



Making Room

Journeying together
through Lent

Songs

[Open the Eyes of My Heart](#)
[My Jesus I Love Thee](#)

“Thank You,” by Bryan Moyer Suderman (see [Spotify playlist](#))

I will actually be teaching my kids these songs all month, but also, throughout the day we’ll also be listening to a public [Spotify playlist](#) I’ve created just for this season.

Memorization [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

Because prayer has always been one of Lent’s emphases, this is a great time for kids to memorize the one that Jesus taught his disciples. I anticipate that we will be working with it the entire seven weeks, both as a something to memorize and actually pray, and then also as a form to personalize. I’ll talk with them about how this prayer begins with worship, both recognizing God’s intimacy (“My Father”) and transcendence (“who is in heaven, Holy is your name”). We then think about the nature of God’s kingdom and His will (What does God want for our world, and how can we be a part of that?). Next we ask God to care for our needs and worries, forgive our sins, and protect/ strengthen us in temptation. Most scholars believe that the ending to this prayer (“For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, amen.”) to be a later addition, but I’ll still teach it because it’s traditionally spoken when used publicly.

If memorization is new to your family, I would highly recommend that you begin working on it in the car and during meals, as you’ll have a more captivated audience! To begin, I’ll simply say a short phrase and have them repeat it. We also go around the table, each taking a word or a phrase, until we’ve all done it. Also, don’t underestimate the power of just praying it, everyday. You might be surprised at how quickly they catch on with consistent repetition.

Bible Stories Parable of the Sower ([Matthew 13:1-9](#); [18-23](#))

We also tell our Bible stories during meals. With this parable, I’ll probably choose to tell the story instead of reading it from the Bible, because I don’t want to distract us with the seed that fell on the path or on rocky soil. Instead, I’ll say something like “In one of his parables, Jesus said that God’s word can be like seed that falls among dormant thorns. The seed of God’s word sprouts and begins growing, but is quickly choked out by everything else that is also growing up all around it. But it can also be like seed that is

sown into good, fertile soil, that has the space and nutrients to help it grow strong and produce lots and lots of fruit.” I’ll then ask them questions about our garden and lead them to draw conclusions about how the same can apply to our lives. I’ll then frame Lent in this context and ask them for ideas on how we can cultivate the soil of our hearts, in the coming weeks. This would be a great time both to talk about habits or to actually plant some seeds (per the suggested activities below). If you are planning on having a garden, now is the perfect time to begin tomatoes and peppers indoors. Cherry tomatoes would be especially fun, in that they’ll really take off between now and Easter, and will then be fun to eat, this summer.

The Lord’s Prayer ([Luke 11:1](#), [Matthew 6:9-13](#))

I’ll give the setting of Luke 11, but then use the text of Matthew 6. See above for how I plan to introduce and teach it.

Solitude in Prayer ([Matthew 6:5-8](#); [Luke 6:12-13](#))

I will read both of these texts, and then ask questions about them, such as “Why does Jesus say we should pray in a closet? What’s the danger of praying in public? What does God say is the consequence for receiving our praise from other people?” and “Why did Jesus go up on the mountain to pray by himself before naming the 12?”

For the first few years of our kids’ lives, most of their praying has been done with us. But more recently I’ve been encouraging my 4 year old, especially, to begin taking steps to developing a relationship with God apart from me. I really like the idea of working together to create some sort of prayer closet, tent, or corner where any family member could go (but especially the kids) to be alone with God. It could be decorated with comfy pillows, beautiful books (like [Danielle Hitchen’s Psalms of Praise!](#)), and depending on their ages maybe even a CD player ready to play some worship songs. And remember-prayer doesn’t have to include words! Encourage your kids to listen peacefully while resting in God’s love!

Activities

- Planting seeds (see above)
- Make a special prayer closet, corner, or tent (see above)
- Choose family habits to uproot and add-in between now and Easter (see above)
- Simplify meals (soup and bread)

For this final idea, one of the most common emphases of Lent is simple living and eating. Thus, I’m looking forward to it being a season of simple soups and breads. We’ll talk more about food in one of the coming weeks, but I wouldn’t wait until then to begin! If your kids are older and understand this, you could even compare the cost of your family’s typical meal with that of a “simple meal,” in order to give the savings to Hope Ministries or Salvation Army.

Children's Book

[Making Room](#) by Laura Alary

Additional Reading

[Celtic Benediction](#) by J. Philip Newell

[Freedom of Simplicity](#) by Richard Foster