Lenten Family Resource

What?
- In the season of Lent, we are encouraging families to focus on creating a prayer space for their Lenten journey and spending some time together with God’s Word.

When?
- This year Lent begins on February 14 (Ash Wednesday) and ends March 29th (Good Friday).
- We will be adding another element to our prayer space every Sunday during that time and will be transforming it during the Easter Season to follow.
- How often you use the space to encounter God’s Word during this time is up to you and your family. We recommend choosing a regular day and time to read a Scripture story together to make it easier to remember and follow through but if you forget, or fall behind in the busyness, it is never too late to come back.

Why?
- During Lent, we are called to make space in our lives for praying, fasting and giving. This resource will help serve as a regular call to prayer that suits the spiritual needs of young families. It also requires you to give of your time, which can often be a most precious resource in the busy schedule of families. This may also require you to give up other uses of your time to make space in your day and in your hearts. It can be so hard to find the time and space but the more room we make for God in our family life, the closer we are able to draw to that incredible heart of mercy that awaits us. This is the beauty of Lent!

How?
- If you have a family member age 4 to 7 who is coming to Children’s Program on Sundays during the 10am mass, they will be receiving their candle to add to your family prayer space every week.
- If you don’t fall into that category or you miss a week, collect your candles and decorating materials at home.
- Follow the weekly instructions below to create a “Lenten Desert” for your family prayer space and use it as your reminder to gather together and read Scripture this Lenten Season.
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Week 1: Feb 18:

Collect 5 white tea light candles and a large tray that will be able to fit them on top when placed in a cross formation. (If you have a family member coming to Children’s Program at 10am Sunday Mass with us, you can skip gathering candles as they will receive theirs on Sundays). Under the candles, either fill your tray with real sand or place some brown construction or sand paper underneath to symbolize your dessert. Place your “Lenten desert” in a prayer space in your home that will be seen often and that you can gather around to pray.

Light one candle this week whenever you join together in prayer. With your family, talk about how entering the season of Lent is kind of like journeying into the desert.

Reread today’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. Recall how Jesus enters the desert for a time of prayer and fasting to be able to listen to God. Make a connection to the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years, learning how to listen to God and coming to know a greater closeness. In the same way, this is a time for us to learn more about God’s story and practice listening to His voice in our lives. When you see this “Lenten desert” that we have made together in our home, it is a reminder to reach out to God in prayer!

For recommendations and tips for reading Scripture with kids and more, follow raisingaintswhithchristflying on Instagram.
Decorate your candles together with the colours of the weeks of Lent. Four will be purple and one will be pink. (Skip this step if you have a family member attending Children’s Program). In Children’s Program, we will be using a band of coloured construction paper to line the outside of the candle but if you have older children or are able to offer one on one support, you may choose to use one of these linked methods of decorating (or another method all together)


https://lifasmom.com/diy-on-a-dime-salt-dough-candle-holders/

*If you choose to decorate your candles in a way which cannot be removed or if you finish a candle during this season, replace it with another so that you’ll have a fresh white set to use when we transform our space for Easter.

Light two candles (decorated with purple) this week whenever you gather together in prayer. Reread today’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. Jesus’ transfiguration gives us a glimpse of the great joy of Easter that awaits us but also reminds us that there is still work to do. We know that forever closeness with God is open to us but we are still learning to open our hearts and to know God more each day, especially during the season of Lent.
Light your three purple candles this week whenever you gather together in prayer.

Reread this week’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. Talk about Jesus as living water. Maybe share a pitcher of water to drink as you chat and pray. Take the time to feel the coolness of the water and how it feels in our bodies. Talk about how we cannot survive without water, just like we cannot live without Jesus! Are there times when we feel alone and sad like the woman at the well? When we pray, we are able to feel that same kind of encounter with Jesus. Jesus tells us that we are KNOWN and that we are LOVED.

Say a special prayer this week for those entering our Church family soon and any other intentions on your hearts.
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Week 4: March 10:

Light your three purple candles as well as your one pink candle whenever you gather together in prayer.

Reread this week’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. Discuss the joy that you would feel if you were the blind man that was healed by Jesus! This is like the joy that we feel when Jesus brings us healing. This can look like extra peace, comfort, love or confidence to do the right thing. Just like in the story, Jesus often ‘opens our eyes’ to be able to see things the way that God sees them. Instead of looking out for what’s best for ourselves, Jesus helps us see the needs of others and how to love and serve.

Say a special prayer this week for those who are in most need. Pray that Jesus may open our eyes to a way that we can be of service.

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Week 5: March 17:

Light all of your candles this week.

Reread this week’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. Discuss the emotions that we hear Jesus feeling in this story. Have you ever felt like that? How beautiful is it that Jesus joins us in feeling all of our human emotions? No matter how we are feeling, we know that Jesus meets us there. He knows what it feels like. Just like Lazarus is raised from the dead, we know that this is a sneak peak to Jesus’ resurrection! We are getting closer and closer to celebrating this! We know that Jesus shares this new life with us, just like he did with Lazarus.

Say a special prayer this week for anyone who has lost hope or who is feeling alone in their sadness. We pray that they know the close love of Christ and that we are able to help comfort them.
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Passion Sunday. March 24:

Light all of your candles this week whenever you gather together in prayer and add your blessed palm branches to the sides of your desert. Reread this week’s Gospel or talk about the main parts of the story. If you have a set of Resurrection Eggs from this year’s Lenten Family Gathering or last year’s Children’s Program, consider using these to help you retell the story. Stop short of the last egg because we are not at Easter quite yet. (Find the QR code for more information on Resurrection Eggs at the bottom of the page)

Discuss what kind of person Jesus is revealing himself to be in this whole story. Is he someone who is super fancy and rides into town on a big horse, expects everyone to serve him and makes a big deal out of how everyone should treat him like a king? No! Jesus shows us the model of HUMILITY! Even though we know that he is the TRUE king, he rides in on a young donkey, he serves others by washing their feet, he allows others to treat him horribly and forgives them. This is the ultimate story of how Jesus shows us to love. His whole life and ministry are wrapped up into this story of humble self-giving. Soon we will hear the happy ending of Easter but for now, we sit in that place of waiting.

Say a special prayer this week for any intention that is most on your heart. Trust that Jesus hears the cries of our hearts.

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Holy Thursday

Light all of your candles while you read or retell the story of Jesus washing the disciples feet.

Consider washing each other's feet and praying for each family member as you do so. Welcome God into your acts of service. Talk about ways that you make each other feel loved and served in your family.
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Good Friday

Keep all of your candles unlit. Consider placing a black or dark cloth or towel over your desert to remind you of the tomb.
Every time you see it, pray “Jesus, remember me”.

Use this QR Code for a sung version to pray together