



LENT FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR KIDS AGES 4-11 & PARENTS



**LENT AT POINT
LOMA CHURCH**

pointlomachurch.org

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Lent Through the Senses was created to help your family experience faith not as something to perform or complete, but as something to receive and notice together. Through simple Bible stories and everyday sensory experiences, this devotional invites children to encounter God's love with their whole bodies—through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.

Each week includes a short, child-friendly retelling of a Gospel story, along with a gentle practice and an application idea. **These are meant to be invitations, not expectations.** You might read the story at the dinner table, before bed, or whenever it fits naturally into your week. Some weeks you may try a practice together; other weeks, simply reading and listening is more than enough.

Please know there is no pressure to keep up, check boxes, or finish strong! If a week feels busy or hard, grace still abounds. Even a few quiet moments can plant seeds of faith that grow over time. May this Lenten journey offer your family space to breathe, notice, and trust that God is meeting you right where you are.

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SIGHT: LEARNING TO NOTICE GOD (MARK 10:46-52)

Theme:

Lent begins with slowing down and noticing: God's presence, our own hearts, and the needs of others.

Jesus traveled everywhere, telling people about God and how much God loved them. Back in those days, they didn't have cars or airplanes to travel, so Jesus mostly walked places, and his close friends—the disciples—walked with him. Most of the time, there was an even bigger crowd of people who walked with Jesus because everyone wanted to hear what he had to say.

One day, Jesus was walking through a town named Jericho. He walked by a man named Bartimaeus who was completely blind. He couldn't see! Every day he sat by the side of the road and begged people for coins. That day, when Jesus and the large crowd passed him by, Bartimaeus started shouting.

"JESUS" he yelled. "HAVE MERCY ON ME!" The people in the crowd shushed him. Some of the people scolded him and told him to be quiet. But that didn't stop Bartimaeus. He shouted even louder:

"JESUS HAVE MERCY ON ME!"

When Jesus heard him, he stopped walking and stood still. "Call that man over here," he told the people in the crowd. Someone helped Bartimaeus to his feet and led him to Jesus. Then Jesus asked him: "What do you want me to do for you?"

What do you think the blind man said? You only get one guess! That's right, he asked Jesus to be able to see!

Jesus said: "Go, your faith has made you well," and healed him on the spot. Suddenly Bartimaeus opened his eyes. He could see the blue sky, the green trees, and a bunch of people who looked very surprised that Jesus healed him! But best of all, he saw the face of Jesus.

Gentle practice idea:

Look closely at something ordinary (a leaf, a candle flame, a family photo) and ask: *What do I notice now that I didn't at first?*

Application idea:

Learn to notice others: This week, be on the lookout for someone who needs help, then be the one to help!

SOUND: LISTENING FOR GOD (JOHN 10:1-5)

Theme:

God speaks to us in gentle ways and the season of Lent invites us to listen.

Jesus loved to tell stories to help people understand God. He especially loved to use stories from nature to help people know what God is like.

One day, Jesus told his friends and followers a story about sheep. There were lots of sheep in Bible times. Back then, people would use the wool from sheep to keep warm. They would use the milk from sheep to make cheese and yogurt. It was normal to see lots of sheep together on a hillside eating grass.

Because there were so many sheep, they needed shepherds. Shepherds stayed with the sheep day and night, even sleeping outside nearby! The shepherds were in charge of protecting the sheep from any wolves, and they also led the sheep to the right grass to eat.

In this story that Jesus was telling, a robber came to try to steal the sheep. The robber opened the gate and tried to get all the sheep to follow him. "Come on!" he told the sheep. But the sheep just looked at him and wouldn't budge. "Heeeere sheepie sheepie sheepie." But the sheep wouldn't follow him. The robber got closer and closer, trying to talk the sheep into following him, but the sheep didn't recognize his voice and ran away from him. The robber went home empty-handed.

Jesus told his followers that God is like the Good Shepherd. As soon as the shepherd showed up, he opened the gate and told the sheep: "Come on, it's time for breakfast!" And because the sheep recognized the shepherd's voice, they all followed him right away.

Jesus wanted his friends to know that God loves them like a shepherd loves his sheep. God knows them, cares for them, and speaks to them with a voice that is kind and safe. Just like the sheep, we can learn to listen for God's loving voice in our lives too.

Gentle practice idea:

Sit quietly for 30 seconds and name all the sounds you hear—inside and outside.

Application idea:

After a bedtime prayer or a mealtime prayer, pause for 10-20 seconds and invite God to speak to you.

TOUCH: GOD IS CLOSE

Theme:

Lent acknowledges vulnerability, pain, and need, and reminds us that God is not distant from suffering.

One day, when Jesus was walking through another town with all of his friends and followers, he was interrupted by a man. The man walked right into the middle of the path, and knelt down on his knees in front of Jesus!

We don't know what this man's name was.

We don't know where he was from.

We don't know how old he was.

All we know is that he had a terrible skin disease. He probably had a lot of spots or sores or rashes on his skin. Back in Bible times, if you had this skin disease, you weren't allowed to go to church, or hug your family or play with friends. You had to live on your own and had to stay far away from others so the sickness wouldn't spread. If anyone accidentally touched you, they had to be separated from everyone else too, for the rest of the day. That meant that people who had this skin disease felt forgotten and lonely.

When this man knelt in front of Jesus, he blocked the path! Jesus had to stop. The sick man said to Jesus: "Please heal me, Jesus! You're the only one who can."

Jesus looked down at the kneeling sick man, and felt compassion for him. He was sorry the man was sick. Then Jesus decided to heal him. But instead of just saying the words or snapping his fingers, Jesus reached out and put his hand on the man's shoulder! Jesus loved the man so much, he wasn't afraid to touch him.

As soon as Jesus touched the man and said "I will heal you," the skin disease immediately went away. No more sores or spots or rashes!

The man was so happy that he went out and told everybody what Jesus had done for him!

Gentle practice idea:

Hold something comforting (a stone, blanket, stuffed animal) while hearing the story.

Application idea:

Give a friend or a family member a hug or a high-five to encourage them.

TASTE: GOD PROVIDES WHAT WE NEED (JOHN 6:1-14)

Theme:

Even as Lent includes fasting or simplicity, the emphasis here is on trust, rather than deprivation.

Many people loved listening to Jesus talk about God. They loved it so much that big crowds of people would follow Jesus everywhere he went so they could listen some more. One time, Jesus walked far, far, far outside the city, telling people about what God and God's kingdom is like. A big crowd of people followed and listened. They listened all throughout breakfast, and all throughout lunch.

When it got close to dinnertime, tummies were grumbling! Jesus noticed that everyone was hungry, so he asked Philip, one of his disciples – his group of close friends – where they could buy some bread for everyone.

Philip said that it would take a whole year to work for the money to feed all of these people. There were at least five thousand people there! But there was a young boy in the crowd who offered up his own meal to Jesus. When the disciples saw the five loaves and two fish, they thought there was no way this small amount of food could feed such an enormous crowd!

But Jesus took the little meal and prayed out loud in front of everybody, thanking God for providing for them. Then he started breaking off pieces of the bread and pieces of the fish. Instead of running out, more and more bread and fish appeared! Jesus kept breaking off pieces and sharing with everyone until all the thousands of people were full. Everybody ate as much as they wanted, and then there were even twelve basketfuls of leftovers!

Jesus knew what the people needed and miraculously provided for them. The crowd got to taste God's goodness that day, smacking their lips from the yummy bread and fish.

Gentle practice idea:

Taste something slowly and say, "Thank you, God, for giving us what we need today."

Application idea:

Pick out your favorite breakfast cereal (from the store or your pantry) to donate to the church's Lent food drive.

SMELL: LOVE POURED OUT (JOHN 12:1-8)

Theme:

Lent is a season of giving. Sometimes love is shown by what we give and how fully we give it.

One day, Jesus and his disciples went to his friends' house for dinner. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus all lived in the same house because they were brother and sisters. They couldn't wait to have their friend over for a meal! Each of the three siblings showed their love for Jesus in a different way.

Martha decided to volunteer to serve all the delicious food they had made. Lazarus decided to sit right next to Jesus and listen to everything he had to say. But Mary decided to show her love for Jesus in a different way.

In Bible times, people would sometimes pour sweet-smelling oil on someone they loved or wanted to honor. They would anoint someone by gently pouring oil on them as a way of saying, "You are important to me." The smell helped everyone remember that this person was special.

So Mary took a very expensive jar of sweet-smelling perfume and broke open the top. She poured all of it out on Jesus's bare feet and dried it off with her hair! The whole house smelled like the perfume.

One of Jesus's disciples thought this was wasteful. "Wait a minute," he said. "We could have sold that very expensive perfume and given all the money to poor people!"

But before Mary could feel embarrassed, Jesus said to him: "I think what she did was a beautiful thing. Mary honored me! She gave me her most precious perfume because she loved me so much."

You see, Jesus welcomed her gift, even when others didn't understand it. Mary wasn't being wasteful or trying to show off. She was just showing Jesus she loved him in the best way she knew how. How do you like to show Jesus you love him?

Gentle practice idea:

Smell something meaningful (soap, spice, flower, a scented candle). Ask: *What does this smell make you think of?*

Application idea:

Just like a smell can spread quickly, so can love! Write a nice note or draw a nice picture for someone you love.

ALL SENSES: GOD'S LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH (JOHN 20:11-18)

Theme:

God's love is embodied.

Jesus knew that he only had a little bit of time left with his closest friends—his disciples—before he joined his Father God in heaven, so he decided to show them how much he loved them.

Jesus and his disciples had been traveling all day, but it was finally time for dinner. In those days, they had to walk everywhere on dirty and dusty roads with only sandals on their feet. They had to avoid mud puddles and donkey droppings but even when they were being careful, their feet would get filthy and stinky by the end of the day.

That means that the polite thing to do when you went to someone's house was to wash your feet with a bowl of water, some soap, and a towel. As you can imagine, this was not a fun job! Usually it would be the lowliest servant's job to wash the feet of the dinner guests.

So when Jesus's disciples came into the house for dinner and took off their sandals for their feet to be washed, they were shocked when Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist, poured some water into a bowl, kneeled down, and started washing his friends' feet!

When it was his turn, Peter, one of the disciples, said: "Jesus, are you—the Son of God—seriously going to wash my dirty feet?" And Jesus said: "This will make sense later."

And later, when Jesus had finished scrubbing all his friends' feet, he explained: "See, even though I'm your Lord and teacher, I showed you my love by serving you in a humble way. You, too, should love each other by serving each other in humble ways!"

You see, because Jesus knew that God loved him so much, he was able to show love to others—even in a way that involved all five senses of his body! We can follow Jesus's example, too: we may not need to wash each other's feet, but we can show love in lots of different ways every single day!

Gentle practice idea:

Gather a small bowl of warm water and add a few drops of scented soap. Invite your kids to dip their fingers or toes into the water, then dry them off. Talk about how love can be something that we do! Reflect on how someone has loved you this week. Invite your kids to share their examples too.

Application idea:

Clean or wash something as an act of love. (ex: your room, your dishes, your car, etc)

ALL SENSES: LOVE THAT CAN BE SEEN, HEARD, AND FELT (JOHN 13:1-15)

Theme:

Easter is something we experience with our bodies.

After Jesus died, his friends and his disciples were so sad. They couldn't believe he was gone! They gathered together and prayed and cried. They didn't understand that Jesus still had a plan to save us, and not even death could stop him!

Three days after Jesus died, a close friend of Jesus named Mary Magdalene decided to go to the tomb where he was buried. The tomb looked a bit like a cave, and soldiers had rolled an enormous stone in front of it. Mary just wanted to be close to Jesus again, so she went to his tomb early in the morning.

But when she got there, the stone was rolled away! This just made Mary cry harder, even tasting her salty tears, because she thought someone came and took his body away. Mary came closer and looked into the entrance of the tomb. She could smell the stale air. But, inside there were two angels who asked her why she was crying. She told them she was looking for Jesus's body and she didn't know where it was.

When Mary turned around to head back home, she saw a man standing in front of her. He was wearing work clothes and had dirt under his fingernails, so she thought he was the gardener. The man asked her who she was looking for. Mary said: "Sir, can you tell me where Jesus's body is?"

You see, Mary didn't know that Jesus rose again, that he was alive and standing right in front of her looking like a gardener! But then the man said: "Mary."

And that's when Mary figured it out! She heard Jesus say her name. She recognized that the gardener was Jesus! She was so excited she gave Jesus the biggest bear hug she could!

Then Jesus said: "Go and tell my friends and disciples that not even death can stop God. Tell them that I'm alive!"

Mary Magdalene was overjoyed and went and told everyone the good news about Jesus.

Gentle practice idea:

Light a candle and say: *God's love is stronger than death.*

Application idea:

Build the empty tomb with playdoh, or blocks/Lego.