

Make a Lenten Cross for your Weekly Home Lenten Devotions

Lent is 40 days (excluding Sundays) prior to Easter, set aside to reflect on the ministry of Jesus, on our lives, to ask forgiveness and for the strength to do better. Forty days is the time Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for His ministry. Having a Lenten cross is strikingly similar to having an Advent wreath. You put the candles on your table and light a new one each Sunday during Lent until it's Easter time. While an Advent wreath is shaped in a circle, the candles at Lent are in the shape of a cross. During both Advent and Lent, there is one Sunday that has the liturgical color of pink (or more specifically, "rose") rather than purple. In Advent, the pink Sunday is called "Gaudete (or Joy) Sunday". During Lent, the pink Sunday is called "Laetare (or Rejoice) Sunday". It's the fourth Sunday of Lent – when we need a little break from the sorrow of Lent.

You will need: a small tray – a paper plate will be fine – a purple one if you can get one; sand (to represent the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert - excluding Sundays); six votive candles (if you can, get five purple and one pink but any color will do); matches; a Bible. If you wish a small white candle can be used on Easter Sunday. Fill the plate with sand and place your candles in the shape of a cross and twist them a bit to get them to sit down into the sand. Use the devotions below on the five Sundays of Lent.



Weekly Lenten Thoughts and Reflections

Week One – Lenten Resolutions

Christians have given special attention to prayer, fasting and charitable giving during Lent. One way to do this is to write down your resolution on a piece of paper and seal it in an envelope. Place this envelope in a prominent site to remind you of your resolution. You could use the Bible daily to direct your praying. You could do without a meal one day a week and use that money to help a food pantry. You could set aside some time to volunteer at a charitable organization in your community.

Week Two – Plant a seed

John 12:24 -Jesus asks us to die to ourselves in baptism so that we can yield good fruit. To get a good look at what it means for a seed to die, plant a bean seed in a clear jar filled with dirt. Plant the seed near the edge of the jar so you can watch the seed. What happens to the old seed? Those of us who have already been baptized die with Jesus by putting our faith in Him daily. Remember the fruit of the spirit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22. How many 'fruits' do you bear?

Week Three – Prodigal Son, Forgiving Father

Read this parable of Jesus - Luke 15:11-32. It has much to say to us during Lent. Why did the father not object to the son's request? What made the son "come to himself?" Was the memory still alive in his heart of the goodness of his father? Why do you think the father didn't need to hear his son's explanations when he returned home? What a great man this father was to recognize what was at stake. Wouldn't you like to have a Father like this!

Week Four – Family Reading

Everybody loves a good book. Why not read together as a family during Lent? Set aside some time before dinner to read devotional material or read from the Bible. If you have young children, explain the scripture passage you read and talk about it. You may want to read from a children's Bible.

Week Five – Pretzels

Many centuries ago, a monk was trying to help his church school class with daily prayer. He took some leftover bread dough and shaped it like the way people used to pray – arms folded over their chest. He gave this treat to them as a reward for remembering their daily prayers. Try baking some pretzels during Lent to remind you that Jesus always prayed to God when He was troubled.

Week Six – Use a white candle on a colorful plate

Add your own Easter decoration. Use Easter eggs to symbolize the resurrection. Even jellybeans are symbolic. The Easter Candle is a wonderful way to recall that the Light of Christ is in our home and in our hearts - the Light of Christ that never goes out.