

Prayers for Lent

2009



 imago dei community

About this Booklet

This booklet is a guide for Imago Dei Community to read and pray through as we journey together this Lenten season. Its purpose is to help us begin to identify with Christ as He makes His journey to the cross. As we read about and meditate upon this story, we are called to both contemplate and respond. We are called to confess, to repent, and to follow in the dust of our Lord. It is a season in which we both recognize our brokenness and recognize the significance of Christ's work for us. We are ultimately driven to rely on the mercy of God, given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. We would encourage you to read and pray through this daily, not just to get through the page, but to search your soul and deal with what you find.

Let us begin with this Lenten prayer:

It is indeed right and good to give You thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ Your Son. For in these forty days You lead us into the desert of repentance, that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be Your people once again. Through fasting, prayer and acts of service You bring us back to Your generous heart. Through study of Your Holy Word You open our eyes to Your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendor of Your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds we bless You for Your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising You and saying: May God the Father, who does not despise the broken spirit, give to us a contrite heart. May Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree, heal us by his wounds. May the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth, speak to us words of pardon and peace.

Amen.

About Lent

Lent is a season of soul searching and repentance. It is a season for reflecting and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness.

Today we celebrate Lent for a forty-day period before Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday. Traditionally we skip Sundays when we count the forty days, because Sundays commemorate the resurrection. In the Bible the number 40 reminds us of the period spent in the ark by Noah, the period spent by Israel seeking the Promised Land after the Exodus and, of course, the amount of time Jesus was in the wilderness after His baptism and prior to beginning His ministry.

For us, Lent is an invitation to 40 days of renewal ("Lent" means "spring"), 40 days to prepare ourselves to take in the good news of Easter through deeper disciplines of prayer, fasting, and giving. Perhaps Lent is unfamiliar to you; everyone knows about Advent, the season surrounding Christmas, but the season before Easter is less popular. Frankly, Lent is the least marketable Church holiday in our culture because it is characterized by what you don't do and what you don't consume.

Traditionally, Christians gave up meat or alcohol or wore dark, unadorned clothing. Today, many Christians pick a vice or a habit, like smoking or consuming sugar or coffee, to give up during Lent. The money saved during this time can be tallied up at Easter and given to a charity. Some people find the cravings they experience can be redirected toward positive ends, such as a reminder to pray or to practice a chosen spiritual discipline. Thus, giving up a physical practice may make room for internal change, just as you replace a bad habit with a good one.

In the end, Lent is not just a time to give up one particular thing or another, but a time to give up your whole life to God. This can take any form, whether internal, external, personal or social.

Perhaps you might focus on some of the following:

- Spend time in solitude each day
- Read a book for inner growth
- Keep a prayer journal
- Focus on thanksgiving in prayer, rather than asking
- Make a list of people with whom you need to be reconciled; pray for them and let Jesus guide you in your thinking and feeling toward them
- Give up a grudge
- Forgive someone who has hurt you
- Take on some loving task
- Say “no” to something that is a waste of money and time
- Give blood and recall the cross
- Rebuke the spirit of criticism and pick a day to fast from any critical, judgmental, or sarcastic remarks
- Find a way to resist evil, injustice, and oppression through the power and liberty given by Christ

About the Prayers

This prayer book was created for the community of Imago Dei so that we can embrace the resurrection life together as a body during Lent. The selections are drawn from several church traditions: Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Puritan, and are designed to facilitate either brief devotionals or longer meditations.

Before you pray, be still so that your thoughts and feelings may be freed from distraction. Then pray without haste and with all your heart.

Ordering Your Prayers Daily

This is a suggestion for how to pray throughout your day.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Glory to You, O Lord. Glory to You.

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, the Treasure of good things and Giver of life, come and abide in us. Cleanse us from every stain and save our souls, O Good One.

The Trisagion (Holy Trinity) Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

O Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

O Master, pardon our iniquities.

O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy on us, for we are sinners.

Morning Prayer

O Holy Spirit of God, visit now this soul of mine, and tarry within it until the eventide. Inspire all my thoughts. Pervade all my imaginations. Suggest all my decisions. Lodge in my soul's most inward citadel, and order all my doings. Be with me in silence and in my speech, in my haste and in my leisure, in company and in solitude, in the freshness of the morning and the weariness of the evening; and give me grace at all times to rejoice in Thy mysterious companionship. Amen.

Evening Prayer

Eternal God, King of all creation, who has granted that I should live, even to this very hour: forgive me the sins which I have committed this day in thought, word, and deed; and cleanse my soul from every stain of flesh and spirit. Lord, grant me to pass through the sleep of this night in peace, so that when I rise from my bed I may please Your holy name all the days of my life. Lord, grant Your salvation upon my bed: enlighten my mind with the understanding of Your gospel, my soul with the love of Your cross, my heart with the purity of Your word and my body with the purity of Your will. Keep my thought in Your humility, and rouse me in good time to glorify You. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship and bow down before God our King.
Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ,
our King and our God.
Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ Himself,
our King and our God.

Scripture Reading

For Lent it is appropriate to read the Gospels, meditating on the words and actions of Christ during His ministry.
Feel free to incorporate any Psalms or regular devotional Scripture reading into this time.

Additional Prayer

Please pray any of the additional prayers. Remember, also, the specific needs within Imago Dei Community and around the world.
Feel free to pray your own prayer requests during this time, as well.

Closing Prayer

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
O Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through Your intercessions have mercy on us and save us, for You are good and love mankind. Amen.

Additional Prayers

Prayers for Lent

Transformation

This is the time of repentance.
This is the day of salvation.
This is the beginning of the new vision.
Be vigilant, my soul!
Close the door of your passions, and seek Christ, our Lord.
This is the day of the transformation.
For you, soul, let it be the setting aside of sin,
the return to Jesus; to life with Him.
Flee from evil. Turn towards Christ.
Follow His example, being gentle and humble of heart,
full of compassion and willing to suffer persecution
for the cause of justice.
Love only those ways which lead to peace,
resting before and within Christ.
By the mystery of your transformation on the mountain,
Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.

Lenten Blessing

God of times and seasons, You have brought us again to Lent for the study of Your Word, for the remembrance of the temptation of Your Son, and for the contemplation of His cross. The birds know their seasons; forbid that we be blind to our times. Grant us a Lenten blessing, and may no one miss this time of growth. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Lent of Repentance

Father of light, in You is found no shadow of change, but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts to the voice of Your Word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight, that we may look upon Your Son who calls us to repentance and a change of heart. God of all compassion, Father of all goodness, to heal the wounds our sins and selfishness bring upon us, You bid us turn to fasting, prayer, and sharing with our brothers. We acknowledge our sinfulness, our guilt is ever before us: when our weakness causes discouragement, let Your compassion fill us with hope and lead us through a Lent of repentance to the beauty of Easter joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer and Fasting

Let us perform a spiritual fast!
Let us loose every tie!
Let us flee from the pitfalls of sin!
Let us forgive our brother's debts
 that our transgressions may also be forgiven!
Then we will be able to sing
 "Let my prayer arise in Your sight as incense, Lord!"
Let us perform a spiritual fast.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. Instead give to me, Your servant, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, for You are Blessed from all ages to all ages. Amen.

Prayer for Lent

Dear Lord, we are now in the holy season of Lent. We begin to realize anew that these are the days of salvation, these are the acceptable days. We know that we are all sinners. We know that in many things we have all offended Your infinite majesty. We know that sin destroys Your life in us as a drought withers the leaves and chokes the life from the land, leaving an arid, dusty desert. Help us now, Lord, in our feeble attempts to make up for past sin. Bless our efforts with the rich blessing of Your grace. Help us to see, in our ordinary difficulties and duties, in the trials and temptations of every day, the best opportunity for Your grace. Every day we are so often reminded in field and wood, in sky and stream, of Your own boundless generosity to us. Help us to realize that You are never outdone in generosity, and that the least thing we do for You will be rewarded, full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and flowing over. Then we shall see, in our own souls, how the desert can blossom, and the dry and wasted land can bring forth the rich, useful fruit that was expected of it from the beginning. Amen.

Prayers of Contrition

Confession

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we

humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name. Amen.

Show Us through the Wilderness

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to Your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

We have grieved Your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to You, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

We confess to You, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

We confess to You, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done; for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of Your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

Accept our repentance, Lord

Restore us, good Lord, and let Your anger depart from us;

Hear us, Lord, for Your mercy is great.

God of love and mercy,

Show us through the wilderness.

Prayer of the Publican

O God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

The Awakened Sinner

O my forgetful soul, awake from thy wandering dream; turn from chasing vanities, look inward, forward, upward, view thyself, who and what thou art, why here, what thou must soon be.

Thou art a creature of God, formed and furnished by Him, lodged in a body like a shepherd in his tent; dost thou not desire to know God's ways?

Let the Spirit teach me the vital lessons of Christ, for I am slow to learn: Hear thou my broken cries.

Heart Corruptions

O God, may Thy Spirit speak in me that I may speak to Thee. I have no merit, let the merit of Jesus stand for me. I am undeserving, but I look to Thy tender mercy. I am full of infirmities, wants, sin; Thou art full of grace. I confess my sin, my frequent sin, my willful sin.

Lord, dost Thou have mercy on me? Thou hast struck a heavy blow at my pride, at the false god of self, and I lie in pieces before Thee. Grant me grace to bear Thy will without repining, and delight to be not only chiseled, squared, or fashioned, but separated from the old rock where I have been embedded so long, and lifted from the quarry to the upper air, where I may be built in Christ forever.

Prayers of Praise

You are Christ

You are Christ, my Holy Father, my Tender God, my Great King, my Good Shepherd, my Only Master, my Best Helper, my Most Beautiful and my Beloved, my Living Bread, my Priest Forever, my Leader to my Country, my True Light, my Holy Sweetness, my Straight Way, my Excellent Wisdom, my Pure Simplicity, my Peaceful Harmony, my Entire Protection, my Good Portion, my Everlasting Salvation.

How Breathes in Us

How breathes in us, O our Lord and God, the sweet fragrance of Thy love; illumined are our souls, through the knowledge of Thy truth: may we be rendered worthy of receiving the manifestation of Thy beloved from Thy holy heavens: there shall we render thanks unto Thee, and, in the meantime, glorify Thee without ceasing in Thy Church, crowned and filled with every aid and blessing, because Thou art Lord and Father, Creator of all.

Thanksgiving

O my God, I bless thee for the soul Thou hast created,
For adorning it, though it is fixed in barren soil;
For the body Thou hast given me,
For preserving its strength and vigor,
For providing senses to enjoy delights,
For the ease and freedom of my limbs,
For hands, eyes, ears that do Thy bidding;
For Thy royal bounty providing my daily support,
For a full table and overflowing cup,
For appetite, taste, sweetness,
For social joys of family and friends,
For ability to serve others,
For a heart that feels sorrows and necessities,
For a mind to care for my fellow men,
For opportunities of spreading happiness,
For loved ones in the joys of Heaven,
For my own expectations of seeing Thee clearly.
I love Thee for what Thou art to Thy creatures.
Increase my love, O my God, through time and eternity. Amen.

Prayers of Supplication

For Mercy

O God, the protector of all who trust in You, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us Your mercy; that, with You as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Valley of Vision

Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see Thee in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory. Let me learn by paradox, that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from

deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Thy stars shine. Let me find Thy light in my darkness, Thy life in my death, Thy joy in my sorrow, Thy grace in my sin, Thy riches in my poverty, Thy glory in my valley.

For Awareness

O Heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold Your gracious hand in all Your works; that, rejoicing in Your whole creation, we may learn to serve You with gladness; for the sake of Him through whom all things were made, Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Renewal

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of Your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Spouses for Each Other

Lord Jesus, grant that I and my spouse may have a true and understanding love for each other. Grant that we may both be filled with faith and trust. Give us the grace to live with each other in peace and harmony. May we always bear with one another's weaknesses and grow from each other's strengths. Help us to forgive one another's failings and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness and the spirit of placing the well-being of one another ahead of self. May the love that brought us together grow and mature with each passing year. Bring us both ever closer to You through our love for each other. Let our love grow toward perfection. Amen.

Intercession for the Living

Lord Jesus Christ, because of Your everlasting mercy and loving-kindness You became man, enduring crucifixion and death for the salvation of all who truly believe in You. You rose from the dead and now sit on the right hand of the Father, yet You hear the humble prayers of those who call upon You with all their heart. Turn now Your ear to Your servant who prays for all Your people Lord, have mercy and save my family and friends. Give them blessings now and salvation in the life to come.

Lord, have mercy and save the very old and the very young, the unborn, the needy, orphaned, widows, the sick and afflicted, those in sorrow and distress, the imprisoned, Christians who suffer for Your sake, those in military service and travelers. Remember them, and

come to them with strength and comfort and quickly deliver them. Lord, have mercy and save those who slander and work against me. Help me to love them, forgive them, and pray for their salvation. Bring those who fall from faith to the light of Your holy wisdom. Amen.

Prayer for the Nation

Lord, have mercy and save our rulers and all who protect us. Keep our nations at peace and subdue the enemies of good government. May our government be at peace with Your church and Your people, that we may be free to pursue right belief, virtue, and godly living. Amen.

Prayer for Mission

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give Your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous, and all for Your love's sake. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
Good Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled
as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Prayer for the Neglected

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before You all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of Your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Church Musicians and Artists

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in Heaven: Be ever present with Your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by Your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of Your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Today

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely on Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul, and the firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of this coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray Yourself in me. Amen.

Prayer for the Acceptance of God's Will

Lord, I do not know what to ask of You. You alone know what are my true needs. You love me more than I myself know how to love. Help me to see my real needs, which are concealed from me. I do not dare to ask either for a cross or for consolation. I can only wait on You. My heart is open to You. Visit and help me, for the sake of Your great mercy. Strike me and heal me; cast me down and raise me up. I worship in silence Your holy will and Your unsearchable ways. I offer myself as a sacrifice to You. I have no other desire than to fulfill Your will. Teach me to pray. Amen.

Prayers of Anticipation

Freedom

Holy Father, Thou hast freely given Thy Son,
O Divine Son, Thou has freely paid my debt,
O Eternal Spirit, Thou dost freely bid me come,
O Triune God, Thou dost freely grace me with salvation.
Prayers and tears could not suffice to pardon my sins,
nor anything less than atoning blood,

But my believing is my receiving,
for a thankful acceptance is no paying of the debt.
What didst Thou see in me?
That I a poor, diseased, despised sinner
should be clothed in Thy bright glory?
That a creeping worm
should be advanced to this high state?
That one lately groaning, weeping, dying,
should be as full of joy as my heart can hold?
That a being of dust and darkness
should be taken like Mordecai from captivity,
and set next to the King?
should be lifted like Daniel from a den
and be made ruler of princes and provinces?
Who can fathom immeasurable love?
As far as the rational soul exceeds the senses,
so does the spirit exceed the rational in its knowledge of Thee.
Thou has given me understanding to compass the earth,
measure the sun, moon, stars, universe,
but above all to know Thee, the only true God.
I marvel that the finite can know the Infinite;
here a little, afterwards in full-orbed truth;
Now I know but a small portion of what I shall know,
Here in part, there in perfection,
Here a glimpse, there a glory.
To enjoy Thee is life eternal, and to enjoy is to know.
Keep me in the freedom of experiencing Thy salvation continually.

The Brightness of God's Glory

Oh Christ, the brightness of God's glory and express image of His person, whom death could not conquer, nor the tomb imprison; as You have shared our mortal frailty in the flesh, help us to share Your immortal triumph in the spirit. Let no shadow of the grave affright us and no fear of darkness turn our hearts from You. Reveal Yourself to us as the First and the Last, the Living One, our Immortal Savior and Lord. Amen.

Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933)

O God Above All

O God above all, yet in all; holy beyond all imagination, yet Friend of sinners; You inhabit the realms of unfading light, yet lead us through the shadows of mortal life; how solemn and uplifting it is even to think about You. Like sight of sea to wearied eyes, like a

walled-in garden to the troubled mind, like home to wanderer, like a strong tower to a soul pursued; so to us is the sound of Your Name.

But greater still to feel You in our heart; like a river glorious, cleansing, healing, bringing life; like a song victorious, comforting our sadness, banishing our care; like a voice calling us to battle, urging us beyond ourselves.

But greater far to know You as our Father, as dear as You are near; and ourselves born of Your love, made in Your image, cared for through all our days, never beyond Your sight, never out of Your thought.

W.E. Orchard (1877-1955)

The Day of Resurrection!

The day of Resurrection!

Earth, tell it out abroad,

The Passover of gladness,

The Passover of God.

From death to life eternal,

From this world to the sky,

Our Christ has brought us over,

With hymns of victory.

St. John of Damascus (675-749)

Our Eternal Inheritance

Grant, Almighty God, since we have already entered in hope upon the threshold of our eternal inheritance, and know that there is a mansion for us in Heaven since Christ, our head and the first fruits of our salvation, has been received there; grant that we may proceed more and more in the way of Your holy calling until at length we reach the goal and so enjoy the eternal glory of which You have given us a taste in this world, by the same Christ our Lord.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

You Will Make All Things Work Together

I thank You, O God, for the relief and satisfaction of mind that come with the firm assurance that You govern the world; for the patience and resignation to Your providence that are afforded as I reflect that even the tumultuous and irregular actions of the sinful are, nevertheless, under Your direction, who are wise, good, and omnipotent, and have promised to make all things work together for good to those who love You.

Susanna Wesley (1669-1742)

Heaven Desired

O my Lord,
May I arrive where means of grace cease
And I need no more to fast, pray, weep, watch,
Be tempted, attend preaching and sacrament;
Where nothing defiles,
Where is no grief, sorrow, sin, death, separation, tears, pale face,
languid body, aching joints, feeble infancy, decrepit age, peccant
humours, pining sickness, gripping fears, consuming cares;
Where is personal completeness;
Where the more perfect the sight the more beautiful the object,
The more perfect the appetite the sweeter the food,
The more musical the ear the more pleasant the melody,
The more complete the soul the more happy its joys,
Where is full knowledge of Thee.
Here I am an ant, and as I view a nest of ants
So dost Thou view me and my fellow-creatures;
But as an ant knows not me, my nature, my thoughts,
So here I cannot know Thee clearly,
But there I shall be near Thee,
Dwell with Thy family,
Stand in Thy presence chamber,
Be an heir of Thy Kingdom,
As the spouse of Christ,
As a member of His body
One with Him who is one with Thee,
And exercise all my powers of body and soul
In the enjoyment of Thee.
As praise in the mouth of Thy saints is comely,
So teach me to exercise this divine gift,
When I pray, read, hear, see, do,
In the presence of people and of my enemies,
As I hope to praise Thee eternally hereafter.

Contemplative Prayers

The purpose of these prayers is to listen, to anticipate hearing from God. Be still, take time, as you repeat the thoughts of each prayer in your mind and heart.

The Presence of God

I reflect for a moment on God's presence around me and in me.
Creator of the universe, the sun and the moon, the earth,
every molecule, every atom, everything that is:
God is in every beat of my heart. God is with me, now.

Conversation

Do I notice myself reacting as I pray with the Word of God?
Do I feel challenged, comforted, angry?
Imagining Jesus sitting or standing by me,
I speak out my feelings, as one trusted friend to another.

Freedom

I will ask God's help,
to be free from my own preoccupations,
to be open to God in this time of prayer,
to come to love and serve God more.

The Presence of God

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God" (G.M. Hopkins)
I dwell for a moment on the presence of God
around me, in every part of my body,
and deep within my being.

Consciousness

How do I find myself today?
Where am I with God?
Do I have something to be grateful for? Then I give thanks.
Is there something I am sorry for? Then I ask forgiveness.

Discipling Your Family through Lent

Use these weeks of Lent as an opportunity to talk to your children about fasting. Read and discuss some times in the Bible when people fasted, especially Jesus, and ask questions like, "Why did He fast?" "What did He do?" "Should we ever fast?" Share with your children what you are fasting towards or away from and encourage them to ask questions. If you think your children understand, and they show a desire to participate, ask them if they would like to fast.

Children that make the decision to fast should understand that, whether they are giving a food item up or something else they love, it should feel like a sacrifice. The main point is that every time they miss doing or eating that thing, they will think of Christ and how much He gave up for them, and rejoice in what He has given to them.

Let them come up with their own idea of a sacrifice:

- TV, movies, video games
- Dessert (or a specific kind of dessert)
- Talking on the phone

Encourage kids to give up 30 minutes of TV in the evenings -- instead go for a walk or play a board game together.

The season of Lent is a great time to talk about communion with your children. You can do this around the dinner table during Lent or on Good Friday. Read in the Bible about the Last Supper and ask your family questions about the event:

Why did Jesus break bread and share wine?

What do bread and wine symbolize? (explain the meaning of symbolize)

What command did Jesus give during the Last Supper?

What is a Christ follower's response?

If your child has confessed their belief and faith in Christ, invite them to share in communion with the family. If they are very young or have not yet committed to being a Christ follower, don't try to pressure them, and don't feel discouraged. Allow them to watch and observe you. Pray that this will bless them as they grow and learn more.

Family prayer, individual journaling, sharing what God is teaching each one and giving opportunity for your children to ask questions are also great ways to lead your kids through this season.