

Lenten Activities for Children



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Grades 1-2 Lenten Activities

Links of Love

Help children brainstorm simple ways to make helpful and meaningful contributions to family, school, and parish life. Every time someone cheerfully serves or helps another, the child can make that act of love concrete by adding a link to a Love Chain. Have children decorate their links. Use the Love Chain to decorate the room for Easter.

Lenten Promise Posters

Help children brainstorm a list of ways that they can change their lives during Lent to become more like Jesus. Write ideas on the board. Invite children to choose one or two ideas that they will do this Lent. Then have children make posters to remind them of their Lenten promises. Have children take their posters home and display them where they will be seen each day.

Ideas to Share: Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday people receive ashes in the form of a cross on their foreheads. The people who distribute the ashes make the Sign of the Cross and say: *Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel* [adapted from Mark 1:15] or *Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return* [adapted from Genesis 3:19]. The ashes are made from palms left over from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

How We Depend on God

In advance write on slips of paper situations where children demonstrate how they depend on God, such as praying before meals and attending Mass. Organize children into small groups. Give each group a slip of paper and have them perform a skit for the rest of the class. Have the group that guesses correctly go next.

Coaching Children to Pray

Encourage children to remember that each time they pray the Lord's Prayer, they give praise to God and ask him for what they need.

Grades 3–4 Lenten Activities

Pray the Rosary

Distribute rosaries to children. Say: *The Rosary is a great prayer to pray during Lent. If you choose to pray this prayer, you might wish to use the Sorrowful Mysteries. Like the Stations of the Cross, the Sorrowful Mysteries help us remember Jesus' Passion and Death.* Pray together the Rosary, using the [Sorrowful Mysteries](https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/prayers-honoring-mary/mysteries-of-the-rosary) (<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/prayers-honoring-mary/mysteries-of-the-rosary>).

Pray the Stations of the Cross

Arrange with your catechetical leader to take children to church to pray the Stations of the Cross. You may wish to pray the [Stations by using this special online version](https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/lent/stations-of-the-cross/multimedia-stations-of-the-cross-for-children) (<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/lent/stations-of-the-cross/multimedia-stations-of-the-cross-for-children>).

Ideas to Share: Stations of the Cross

By the 15th century, churches in Europe were building “stations,” making it possible for Christians who could not make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to follow in Jesus' footsteps in his last hours. Eventually the Church settled on the 14 stations we now have.

Celebrate Reconciliation

Arrange with your catechetical leader to have children celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If this is not possible, share with children the opportunities your parish offers to celebrate the sacrament. Explain that celebrating Reconciliation during Lent is a great way to prepare our hearts to celebrate Easter.

Coaching Children to Pray

Encourage children to pray the Stations of the Cross as a special way to reflect on Jesus' journey.

Grades 5–6 Lenten Activities

Illustrating Jesus' Journey

Distribute art supplies. Instruct children to make their own illustration of Jesus overcoming temptation in the desert. When children have finished, invite volunteers to share their drawing with the class. Display children's work around the classroom.

Lenten To-Do List

Tell children that planning out their steps to grow closer to God will make them more achievable. Instruct children to write their plans for growing closer to God during Lent in a bulleted list. Remind children to focus on different ways they can pray, fast, and give alms. Encourage children to share their plans with their families. Tell children to hang their list in a place where they can review it daily during Lent.

Ideas to Share: Ash Wednesday

Explain that the ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday come from burning the palms we received on Palm Sunday of the previous year. This is why we are asked to bring our palms from the last year to church.

The Number 40

Say: *Biblical authors used numbers to emphasize the symbolic significance of an event. For example, the number 40 is used to symbolize a period during which people were tested. Have children find examples of the number 40 in the Bible. Invite volunteers to write examples on the board. (Noah endured 40 days and 40 nights of rain; the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years; Moses spent 40 days and nights on the mountaintop before descending with the Ten Commandments; Jesus remained in the desert for 40 days without eating.)*

Coaching Children to Pray

Assure children that the Holy Spirit is always present with them in their Lenten prayers, fasting, and good works to strengthen their resolve and guide their decisions. They can call on the Holy Spirit for help and guidance anywhere, anytime.

Grades 7–8 Lenten Activities

Take 10 Minutes

Have young people recall temptations that they have experienced. Say: *Silently think about two or three temptations that tend to recur in your life.* Ask young people to write a personal strategy they might use to help them avoid these temptations in the future. Encourage young people to begin each strategy with “First, take 10 minutes and talk to God. Then . . .” Encourage young people to use these strategies the next time they encounter the temptations they often face.

Commitment Buddies

Assign each young person a partner and have partners agree to check in with each other at least once a week, at a preestablished time, to see how their Lenten commitments are going. Encourage young people to be honest in their reports and invite them to support one another with notes of encouragement throughout the week.

Family Effort

Engage young people in a discussion about how they can support their family members’ Lenten commitments. Begin by providing a suggestion such as offering to cook a meat-free meal on one of the Fridays of Lent. Write on the board a list of young people’s suggestions. Encourage young people to select a few of the items they have listed and to include the actions as part of their own Lenten commitments.

Coaching Young People to Pray

Encourage young people to adopt a prayerful attitude at all times this Lent. Discuss with young people what this might mean in terms of speech, attitude, recreation time, and social behavior.

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All activities are from *Finding God: Our Response to God’s Gifts* (<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2013>), a faith formation program that invites children and their parents into a new way of living in relationship with God, family, community, and the world.

