



SIMPLE LENTEN TRADITIONS FOR FAMILIES

Here are some simple things you can do with your family to help you have a happy and holy Lent.

1. Go to Mass on Ash Wednesday if possible, as a family. This is so great because even the smallest members of the family can have ashes. Read the scripture about when Jesus goes into the desert for forty days.
2. Resolve to do good deeds and make sacrifices. Download the Lenten calendar from the HCA web site to keep track of your Lent.
3. Give something up for Lent as a family, even if some children are young enough that they don't "have" to. You could start with candy as a blanket sacrifice, and then decide on other things. Other good "blanket sacrifices" are no music in the car, no eating out, silent lunches, or drinking only water during Lent.
4. Set up an alms-giving box— you simply set out a box, and take 1 thing from your family's pantry every day of Lent. At the end of Lent, take the box to St Vincent de Paul or the local food bank.
5. Set up an offering jar— all you need is a jar or piggy bank of some kind. Spare change goes into the jar for the length of Lent, and then is donated to the HCA.
6. Add extra prayers to your daily life. Maybe this is extra prayers in the morning or at bedtime.
7. Pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary together- daily, weekly, whatever works for you. If this feels overwhelming with little children, try just 1 decade.
8. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet together.
9. Light Lenten candles on your dinner table each night (much like an Advent wreath, but for Lent).
10. Go to daily Mass. You decide how often this might be doable at this current stage of your life and in your circumstances.
11. Go to Reconciliation as a family.
12. Read the penitential Psalms.
13. Attend Stations of the Cross at your church, usually held on Fridays.
14. Listen to the stations of the cross on CD (www.holyheroes.com). This can work well for car trips, especially if you're traveling to see family on Easter.
15. Encourage better attention during Mass by assigning each member of the family 1 reading to pay special attention to (first reading, Psalm, second reading, and the Gospel). Have everyone give a re-cap of "their" reading on the way home in the car or at lunch/dinner. Have a family discussion if anyone had thoughts about the readings.
16. Lenten cleaning- rather than the idea of "Spring cleaning", clean 1 area of your home every day during Lent. Your house is beautiful and clean for Easter!
17. Watch a Lenten movie together as a family, like The Greatest Adventure Easter Story for little children, or one of the many appropriate feature length films about Jesus.
18. Read 1 Saint story per day.
19. Read the Bible together as a family daily. This can be done in the morning at breakfast, and doesn't have to take long. You can just read a paragraph each day.
20. Decide 1 day of the week during Lent to go "screen/device free" as a family.
21. Light a candle at church on Sunday.
22. "Un-decorate" your house to keep things simple for Lent. Put a purple table cloth out on the table. Discuss liturgical colours.
23. During Holy Week, read the story of Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, and the crucifixion from the Bible.
24. Join Holy Heroes Lent Adventure (www.holyheroes.com)— lots of Lenten activities for free.
25. Basically, make sure you're including more prayer, fasting, and almsgiving than during ordinary time.
26. Save all of the Easter celebrating for Easter!

