of God's Love, is torn in two as Jesus' death opens a New Covenant with God.

Jesus, you spoke lovingly to everyone gathered at the foot of Your cross. You knew the new life that Your death made possible. Speak lovingly to us when we come before You and make us worthy of that new life in You.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **Thirteenth Station:**

#### **Jesus is taken from the Cross**

Now, all that is left is to take Jesus' body down from the cross. All the gentleness, reverence and love denied through this terrible day is possible now. Mary and the Apostles wonder, Is it too late? Is it over?

Jesus, with our prayers, we join in taking your body down from the cross. We touch You; take the nails out, wash your wounds, take off the crown of thorns, with love and sorrow. We grieve with Mary, and want to comfort her.



Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

### **The Fourteenth Station:**

#### **Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher**



Even in this time of sorrow, there is help. Joseph of Arimathea arranges for Jesus to be buried in a nearby tomb. His body is wrapped in clothes and sealed away. Everyone walk away, weeping. Finally, all is quiet, peaceful even.

Jesus, we sometimes think that You are gone, that it is all over, that we will never be happy or good again. Your death and resurrection shows us that You will never leave us. We should always try to follow you with our lives and our prayers.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...

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