

Six Things You Can Do For Lent In Your Congregation

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1. Make a poster (or small hand-out posters) displaying the prominent days of Lent in 2005. Add pictures or photos.

February 8:	Shrove Tuesday (introduction to Lent)
February 9:	Ash Wednesday
February 13:	1st Sunday in Lent
February 20:	2nd Sunday in Lent
February 27:	3rd Sunday in Lent
March 6:	4th Sunday in Lent
March 13:	5th Sunday in Lent
March 20:	Palm Sunday
March 24:	Maundy Thursday
March 25:	Good Friday
March 26:	Easter Vigil
March 27:	Easter Sunday

2. Challenge people to add something to Lent. Remind people that the Catholic tradition for celebrating Lent is to give something up. The Protestant tradition is to add something. Challenge members of your congregation—children, youth, young adults and older adults—to name one good thing they will add to their celebration of Lent.

3. Make up symbol riddles for each Sunday in Lent. Print the question in the bulletin one Sunday, the answer the next. Or, if you have an opening time in your Sunday school, display an item (e.g. a pancake) and pose the question. The answer can be given right then or the following week when a second "symbol riddle" is added.

Here are some examples:

Q: What do pancakes have to do with Lent?

A: Pancakes are traditionally eaten on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday is a day to have fun, dance and play before beginning a special time of thinking about Jesus. We call this time "Lent." Some people used to fast or not eat much during the time of Lent. Pancakes were eaten to use up the fat, eggs and butter in the home.

Q: What does the colour purple have to do with Lent?

A: Each season of the Christian year has a colour that goes along with the season. This helps us remember what part of the Christian year we are celebrating. The colour purple is associated with Lent because purple is a "royal colour," a colour that kings wear. Purple reminds us that Jesus is like a special king to us.

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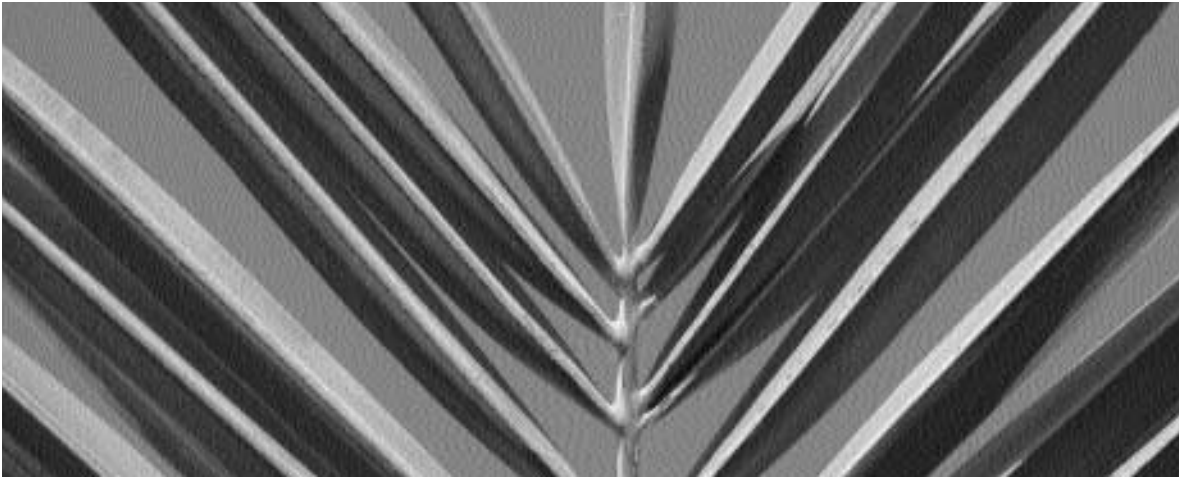
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Q: What do ashes have to do with Lent?

A: Ash Wednesday follows Pancake (Shrove) Tuesday and is the first day of Lent. Ashes remind us of deadness. In Old Testament times dust and ashes were used as a sign of sorrow. In some churches on Ash Wednesday, ashes are rubbed on people's foreheads to remind them of Jesus' sorrow as he drew near the cross.

Q: What do palm branches have to do with Lent?

A: We use palm branches to remember the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Palms were a sign of hope. When a tired and thirsty traveler was in the desert and saw a palm tree, he was delighted because he knew he was near an oasis and that gave him hope.



Q: What does the crowing rooster have to do with Lent and Easter?

A: The Bible tells us a story about Jesus talking to Peter just before Jesus died. Jesus told Peter that before the rooster crowed three times in the morning, Peter would be so scared that he would say he didn't know Jesus. Peter said, "No! No! This isn't possible." But, in fact, it did happen. The rooster reminds us that sometimes we, too, disappoint Jesus.

Q: What does the cross have to do with Lent and Easter?

A: The cross represents the way in which Jesus died. Sometimes we wear gold crosses around our necks as jewelry to remind us of the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Q: What does the crown of thorns have to do with Lent and Easter?

A: Crowns full of beautiful jewels were worn by kings. The soldiers made fun of Jesus and called out, "Are you the king of the Jews?" To make fun of him they placed a crown of sharp thorns on his head. Now we think of the crown of thorns as a powerful picture of God's love for us.

3. Make for each member of the congregation a **Path to Easter** chart. (Simply print or enlarge the following. Invite members to pause and pray on each of the special days on the last day of Lent.

The Path to Easter

Easter Sunday Morning
"The Lord is risen!"
Celebrate with joy.

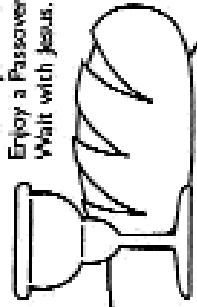


Saturday Evening Vigil
Meet others in darkness.
Pray and sing. At midnight, light candles.
Declare, "Christ has conquered death!"

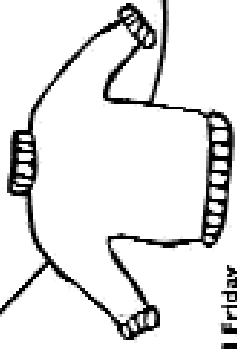
Holy Saturday
Rest for the Vigil.
Do quiet activities.



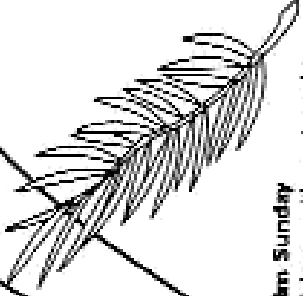
Maundy Thursday
Enjoy a Passover meal.
Wash with Jesus.



Good Friday
Let your spirit fall with grief.
Turn down the heat. Wear a sweater.
Eat lightly or fast. Sit in darkness.



Palm Sunday
Celebrate with waving palms.
Welcome the King.



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4. Make a Lenten Tree.

Pour plaster of paris into an empty coffee can and embed a tree branch in the soft plaster. Let harden.

Challenge members of your congregation (children, youth, young adults, older adults) to remember and list 40 different stories of Jesus.

As the stories are remembered, draw something about the story on oval, egg-shaped paper or cardboard. Punch a hole in the paper, add a ribbon and tie it to your tree.

Alternatively, you can challenge members of your congregation (all ages) to do this at home during the week and bring it to the church on Sunday. They can tell others what they have drawn or if, they are shy, ask the minister to do this for them.

5. Host a **Thirty Pieces of Silver Meal**. This could be a potluck dinner, Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner or seder meal. The admission is 30 pieces of silver. The 30 coins symbolize the money Judas received for betraying Jesus to the Jewish authorities and reminds us of our need for repentance. Do a short drama to re-enact the story at the dinner.

6. Set up and use during Lent a **Walk to Good Friday**. Urge people to do this many times. If you have a church hall, set it up there and invite people after worship to walk through it as they are enjoying their coffee. Alternatively, set up three centres for each of the four Sundays of Lent, or invite people to adapt this for home use.

If you have a large church, you may have two readers for every station. If you have a small church, the same two readers may rotate from station to station. As organizer, you will need to set out symbols prior to rotating through the centres.

Station 1: *a crèche, a globe*

Reader 1: Read Genesis 1:1, 3, 4, 26, 27

Reader 2: Read Luke 2: 5-7

Both readers: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.

Readers offer a handshake of peace before moving on.

Station 2: *a baby's blanket in a heap*

Reader 1: Read Genesis 2: 22-23

Reader 2: Read Luke 2:14, 16a

Both readers: And the earth seemed desolate and formless once again.

Allow a moment of silence before moving on.

Station 3: *a suitcase or backpack, pair of sandals*

Reader 1: Read Genesis 12: 1, 4-5a

Reader 2: Read Luke 2: 19-20, 22a

Both readers: We move from our places of security, in faith, O God. We have nothing else.

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Station 4: *a small pile of stones*

Reader 1: Read Exodus 17: 3-4

Reader 2: Read Matthew 4:1-3

Both readers: Help us see the deserts of our own lives as places where your Spirit can break through to us.

Station 5: *a bowl of water*

Reader 1: Read Exodus 17: 5a, 6a

Reader 2: Read John 4: 11, 13-14

Both readers swish their hands as if through water. Let it run through the fingers and say: Water is life. Thanks be to God!

Station 6: *small bowl of olive oil*

Reader 1: Read 1 Samuel 16: 1, 3, 12, 13

Reader 2: Read John 1: 35-36, 40-41

Readers dip a finger into oil. Mark the forehead or hand of each person and say: You are God's precious child, (their name.)

Station 7: *large bone and a blue balloon*

Reader 1: Read Ezekiel 37: 1, 4, 5

Reader 2: Read John 11: 17, 20, 39, 43)

Invite people to close their eyes and take several deep breaths. As a signal to opening the eyes, both readers say, Fill us with your Spirit, O God. Breathe new life into us.

Station 8: *jug of water, basin, soap, towel*

Reader 1: Read Isaiah 50:4

Reader 2: John 13: 2, 4-5

Take turns washing and drying one another's hands or feet.

Station 9: *loaf of bread*

Reader 1: Read Exodus 16: 11, 12, 14, 15

Reader 2: Read Matthew 26: 26-28

Share the bread by passing it to one another saying: The bread of life.

Station 10: *a glass of salted water*

Reader 1: Read Lamentations 1: 16a, 17a

Reader 2: Matthew 26: 37b-39a

Invite everyone to dip a finger in the salted water and taste it.

Station 11: *a board, hammer, several large nails*

Reader 1: Read Isaiah 53: 3, 8

Reader 2: The girl at the gate said to Peter, "Aren't you also one of the disciples of that man?"

Reader 1: "No. I swear. I do not know this man."

Reader 2: And Pilate asked the crowd, "Which one do you want me to set free for you? What shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?"

Both readers: Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!

Take turns pounding nails into the wood.

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Station 12: *cross draped with black or red material*

Reader 1: Luke 23:24, Mark 15:33

Reader 2: Genesis 1:1-2

Reader 1: And his mother stood at the foot of the cross and watched her creation, her beloved son, lose blood, and breathe and slowly die. But she could not leave his side or run away. She stayed there quietly, saying, "I love you, son. You are my beloved." And she did not know if his body could hear her words, but she knew his spirit could. And so she stayed. She remembered his birth, his childhood, and remembered his arms around her. While she stood at the foot of her son's cross, the other women held her and wept with her. They sat in that great formless and desolate darkness. And her beloved, son, Jesus, died.

Stand/sit quietly with bowed head.