

LENTEN ACTIVITIES

*for families
& friends*

PAPER CHAIN

Create a paper chain by adding a link for each day from Ash Wednesday through Easter:

- ◆ Begin with an orange link on Ash Wednesday (February 17). Write or draw on the link a way that your family hopes to grow during Lent.
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next three days (February 18-20). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on the First Sunday in Lent (February 21). On the link, write or draw something that your family hopes to change (a habit, an attitude, etc.).
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next six days (February 22-27). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on the Second Sunday in Lent (February 28). On the link, write or draw something that your family has taken for granted (your home, toys, food, etc.).
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next six days (March 1-6). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on the Third Sunday in Lent (March 7). On the link, write or draw a way that your family can help someone else.
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next six days (March 8-13). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on the Fourth Sunday in Lent (March 14). On the link, write or draw a way that your family can worship God together.
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next six days (March 15-20). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on the Fifth Sunday in Lent (March 21). On the link, write or draw a way that your family can support your church or community.

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- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next six days (March 22-27). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a white link on Palm Sunday (March 28). On the link, write or draw a way that your family can offer praise to Jesus.
- ◆ Add a purple link on each of the next three days (March 29-31). On each link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a red link on Maundy Thursday (April 1). On the link, write or draw what communion or the Lord's Supper means to your family.
- ◆ Add a brown link on Good Friday (April 2). On the link, write or draw a reason your family is grateful for Jesus.
- ◆ Add a purple link on the next day (April 3). On the link, write or draw someone or something for which your family is praying.
- ◆ Add a gold link on Easter Sunday (April 4). On the link, write or draw what Easter means to your family.

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

The season of Lent is a good time for families to find ways to spend time together—either in person or virtually. Seasonal ideas include:

- ◆ Taking a walk, and noticing signs of spring.
- ◆ Planting seeds or bulbs indoors.
- ◆ Baking cookies to share with someone who is ill or homebound.
- ◆ Writing letters or making cards to send to friends or family members.
- ◆ Reading the Bible and/or books and stories with Lenten themes.

PRETZELS

The pretzel comes to us from Lent. As far back as 1,500 years ago, small breads made from flour, water, and salt were eaten during Lent. They replaced the regular bread made with eggs, milk, and butter. People of that time were strict about the Lenten fast and avoided eating meat, cheese, cream, milk, butter, and eggs. To remind themselves that Lent was a time of prayer, they twisted the dough into shapes that looked like crossed arms.

1 1/2 cups lukewarm water
 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 teaspoon salt
 4 cups all-purpose flour
 1 package dry yeast
 1 beaten egg
 coarse salt

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Let rise until doubled. Add sugar and salt. Blend in flour. Turn onto floured surface. Knead until smooth. Cut off 4-inch pieces of dough. Roll into 6- to 8-inch ropes. Twist into pretzel shapes. Arrange on a lightly greased baking sheet. Brush all over with a beaten egg. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake immediately for 12 to 15 minutes at 425 degrees.

SCENTED SOAP BALLS

Some of our Lenten customs have been borrowed from Passover traditions. Thorough house cleaning during this springtime observance has a religious significance for Jewish families. Among Christians, this house cleaning has come to symbolize the “cleaning” that is to take place in one’s spirit and heart during Lent.

Cut up three bars of white soap, or save thin soap leftovers. Chop the soap into small slivers, or shave it with a vegetable peeler. Pour 1 1/2 cups of boiling water over 2 teaspoons of an aromatic herb, such as sage, mint, rosemary, thyme, or lavender. Allow to steep for a few minutes. Strain out the herbs, and pour the hot water over the cut-up soap. Mix well with your hands. The soap chips should be moist, but not “soupy.” Set aside for about fifteen minutes until the mixture is mushy. Mix the softened soap again, and divide into five parts. Place each portion on an eight-inch square of muslin or cheesecloth. Form balls with your hands. Pull the cloth tightly around each ball. Gather the cloth at the top, and tie it firmly with string. Hang the soap balls in a warm place to dry for about three days or until the soap is completely hard. Remove the fabric wrapping. Place the soap balls in a basket or dish. (Wrap in tissue paper if the soap is to be given away.)

HOT CROSS BUNS

Hot cross buns originated in England during medieval times. They originally were made as a special bread for Good Friday, but now the buns are baked throughout the season of Lent. According to tradition, on Good Friday in 1361, Father Rocliff, a monk and the cook of St. Alban’s in Hertfordshire, gave each poor person who came to the abbey a spiced bun marked with the sign of the cross, along with a bowl of soup.

- 1 box hot roll mix
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup seedless raisins
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup confectioners sugar
- 2 teaspoons water
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

Prepare hot roll mix as directed on box. Add the next four ingredients. Divide and shape into buns. Bake as directed on box. Mix confectioners sugar, water, and melted butter. (Add more sugar if needed.) Make a cross on each cooled bun with icing.

BUTTERFLY SNACKS

Easter celebrations bring to mind traditional foods, such as spring lamb or ham, asparagus, hard-boiled eggs, holiday breads, and jelly beans. Create a new tradition by featuring a favorite Easter symbol—the butterfly.

Cut toast diagonally. Place the pieces on a plate with the triangles joined to resemble a butterfly. For breakfast, spread the toast with a fruit-flavored cream cheese. Add an orange section for the body and slivers of orange peel for the antennae. For a lunchtime snack, spread the toast with a colorful vegetable cream cheese. Use a baby carrot for the body and green-pepper strips for antennae.

ALMSGIVING

The giving of gifts to individuals who are less fortunate is often a focus during Lent. Some people give up spending money on themselves (for treats, entertainment, etc.) and give that money to help others.

Some ideas that your family might want to use during Lent include:

- ◆ Donate money based on your gratitude for the many things your family has (one penny for each crayon in your home, one quarter for each window in your house, one nickel for each pair of shoes your family owns, etc.).
- ◆ Select a treat (candy, soft drinks, fast-food meals, etc.) that each member of your family is willing to give up during Lent. Donate the money that you would have spent on those treats.
- ◆ Use coupons whenever you shop during Lent. Donate the money that you save.

OTHER RESOURCES

- ◆ *Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter* (book) by Laura Alary
<https://www.amazon.com/Make-Room-Childs-Guide-Easter/dp/1612616593>
- ◆ *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home* (book) by Traci Smith
<https://www.amazon.com/Faithful-Families-Creating-Sacred-Moments/dp/0827211228>
- ◆ *Lent in a Box* (downloadable resource)
<https://michiganumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Lent-in-a-Box-compressed.pdf>
- ◆ *Holy Week in a Box* (downloadable resource)
<https://michiganumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Holy-Week-in-a-Box-1.pdf>

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Lent 2021

ELDER CARE MINISTRIES

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