



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

THEME: Lent



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Lent – a time of preparation.

At the start of his three-year public ministry, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Immediately afterwards he went into the desert of Judea, where he remained for forty days, not eating or drinking at all ('fasting'). He needed to be quiet, to be alone and to pray at the start of the work that God had sent him to earth to do. There in the desert he was tempted to use his supernatural powers to win people to follow him; he was tempted to do things the easy way and not God's way, but he did not acquiesce.

Lent lasts for six weeks and is the 40 days before Easter in the Christian calendar (not including Sundays!). It is a time of disciplined preparation for the great festival of Easter—a time for getting spiritually fit. It is a time to stop and take stock of life and to make resolutions to do better in future. Many Christians try to do something special during Lent. This might be something extra like reading a thoughtful book about the Christian faith, spending more time in prayer, or it might be giving something up (cakes or chocolate, for example) as an act of self-denial and discipline, and giving the money saved to a charity.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Matthew 4:1-11

The Bible passage this week tells of the time when Jesus was fasting in the desert and was tempted.



During Lent 2021, two diocesan RE advisers have launched an online Calendar of Kindness, which works a bit like an Advent calendar, and has a story / video, points to ponder, and act of kindness for each day, helping school communities to feel connected and focused on living differently during Lent. There are more details [below](#).

Gathering

Some questions to think about:

- **Look at some road signs together.** Do you know what they mean?
- How do road signs help people to know what to do?
- Christians look to the life and example of Jesus to help them to know how to live. Whose example do you like to follow?
- Lent is a bit like Advent, a time of 'getting ready' and lasts for 40 days. What things do you get ready for, and how?
- Why might Christians want to get ready for Easter? What do you think Christians think about during Lent?

Engagement

Christians look to the life and example of Jesus to help them to know how to live, a bit like the way that road signs help people to know what to do on the road. On their journey through the 40 days of Lent, Christians will be especially focussing on the life of Jesus and following his example of how to live in God's Kingdom.

We're going to use our time today to think a bit more about this using some familiar road signs...to reflect on what Lent might mean for us in our school community....and how it might help us to live differently.

Now use these road signs in order, to help you to think together:



Like Advent, Lent is a special time of preparation for Christians a time to prepare for Easter... a time to live differently....a time to slow down and reflect....as we are going to do today.



Jesus spent 40 days in the desert, praying & preparing for the job that God had asked him to do. He went without food or drink for this whole time. In the challenges he faced in the desert, Jesus always put God's ways first. The season of Lent remembers this time and starts 40 days before Easter Day.



This looks a bit like a pancake, doesn't it?! In the past, people were supposed to use up all the rich foods in their kitchen, such as butter and eggs, before Lent starts, which is why we have pancakes. During the 40 days of Lent, people who are Christians sometimes choose to give up something that they really like, such as chocolate, or TV, or computer games....



....or they might choose to do some good for others, remembering how Jesus did this in his own life. They will try to serve others in lots of different ways, showing love for family, friends and others, following the example of Jesus, and living according to God's kingdom. I wonder what good ideas we could think of as we begin Lent together this year? *[You might like to pause and talk together here]*



Living in this way is often **hard work!**.... because as human beings, we often find it easier to think about ourselves. But as we've heard from the parables of the kingdom, living this topsy-turvy way is what Jesus taught. Maybe you'd like to be a part of the challenge this Lent, or for as long as you can manage, because every little helps!



The good news is that we're not doing this alone: we have others around us to help us, and we can encourage one another to keep doing good....We can ask God to help us too, which we'll be doing in a few moments.

Response



But first, let's spend some time 'wondering' together now....

I wonder what difference Lent makes to Christians?....

I wonder how it helps them to prepare for Easter?....

I wonder what difference it might make if we were to live differently during Lent...at school, or at home?...

I wonder what might help us to do this?

Let's be still and quiet together now....

...think about the things that we've heard today....

...Jesus spent 40 days in the desert and lived his life putting others first....

...Lent is a time when people who are Christians will try to follow the example of Jesus....

....over this week, and maybe for longer, we could try to do some good for others using the ideas we've talked about....

....or find some new ways of our own....

....I wonder how this might change our world?....

....think quietly to yourself for a few moments now....

I'm going to use a prayer that's been written especially for Lent. You might like to make it your own, or prefer to continue to be quiet with your own thoughts.

Loving God,

Help us to work together to share what we have, so that everyone has what they need.

Help us to build a better world, where each of us can become the best person we can be.

Help us to live differently during this season of Lent.

Amen

[based on a prayer written by CAFOD]

Sending

Say these words to encourage and challenge each other:

"Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,

As long as ever you can."

[attributed to hymn-writer John Wesley]

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

- **In pairs or groups, create 'frozen statues' for different tempting situations** while the rest guess what they're doing: e.g. stealing / blaming someone else for breaking something, being cruel to an animal, being rude at school or home, copying in a test...
Jesus was tempted too: nothing wrong with being tempted – it is the decision we make that matters. So, we've got a choice between doing the easy thing and the right thing.
Development for older pupils: in groups, devise two freeze-framed tableaux of figures to show modern age-appropriate situations of being tempted: In 'Take one, show the easy choice' In 'Take two, show the right choice.'
- **Play Cross the circle** One to use if you are in school. Children stand in a circle. Adult calls out 'cross the circle if you have ever...' been tempted to lie in bed rather than get up, to eat a burger rather than a healthy salad, not to own up to breaking something, to say something mean, to steal something, to cheat in a test etc. *Stress that you are asking if you have been tempted to do this, not did you actually do it. Being tempted is not wrong, it's the choice you make that might be wrong.*
Children swap places with someone on the other side of the circle if they can answer yes to that experience.
- **[Jesus is Tempted](#)** A simple video version of the story of Jesus temptations in the wilderness.
- **[Lent Family Creative Journal](#)**. From Engage Worship. Includes questions to think about, Secret Agent challenges and practical activities to do at home. You can download it in sections for free.
- **[Lent in a bag](#)** An idea using 6 objects to help children and families to reflect on the events of the life of Jesus and Lent. Sand, rock, figure, candle, and a useful leaflet with suggestions about how to use the items.
- **[Lent in 3 minutes](#)** video Busted Halo. A useful explanation of Lent but written for Catholics so would need some explanation in a Church of England context.
- **[Messy Church in Lent](#)** – Ideas for crafts and practical activities linked to Jesus in the wilderness.
- **[Spiritual Child Network](#)** – Inspiring ideas for Lent. Several practical ideas for Lent in schools, including:
[Jesus in the wilderness](#) reflective storytelling and creative response. Areas set up for the different stations: bread and stones, the pinnacle of the temple and the kingdoms of the world.
[Lent for under 5's](#) Pray and play stations for under 5s based on Jesus' experience in the wilderness. Including Jesus' baptism, bread or stones; the pinnacle of the temple and all the kingdoms of the world.
- **[Staying on Task](#)** – Jesus in the wilderness an idea for a collective worship from Barnabas in Schools.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on times when you have found life difficult. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the times when someone has helped you when you were struggling.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the situations in your life that are challenging.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about times when you have been able to help someone else who is finding life difficult.

4. SAY SORRY for the times that you have not helped someone else who is finding life hard.
5. DECIDE how you will support those who are finding life difficult during Lent. Decide how you will take care of yourself during Lent this year.

- **Tough things** (A prayer activity taken from Kids Club by Post www.energize.uk.net)
Put some stones in a box of sand/earth.
Lift one of the stones. It is hard.
Think of some of the things you find hard at the moment. Ask God to help you deal with the hard and difficult things and to support you in your difficulties. Thank God for always being with you as you go through hard and difficult experiences.
- **Lifeline** This idea from Prayer Spaces in Schools encourages pupils to think about who has strengthened them in times of need.
- **Mountain- The Climb** This idea from Prayer Spaces in Schools encourages pupils to think about challenges that they are facing.
- **You Lead us through the Wilderness** – Song by Sam Hargreaves Engage Worship.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES



Calendar of Kindness Online calendar from 22nd February to 1st April

Traditionally, calendars are only for Advent, but we are introducing a Calendar of Kindness for use during the season of Lent. Each day will relate to either an event in the life of Jesus or one of his parables.

The calendar will go live at 00:01 on February 22nd and each door will only open on the correct day.

In the calendar, you will find:



an image;



the Bible reference for the day;



a video link. If there is no video, then there will be a set of PowerPoint slides linked within the final section (*only YouTube can be uploaded, which is limiting*);



some thoughts for you to ponder and a prompt for an act of kindness (**in bold**).



Each day, you could also consider the following questions: *How was Jesus an 'agent of change' here? How did other people view Jesus' actions? How do you think people reacted to hearing Jesus' words? Why might Jesus have said / done this....? What does this story mean for me?*

You can find more information including the details of what is included for each day [here](#).

40 Acts Ideas for acts of kindness to do each day during Lent. There is a version for schools with accompanying materials on this webpage.

The version for adults gives three levels of challenge to the act of kindness each day.

In some schools the pupils have created their own 40 Acts to fit their school and community context.

Together@Lent 40 simple ideas to do as a family during Lent 2021, such as playing a board game, building a den! The activities can be done in any order. These are written for Christian families so may not be suitable to send to families of other faiths or no faith.

[Love Yourself Through Lent](#). From Together at Home. In a really challenging season why not focus on self-care this Lent. Here are 40 self-care ideas to choose from, why not pick one each day and give yourself a boost of positivity. This could be great to share with families and the wider community.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is ‘what Christians believe’, saying things like:

‘I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?’

‘The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...’

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?