

# Lenten Ideas for Children

## Fasting

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- ✓ Give up one TV show today and spend that time helping a family member.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Woman at the Well in chapter 4 of the Gospel of John, verses 5-30.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Blind Man in chapter 9 of the Gospel of John, verses 1, 6-11, 35-38.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of Lazarus in chapter 11 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-7, 17-44.
- ✓ Give up one TV show or the radio or music for 30 minutes and read the story of the Good Shepherd in chapter 10 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-18.
- ✓ Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and spend a few minutes praying for the needs of others.
- ✓ Give up something that you enjoy today (like dessert or snacks) and donate 25¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up buying something new (clothes, CD, magazine, jewelry) and donate 50¢ to your Operation Rice Bowl box.
- ✓ Give up going to a movie or other fun activity and donate the money from this activity to your Operation Rice Bowl box or other people in need in your community.
- ✓ Think about a bad habit that you would like to change, like telling a lie, yelling at others, getting angry, or putting people down, and choose to avoid that habit and do something positive instead.
- ✓ Think about someone you are angry with or who has hurt you. Ask God for the courage to forgive and pray for that person each day. Think about one thing that is good about them.
- ✓ Share lots of smiles today.
- ✓ Give a hug to everyone in your family.
- ✓ Compliment each person in your family some time today.
- ✓ Give up complaining, frowns, and negative thoughts today.

## Praying

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- ✓ Read the story of Palm Sunday, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, in the Gospels of Matthew 21:1-11 or Mark 11:1-10 or Luke 19:28-40.
- ✓ Read the story of the Last Supper of Jesus in chapter 13 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-15.
- ✓ Read the story of Easter chapter 20 of the Gospel of John, verses 1-9.
- ✓ Pray the "Our Father" three times today – in the morning when you get up, at noontime, and when you go to bed.
- ✓ Say a prayer for someone who is sick today.
- ✓ Pray for a forgiving heart and ask the people you have hurt to forgive you.
- ✓ Participate in Ash Wednesday services with your family.
- ✓ Participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent.
- ✓ Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent.
- ✓ Rent the video, *The Prince of Egypt*. Watch the video and read the story of Moses from the Book of Exodus, chapters 2-15. Try to read one chapter each day. Be sure to read the story of the Passover in chapters 12 through 13:22.
- ✓ List three blessings you have been given. Say a prayer to God, giving thanks for the blessings in your life.
- ✓ Pray for the children and families who are homeless, and think about ways you and your family might help them.

# Serving/Almsgiving

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- ✓ Show an act of kindness to each family member today.
- ✓ Show an act of kindness to a friend and to someone who is difficult to like.
- ✓ Together with your family, spend time serving others during Lent. Work at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Visit elderly people who are in nursing homes or are shut-ins.
- ✓ Bring food or clothing to the parish or community food pantry, food bank, or homeless shelter.
- ✓ Do someone else's chores one day this week.
- ✓ Donate a new item of children's clothing to the local homeless shelter or clothing center.
- ✓ Go through your closet and find some clothes in good shape to give away to other children who are in need of clothes.
- ✓ Write a letter or create a card for someone who is sick or might be lonely.
- ✓ Buy a can of food to give to a food bank or homeless shelter.
- ✓ Talk with your family about eating one simple meal each week of Lent and putting the money you save in the Operation Rice Bowl box or giving the money to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.

## *Lenten Ideas for Adults*

### Fasting

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- ✓ fast from watching television one night each week so that you can spend time on a Lenten practice, such as praying, reading the Bible, serving others
- ✓ fast from one movie during Lent and give the money... and the time in service to others
- ✓ fast from using foul language and put-downs and start affirming the good in other people
- ✓ fast from buying new things like clothes, music, magazines, or jewelry and make a donation...
- ✓ fast from spending money on entertainment and make a donation of time or money that serves others
- ✓ fast from holding resentments and start practicing forgiveness
- ✓ fast from gossiping or being dishonest and start the practice of always being truthful and honest
- ✓ fast from a favorite snack food or drink and set aside the money you would have spent to donate to a special charity
- ✓ fast from being angry or upset with people who have hurt or offended you, and pray for the courage to forgive them
- ✓ fast from feeling guilty and angry at yourself for things you have done wrong, instead remember God's great love for you

# Praying

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- ✓ read the Lenten Scripture readings through Lent; here's a list for each week of Lent:
  - (1) Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (Ash Wednesday)
  - (2) Matthew 4:1-11 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)
  - (3) Matthew 17:1-19 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)
  - (4) John 4:5-42 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday)
  - (5) John 9:1-41 (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)
  - (6) John 11:1-45 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)
  - (7) Matthew 21:1-11 (Passion Sunday)
  - (8) John 13:1-15 (Holy Thursday)
  - (9) John 18:1 – 19:42 (Good Friday)
  - (10) John 20:1-9 (Easter)
- ✓ participate in Ash Wednesday services
- ✓ participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent
- ✓ participate in the Lenten Sunday liturgies
- ✓ participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent
- ✓ spend fifteen minutes a day praying during Lent: give thanks to God for all your blessings, pray for a specific personal need prompted by the day's experience, and pray for those who are in need or suffering in your community and the world

# Serving/Almsgiving

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- ✓ donate personal possessions, such as clothes, books, shoes, to people in need
- ✓ dedicate time for service during Lent, e.g., working at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, helping people in your neighborhood such as the elderly
- ✓ donate food or money saved by fasting to the parish or community food pantry, food bank, or homeless shelter
- ✓ cook a meal for the soup kitchen or homeless shelter, gather some friends to help
- ✓ volunteer at a local soup kitchen, homeless shelter or nursing home several hours per week during Lent
- ✓ support organizations that provide direct relief to people in need:
  - *Catholic Relief Services*, 209 West Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-3403
  - *Heifer Project International*, P.O. Box 808, Little Rock, AR 72203
- ✓ support the work of Habitat for Humanity, Donate money or your time to build a house. A gift of \$20 purchases a 50-pound box of nails, \$35 helps to purchase a living room window, \$50 helps to pay for an interior door. Contact Donna about how you can be involved.
- ✓ learn more about feeding the hungry by contacting Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301-608-2400)
- ✓ learn more about addressing human rights violations around the world by contacting Amnesty International ([amnesty.org](http://amnesty.org))
- ✓ volunteer to read books and magazines to the elderly who are no longer able to read
- ✓ help others learn to read by becoming a literacy trainer or volunteer to tutor children
- ✓ work to change the structures of injustice by joining the work of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby at ([networklobby.org](http://networklobby.org))
- ✓ work to overcome child sweatshops by supporting the work of Free the Children, (FTP, 603 N. Oak St., Falls Church, VA 22046, 703-534-7045)
- ✓ support the work of the hospice movement to provide compassionate low-cost, in-patient and at-home care for the terminally ill, contact the National Hospice Movement at 1-800-658-8898
- ✓ give the gift of sight by donating old eyeglasses or unused frames to the local Lion's Club who recycles them to the poor
- ✓ support the national work of Covenant House as they house and care for homeless youth (P.O. Box 731, Times Square Station, NY, NY 10108-0731)