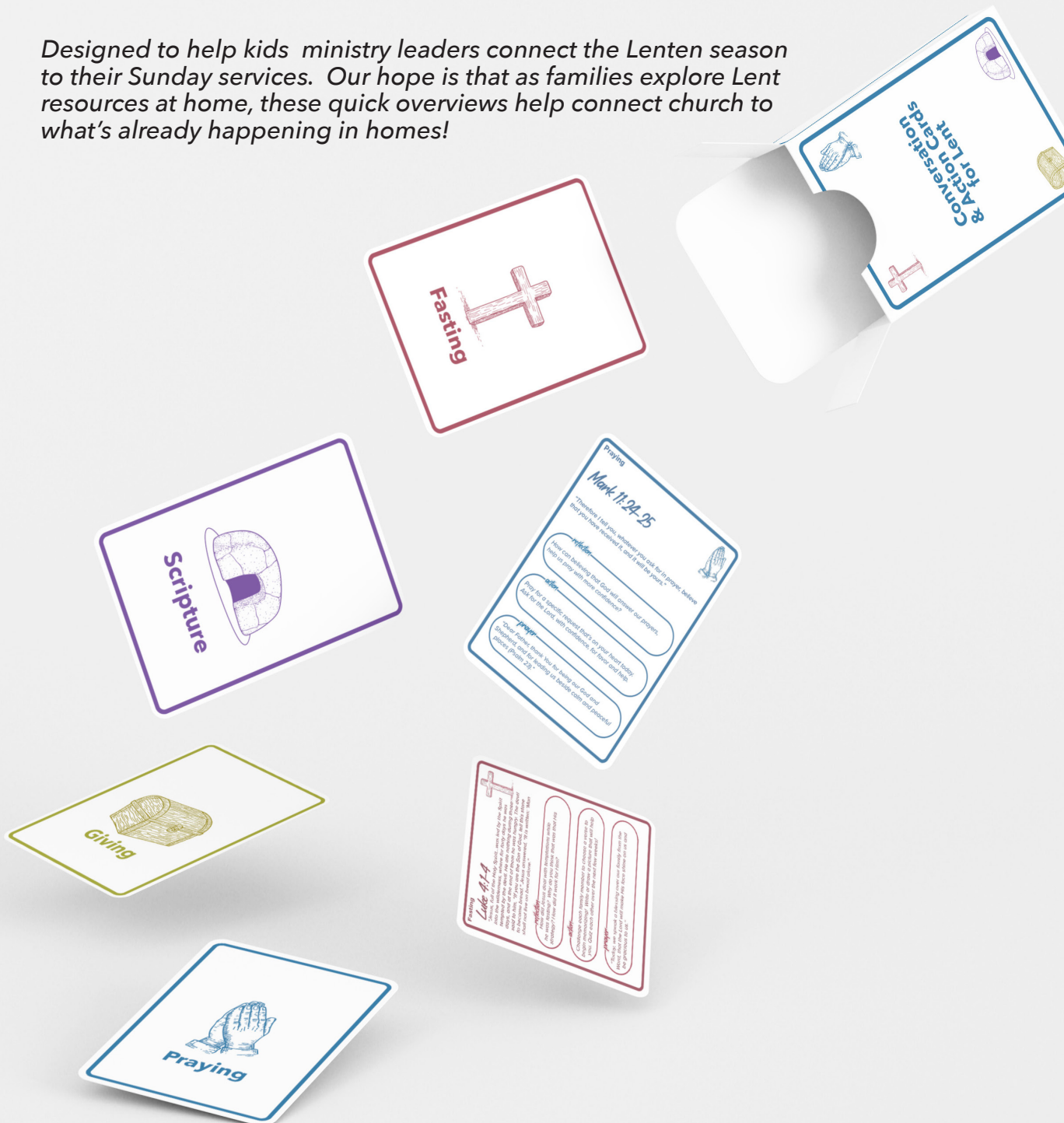


Connecting the Six Sundays of the Lenten season to your kids ministry

Designed to help kids ministry leaders connect the Lenten season to their Sunday services. Our hope is that as families explore Lent resources at home, these quick overviews help connect church to what's already happening in homes!



Week One: What Is Lent?

Scripture References: *Mark 1:12; Ecclesiastes 3:1; Joel 2:12*

Week One PRESCHOOL Devotion:

Lent is a special time when we slow down and remember God. It helps us stop, take a breath, and listen for God's love.

Lent lasts for 40 days. It starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter—the happiest day when we celebrate Jesus being alive! The 40 days help us remember the time Jesus spent being quiet and talking with God.

Lent is not about being perfect. We don't have to fix ourselves before we come to God. We can come to God with our worries, our questions, and our hearts.

During Lent, we practice praying, sharing, and being kind. These things help us make room for God in our hearts. Lent helps us get ready to celebrate Easter and remember that God is always with us.

Week One ELEMENTARY Devotion:

Lent is a special season in the life of the church where we try to slow down and pay extra attention to God. The Bible tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes that “there is a time for everything.” Lent is a time to think, pray, and get our hearts ready for what comes next. You see, Lent lasts for forty days. It starts on a day called Ash Wednesday and ends with the best day ever: Easter Sunday! The reason Lent is 40 days is to help us remember the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness getting ready for His ministry and listening closely to God before He began His important work.

Lent is not about trying to be perfect. It is not a season meant to make us feel guilty or ashamed. Instead, Lent is an invitation. It's like how through the prophet Joel in Scripture, God said, “Return to me with all your heart.” That means we can come to God just as we are, even with our worries, bad habits, and questions.

During Lent, we practice things like prayer, fasting, and being generous (or sometimes called Almsgiving). These things help us notice God more clearly by creating space in our lives to do something different. Just like you might clean your room before a special guest comes over, Lent helps us get our hearts ready for the joy of Easter. It reminds us that God is already with us and ready to meet us when we slow down and pay attention.

Week One BONUS idea:

Give each child a small piece of paper. Ask them to quietly draw or write one thing that distracts them from noticing God. Collect the papers and place them in a basket or box labeled “Lent.” Explain that Lent is a season of noticing God more and not getting distracted by other things. Talk about how to deal with the distraction that they identified and how giving that up might be part of fasting during Lent.

Week Two: The Holy Spirit and Lent

Scripture References: *Mark 1:12-13, Psalm 34:18*

Week Two PRESCHOOL Devotion:

Sometimes Lent can feel slow, like how it feels waiting for your birthday party to start when you know something happy is coming, but you have to wait.

The Bible tells us that Jesus spent forty days in a quiet place, waiting and getting ready for what He was going to do next. It was a time for Him to grow. But He was not alone! The Holy Spirit was with Him the whole time.

The Bible also tells us that God stays close to us, especially when we are sad or confused. He never walks away; He comes closer to us.

God is always working in our hearts. Even when things feel quiet, boring, or hard, the Holy Spirit is with us. Lent reminds us that He is with us when we are happy and loud, and also when we are quiet and waiting.

Week Two ELEMENTARY Devotion:

Sometimes the forty days of Lent can feel slower than the rest of the year, kind of like how it feels when you're waiting for your birthday party to start. We know something good is coming, but the waiting can feel kind of long!

The Bible tells us, in the book of Mark, that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for forty days. This wilderness time was not a mistake or a punishment for Jesus—it was a place for him to get ready for what was coming next.

And while Jesus was in the wilderness, the Holy Spirit did not leave Him alone. The Spirit was there with Him. Psalm 34 reminds us that “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.” You see, God doesn't step away when things feel confusing; He comes closer.

During Lent, the Holy Spirit is working in us too! When things are uncomfortable, or boring, or hard, God can use those moments to help us grow. One of the things that Lent teaches us is that God is not only present in loud celebrations or joyful moments, but also in stillness and in waiting times.

Week Two BONUS idea:

Practice two minutes of silence together. Invite kids to sit comfortably, close their eyes, and listen quietly. Afterward, ask:

- Was it easy or hard to be quiet?
- How might the Holy Spirit speak to us in moments of stillness?

Week Three: Prayer – Jesus Prays in the Garden

Scripture References: *Matthew 26:39-41*

Week Three PRESCHOOL Devotion:

When Jesus was sad or scared, He talked to God. Before He had to do something really hard, Jesus spent time talking to His Father God. He shows us that we don't need fancy words or a special time to talk to God; we can talk to Him anytime or anywhere about anything!

During Lent, one thing we focus on is talking to God more. We can tell Him when we are happy, sad, scared, or thankful. We can ask Him questions and know that He is always with us and cares for us.

Week Three ELEMENTARY Devotion:

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus shows us what honest prayer looks like. When Jesus is preparing to face something scary and painful, He talks to God about it. Jesus doesn't pretend to be brave or act like everything is fine. Instead, He tells God how sad and afraid He feels. And Jesus also says that He trusts God at the same time.

Jesus teaches us that prayer is not about saying the right words or sounding impressive. It is about a relationship and talking to God. Jesus reminds His disciples to "watch and pray," because prayer keeps us connected to God when we feel confused.

During Lent, we are invited to pray with honesty and courage. God welcomes our questions, fears, thankfulness, and hopes. When we pray, we are never alone. We are putting our lives in God's loving care.

Week Three BONUS idea:

Invite kids to create a one-sentence prayer they can memorize and repeat when they are afraid or alone. Provide these prompts:

- "God, I am thankful for..."
- "God, I am worried about..."
- "God, help me with..."

Once they script a prayer, help them write their words or draw a picture to remember.

Week Four: Fasting – Jesus Fasts

Scripture References: *Matthew 4:2-4*

Week Four PRESCHOOL Devotion:

When Jesus was in the wilderness, He did not eat for a while so He could listen to God really well. Jesus trusted God to help Him through that time – and God did! This verse teaches us that we though we do need food in our tummies, we also need God in our hearts.

During Lent, we might try giving up a small thing like a treat. This is not a punishment at all. When we miss the thing we gave up, we talk to God instead and trust Him to help us. Then our hearts grow closer and closer to Him.

Week Four ELEMENTARY Devotion:

Jesus fasted in the wilderness to focus His heart and mind on God. Fasting means He chose not to eat for a time so He could rely on God's strength and not His own. When Jesus says, "Man shall not live on bread alone," He reminds us that we need more than food; we need God in our hearts.

Fasting during Lent is not about being punished or being miserable. It's about helping us pay attention to Jesus and remember His love, death and resurrection. When we choose to give something up, like a treat or a habit, we notice how often we turn to comfort or routine instead of God. That noticing helps us turn our hearts towards God.

Lent teaches us that even small acts of fasting can help us grow in trust and gratitude. When we miss the thing we gave up, it can remind us to talk to God, to trust Him, to be thankful.

Week Four BONUS idea:

As a group, discuss if they or anyone in their family are fasting. If there are children who were present for week one, check in and ask:

- How is giving up that distraction going?
- What has the Holy Spirit been doing in your life? What have you been praying more about?

After the discussion, encourage kids that they can begin (or begin again) and focus on fixing their hearts towards Jesus.

Week Five: Almsgiving – Jesus Flips the Tables

Scripture References: *Matthew 21:13, Matthew 22:39*

Week Five PRESCHOOL Devotion:

Jesus loves people and wants everyone to be treated kindly. In the Bible, when people were being unkind or unfair, Jesus spoke up. He teaches us that loving God also means loving other people.

During Lent, we practice sharing and giving what we have. We can share our toys, our time, our kindness, and our love. So let's look for ways to help others so we can show them God's big, loving heart.

*Depending on the age of your group, considering introducing the word "generosity."

Week Five ELEMENTARY Devotion:

In Scripture, Jesus stands up for those who were treated unfairly. We see a picture of this when He flipped over the tables where people were selling things unjustly. His actions showed deep care for the poor and reminded the people that God's house is meant to be a place of prayer, justice, and love.

One part of lent is a word called "almsgiving," or more simply, being generous. Almsgiving is about more than giving money. It is about sharing what we have: our time, kindness, attention, and compassion. Jesus teaches us that loving God also means loving our neighbors.

During Lent, generosity helps shift our focus outward. We begin to notice the needs of others and look for ways to respond with love. When we give, we reflect God's generous heart.

Week Five BONUS idea:

Invite children to list three ways they can help someone this week (at home, school, or church). Encourage them to choose one to commit to and do during this week.

Week Six: How Does Getting Rid of Selfishness Change How I Live?

Scripture References: *Luke 9:23, John 15:13*

Week Six PRESCHOOL Devotion:

Jesus teaches us to love others, not just ourselves. Sometimes that means sharing, helping, or being kind even when it's hard. It doesn't mean we stop being ourselves; it means we try to choose love.

The people who waved palm branches to praise Him also hurt Him a few days later. But Jesus showed us the biggest love by caring for others, even when it was hard for Him.

Lent is a time to practice little ways of showing Jesus' love every day, like being patient, saying sorry, helping quietly, or sharing with friends. When we choose to be kind and helpful, no matter what, we help others see God's love through us.

Week Six ELEMENTARY Devotion:

Jesus teaches us that following Him often involves getting rid of our own selfishness. This means giving up our own needs and comforts so that others can know Jesus more. This does not mean we stop being ourselves. Instead, it means we choose love even when it costs us something, like our time, comfort, or pride.

Jesus' shows us and tells us what this life of love looks like: He says, "Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Think about how the same people who waved palm branches to praise Jesus also said and did hurtful things to him just a few days later. But Jesus chose to show love to them anyway! And we can show this love, even when it's hard, by being patient, forgiving others, or serving quietly.

When the Holy Spirit works in us to get rid of selfishness, it changes how others experience God through us. When we choose kindness and humility, we become living examples of Jesus' love in the world.

Week Six BONUS idea:

Ask kids to think of one way they can put someone else first this week. Have them draw it and hang them around the church as a reminder. Close by reminding them that even small sacrifices can show big love.