

## Prayer Celebration

**Preparation:** Arrange a table with a purple cloth, a Bible, and a cross. In front of the table, place a basket or ceramic bowl, large enough to hold a small stone for each child. Place markers nearby.

*Gather the children together in front of the prayer table.*

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Jesus, each day of Lent is a chance to show our love for you. May each step we take during this holy season bring us closer to you.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Let us listen to the Word of God.

**Reader:** A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians.

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”  
(Philippians 4:8)

**Leader:** During the season of Lent, we remember how Jesus gave his life for us and how he asks us to show our love for God, for each other, and for ourselves. We do this by praying, by doing good, and by helping the poor.

*Leader distributes the stones and markers, and invites the children to use the markers to draw a sign that will remind them of Jesus during Lent. When everyone has finished, conclude with the following prayer.*

**Leader:** Invite the children to repeat each line of the prayer after it is read.

“Again we keep this solemn fast,  
A gift of faith from ages past,  
This Lent which binds us lovingly  
To faith and hope and charity.

More sparing, therefore, let us make  
The words we speak, the food we take,  
Our sleep, our laughter, ev’ry sense;  
Learn peace through holy penitence.”

(Prayer of Gregory the Great)

**Leader:** Conclude the prayer service by inviting the children to place their stone in a place that will remind them of the road through Lent. If desired, sing a closing song.

## The Road to Lent Leads to Easter

The word *Lent* comes from an Old English word, which means “to lengthen.” For those living in the Northern Hemisphere, the season coincides with spring, a time in which the days lengthen. The increased light causes trees to bud and flowers to blossom. New life emerges all around us.

Lent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ’s Death and Resurrection at Easter. Lasting for forty days — from Ash Wednesday to the evening of Holy Thursday — the season draws us towards the light of Christ. The Church invites us to stretch ourselves towards that light through three traditional practices: prayer, penance, and almsgiving. Each one has both a personal and communal context. In our individual lives, we craft a Lenten routine that draws us

into a desert of simplicity through daily acts of meditation, self-restraint, and generosity. As members of the faith community, we join together to celebrate the Eucharist during the six Sundays of Lent, and to take part in other sacramental and seasonal rituals, such as Ash Wednesday, the Stations of the Cross, and communal celebrations of Penance and Reconciliation.

The road through Lent leads us towards the promise of Christ’s new and abundant life. Each step along the way brings us closer to the Paschal Mystery and to the light that emanates from an empty tomb and gives rise to a garden of grace. Our “alleluias,” stilled for a time during Lent’s forty days, arise anew as we proclaim our faith: Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

### Suggested Activities




- Brainstorm a list of healthy habits — those practices that help us maintain our physical well-being. Explain that the three Lenten practices of prayer, penance, and giving to the poor are like “healthy habits” for the soul. They keep us focused during Lent on the sacrifices Christ made for us, and the call to holiness that he extends to us.
- Christ’s journey on Calvary when they could not make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Invite the children to work individually or with others to make simple drawings of each of the Stations of the Cross, and to write a short prayer to accompany each one. Post these along a hallway or around the classroom as a way to pray during Lent.



### Bright Ideas

To find additional activities for your class, visit [WeBelieveWeb.com](http://WeBelieveWeb.com).

### Directions

Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Easter and the new life that Jesus brings us. We follow Jesus through the forty days of Lent by praying , doing good things for others , and helping the poor . Complete the steps on the road to Lent by filling in a way to pray, do good, or help others. Some ideas are already in place. Then put your ideas into practice!

### The Road to Lent

Ask Jesus to help you walk the road through Lent.



Name one thing you could "give up" for Lent.



Draw a picture of Jesus praying in the desert.

Write a card to someone who is sick or sad.



Act out a story about Jesus healing someone.



Design a Lenten prayer space.

Write a prayer asking Jesus to help those in need.



Try not to complain about anything today.



Write a prayer thanking Jesus for the new life he gives us.



Write a prayer for the people in your parish.



Give away one of your toys or games.

Look back on your road through Lent. Tell how it brought you closer to Jesus.

### EASTER