



ENGAGE  
with  
God

LENT

## Family Creative Journal

ENGAGE TOGETHER IN THE THEMES  
OF LENT AND EASTER, THROUGH  
DRAWING, WRITING, STORIES, FUN,  
PRAYER AND WORSHIP.



# ASH Wednesday

"GIVE YOURSELVES COMPLETELY TO GOD, FOR YOU WERE DEAD, BUT NOW YOU HAVE NEW LIFE." Rom 6:13

For this you will need:

Cold ashes (burn some paper outside to create some)

A tray with some white paper in the bottom

Olive oil



The word "Lent" comes from the word "lengthen".

As we move out of Winter into Spring, the days get longer and new life begins to emerge all around us.

What are you looking forward to with the coming of Spring?

For hundreds of years Christians have linked the changing seasons to Jesus' journey; through his temptations, his final week, his death and then his coming alive again.

Lent is a journey from death to life!

Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent. Pour your ashes onto the white paper.

What do you think the ash is supposed to remind us of?

Draw in the ash with your fingers - signs of new life like flowers, birds and animals.

You can also draw these things with pens on top of the ashes below.

Another old tradition is to add a little oil to a small amount of ash, and draw a cross onto each other's foreheads. You can do this, and pray that God would be with you as you journey through Lent together.



# SECRET AGENT: fasting



"WHEN YOU FAST, DON'T MAKE IT OBVIOUS...  
COMB YOUR HAIR AND WASH YOUR FACE." Matt 6:16-18

People often talk about 'giving things up' for Lent - a form of 'fasting'.

The original reason behind fasting during Lent was that people were trying to imitate Jesus' 40 day fast in the wilderness.

He ate nothing at all, and the Bible says "after this he was hungry" (Matt 4:2). Are you surprised?! How long can you go without food before your stomach rumbles?

There are some right and wrong reasons to fast - see if you can sort them out below.

The answers are at the bottom of the page. Talk about these together.

a) fasting is to make God feel guilty,  
so he has to answer our prayers

RIGHT?      WRONG?

b) fasting is to remind us to trust  
God more than food and other things

RIGHT?      WRONG?

c) fasting is to look good and holy  
in front of other people

RIGHT?      WRONG?

d) fasting creates time in our  
lives when we can talk to God

RIGHT?      WRONG?

Jesus says that fasting should not be done loudly or to show off,  
but in secret so only God and those closest to you know (see Matt 6:16-1).

As a family, could you do 'secret agent fasting' together for Lent?

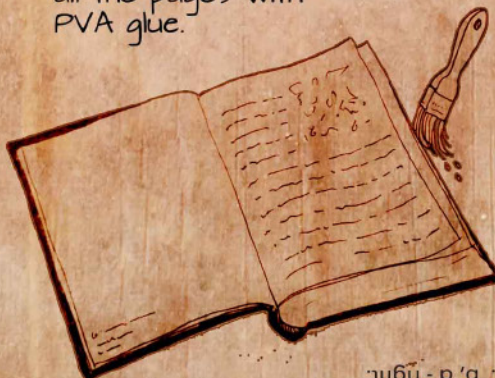
Perhaps it could be: 30 minutes less TV per day? or puddings?  
or not listening to music as you drive to school? or committing to get up  
15 minutes earlier to have a family prayer time together?

To make your 'secret  
agent fasting' more fun,  
make this fake-book-  
hidey-hole.

As you pray for things  
each day during your  
fasting time, you can  
write or draw the prayer  
points and hide them  
in your book, which  
nobody will know is  
sitting on your shelf!

1. Find an old book or buy  
one from a charity shop.  
Glue all around the edge of  
all the pages with  
PVA glue.

2. With a craft knife and a metal  
ruler, have an adult cut rectangles  
of paper out of the middle  
to create a secret space.



Answers: a, c - wrong. b, d - right.



# SECRET AGENT: Praying

"WHEN YOU PRAY, DON'T BABBLE ON AND ON...  
YOUR FATHER KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT YOU  
NEED EVEN BEFORE YOU ASK HIM!" Matt 6:7-8

Lent is also a time when Christians have committed themselves to growing in prayer. Jesus often went off to spend time talking to his heavenly Father, and we can too.

Below is a list of ways you could pray. Talk about the ones you are familiar with, and the ones you would like to learn more about.

silent prayer	drawing prayer	pre-written prayer
thank-you prayer	making-it-up-as-you-go-along prayer	
sorry prayer	Bible prayer	asking prayer

Jesus encourages us that God already knows what we need before we even pray it! The important thing is not *how* we pray, or even *what* we pray, but simply *that* we pray!

Jesus taught us a simple prayer in Matthew 6, to show us how easy it is.

As a family, read it through line-by-line, and talk about what you think each bit means. As you do so, start to write your own family version, in your own words.



## OUR VERSION:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your Kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the Kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
forever and ever, Amen.

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This can be your own secret family version! Can you commit to pray it each day?  
Could you make up hand-movements to help you remember it?



# SECRET AGENT: blessing

**"DON'T DO YOUR GOOD DEEDS PUBLICLY, TO BE ADMIRERD BY OTHERS... GIVE YOUR GIFTS IN PRIVATE,"** Matt 6:1-4

The third thing that Christians have often done during Lent is develop their generosity towards others - giving money, time and doing good deeds.

In Jesus' time, people used to announce when they gave money to the poor by blowing trumpets and shouting about it.

But Jesus could see that they were only doing this to draw attention to themselves, not because they really cared about the poor.

Talk together about:

people who need cheering up,  
or some practical help?

situations in the world which need  
money to help solve problems?

local organisations which you could  
give your time to as a family?

Write or draw these in the box,  
and say a prayer for each situation.

**Your third 'secret agent' challenge for Lent**  
is to be a blessing to someone in need.

It could be giving money, or time.

It could be saying kind words, or  
making a gift or card to encourage someone.

Discuss what you are each  
going to do - but keep it a  
secret amongst you as a family.



To add to the fun, find a piece of white paper,  
a lemon and a paintbrush.

Write the 'blessings' you are planning to do in  
lemon juice on the paper - a kind of 'invisible ink'!

In the week before Easter, you can heat the paper  
gently by a candle or on a low oven temperature.

This will remind you whether you have done the  
thing you've committed to, and you can  
talk about how it went!



# Jesus in the DESERT

"THEN JESUS WAS LED BY THE SPIRIT  
INTO THE WILDERNESS" Matt 4:1

For this page you will need a sand-pit,  
or a tray with some dry play-sand on it,  
and a jug of water.

Play with the dry sand, and as you do so  
talk about what you think it would be  
like for Jesus in a desert wilderness.

Try to make castles or shapes with  
the sand - what happens?



The Bible often uses deserts and wilderness as pictures of when life is difficult.  
Have you had times when things were hard, and it felt like you were in a desert?  
Do you know anyone who is having an experience like that right now?  
You can write down their names, or your difficulties, in the sand.

Find a Bible and read out the following verses.  
As you do so, pour some water into the sand.

ISAIAH 35:1-3

JOB 38:26-27

PSALM 107:35-37

EXODUS 17:5-6



Does it help the sand when you added water?  
God promises to bring water to dry places.

Jesus was led by the Spirit of God into the desert.  
It was hard, but God was with him.

Go to the website [www.resoundworship.org/  
song/you\\_lead\\_us\\_through\\_the\\_wilderness](http://www.resoundworship.org/song/you_lead_us_through_the_wilderness)

Listen to the song, and then pray that God would  
be with you, or people you know who are going  
through times which feel like a desert wilderness.



# Jesus is TEMPTED

"JESUS WAS LED BY THE SPIRIT...  
TO BE TEMPTED THERE BY THE DEVIL." Matt 4:1

What wrong things do you  
get tempted to do?

Lose your temper?  
Be selfish with your things?  
Say unkind words?  
Not tell the truth?

Be honest with each other,  
and write the things down  
in the box here:



It is very encouraging to know that even Jesus was tempted as we are (Heb 4:15)!

Read Matthew 4:3-10 together - take different characters to read if you like.

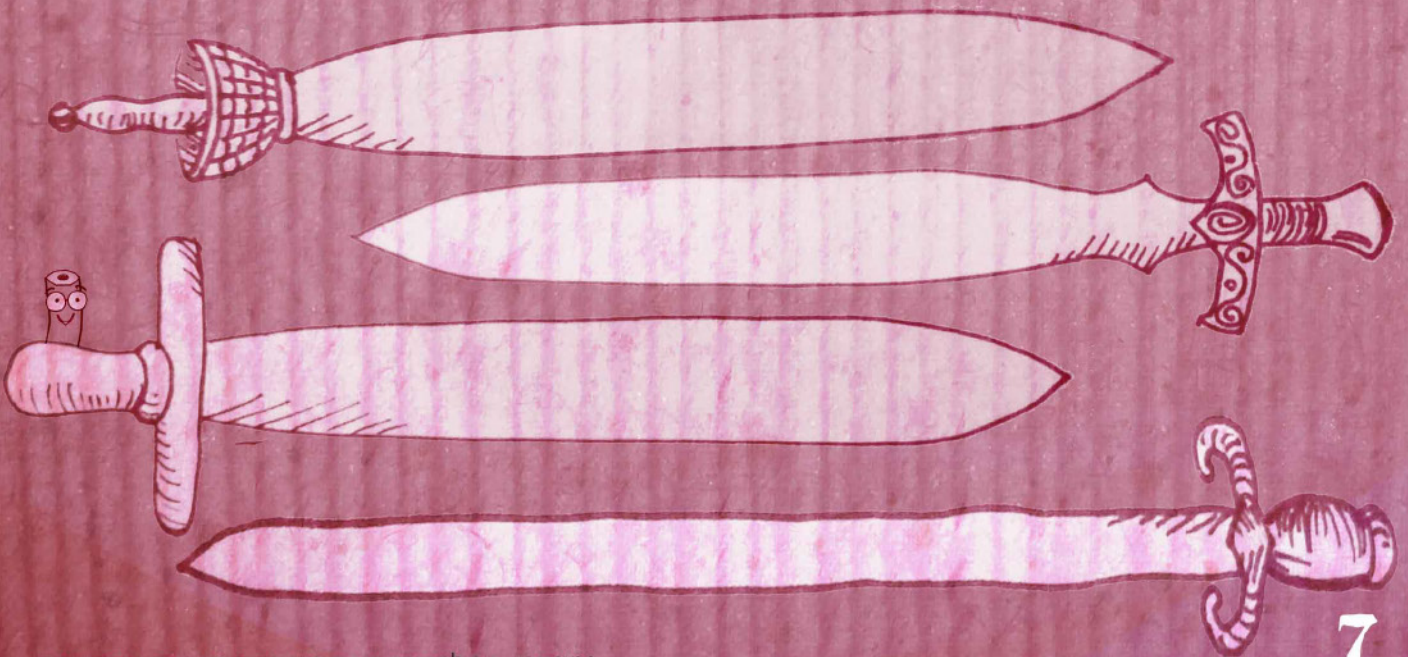
What do you notice that Jesus does each time he is tempted? (Answer at bottom of page).

The Bible is a 'double edged sword' (Heb 4:12), a powerful weapon against temptation!

Think about the things you said you were tempted by.

Then talk about if there are any Bible verses, or truths from the Bible,  
which you could learn by heart, and remember in moments when you feel tempted.

Write these on the swords below, and pray God would help you use them.



Answer - he quoted the Bible from the Old Testament



# Israel in the DESERT

"LIVE OUTSIDE IN LITTLE SHELTERS... REMIND EACH NEW GENERATION OF ISRAELITES." Lev 23:42-43

Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness was, in one sense, reflecting the wandering of the Israelites in the desert for 40 years. God had brought them out of slavery in Egypt, and was leading them to the promised land.

Right through Jesus' time, and up to today, Jews remember this period in a festival called Tabernacles or 'Sukkot'. They set up tents to remind them how they lived in makeshift shelters for 40 years.

Could you pitch a tent in the garden, or make a shelter with chairs and blankets? Enjoy spending time in your den, perhaps have a meal in there! As you do so, remember and be thankful for how God has provided you with shelter, food and drink.



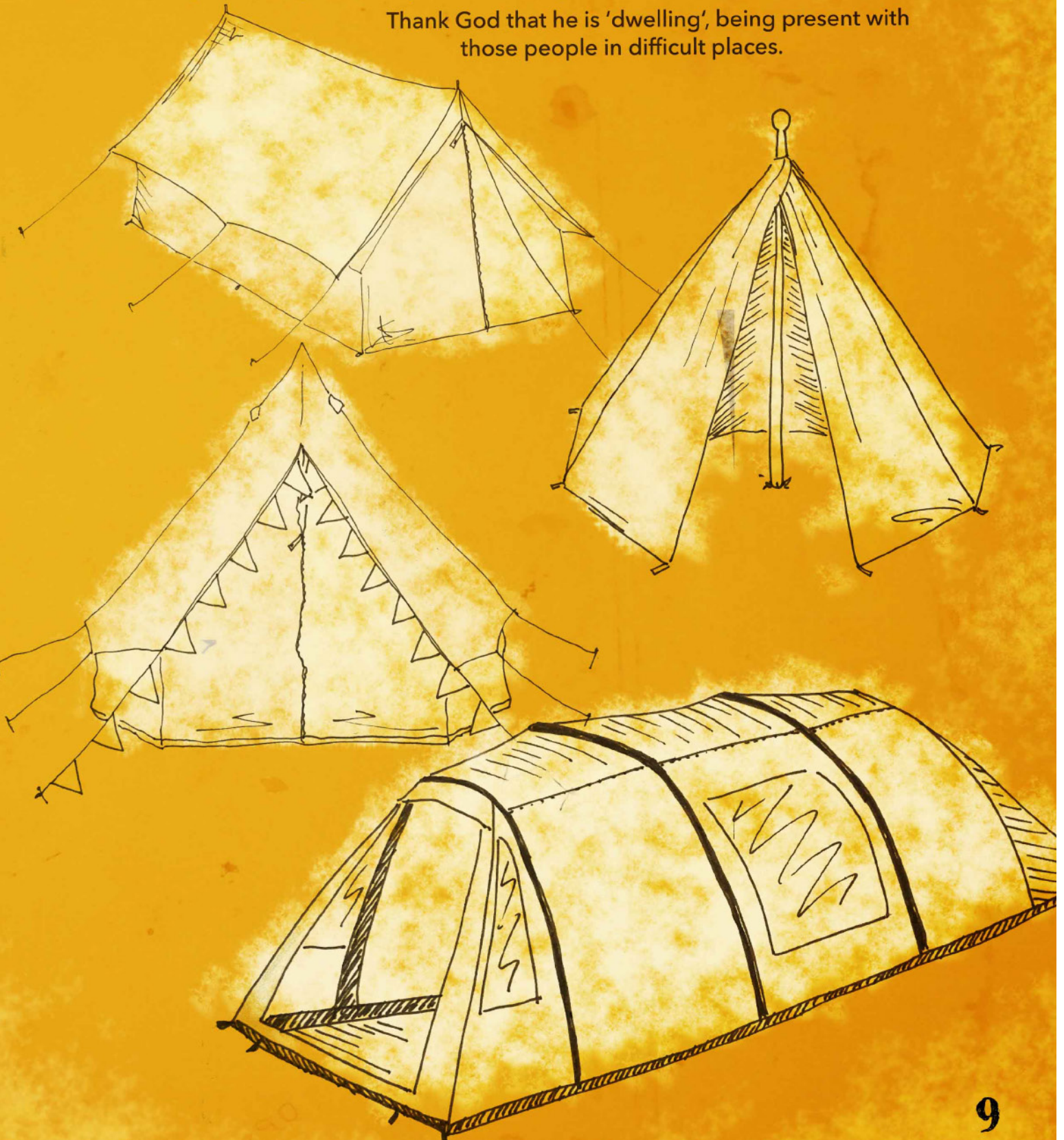


'Tabernacle' means 'dwelling-place'. In the desert, God was present with his people in a grand tent. This could be taken with them as they moved on, showing that God was with them as they journeyed, even through the hard times.

Think about people and situations which need to know God's presence right now. Write or draw them in the tents below.

In the New Testament it says that Jesus came to 'dwell with' or 'tabernacle' with us (John 1:14). Jesus is present amongst us, and in the hard places in the world.

Thank God that he is 'dwelling', being present with those people in difficult places.







# true Fasting

"THIS IS THE KIND OF FASTING I WANT: Isaiah 58:6  
LIGHTEN THE BURDEN OF THOSE WHO WORK FOR YOU."

Some people in Isaiah's time thought that they were worshipping God right, because they fasted and did other things. But God was not happy.

God loves it when we worship him, but the way we treat other people needs to match up with our songs, prayers and actions in worship.

Read Isaiah 58:6-10 together. What does God want from his people?  
Draw a picture of what it would look like if we followed this today.



One way we can help bring God's justice in the world today is buying fairly traded goods, which give workers a fair price.  
Get hold of some Fair Trade chocolate, make some Fair Trade (decaf?) coffee, and use the tastes to help you pray for God's justice.

Take a sip of coffee, and pray for people who experience the bitterness of poor wages, bad work conditions and being unfairly treated. Say sorry for when you don't play your part in bringing God's fairness to the world.

Take a bite of chocolate, and pray for the sweetness of God's justice to be known in the way people buy and sell. Thank God for people working hard for a fairer world.





# REND your hearts

"DON'T TEAR YOUR CLOTHING IN YOUR GRIEF,  
BUT TEAR YOUR HEARTS INSTEAD." Joel 2:13

Are there things in the world which make you sad?

PEOPLE NOT HAVING ENOUGH FOOD

SICKNESS

POVERTY

LITTERING

POLLUTION

LONELINESS

HOMELESSNESS

Add to this list above, or write in specific examples of people or places.

We can talk to God about these things, and how they make us feel.  
That is called 'lament'.

In Bible times people would tear their clothes to show that they were upset.

But in the book of Joel, God says - I don't want your clothes! I want to know about  
how you feel in your heart about the problems you see in the world.

Find some clothes to help you pray.

Put on some gloves, and then take it off again, praying:

"God I am sad about \_\_\_\_\_.

Use my hands, and the hands of other people  
to make a difference in that situation."



Or put on a hat, and then take it off, praying:

"God I am sad about \_\_\_\_\_.

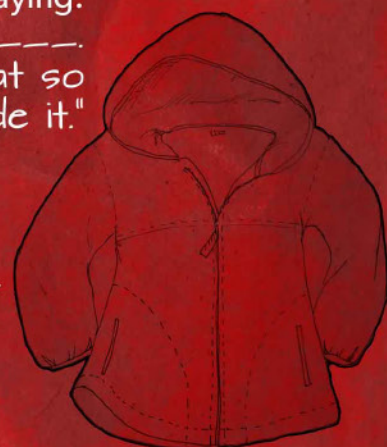
Change the way people think about that so  
that the world is more the way you made it."



Or put on a coat, and then take it off, praying:

"God I am sad about \_\_\_\_\_.

Change my heart, and the hearts of others,  
so we start living differently."



Joel 2 ends with a wonderful promise that God will hear his people when they  
lament, a celebration that he will answer their prayers.

Sing a song that you know which celebrates God's faithfulness and love.



# Jesus' words from the cross: 1

JESUS SAID "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR  
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING." Luke 23:34

If someone does something unkind to you, how easy do you find it to forgive them?  
Talk about your experiences of forgiving, and being forgiven.

Jesus was the only person who never did anything wrong (1 Pet 2:22).  
And yet, on the cross, he suffered for all the wrong things ever done in the world.

He could have run away from this, or he could have been angry about it.  
Instead, he looked out at the world with love, and said "Father, forgive them".

On the cross shape, write  
down the wrong things which  
have been done to you.

Then write down wrong things  
which you have done.

Then pray this prayer together:  
Jesus, thank you for  
dying on the cross.  
Thank you for taking  
my wrong things,  
and forgiving me.  
Help me to forgive  
other people  
as you have forgiven me,  
Amen.

To celebrate  
this forgiveness,  
listen to the song on:  
[www.resoundworship.org/  
song/we\\_may\\_not\\_  
gods\\_masterpiece](http://www.resoundworship.org/song/we_may_not_gods_masterpiece)

Read through the words  
together, and/or have a  
jump around the room to  
enjoy the freedom of  
God's forgiveness!



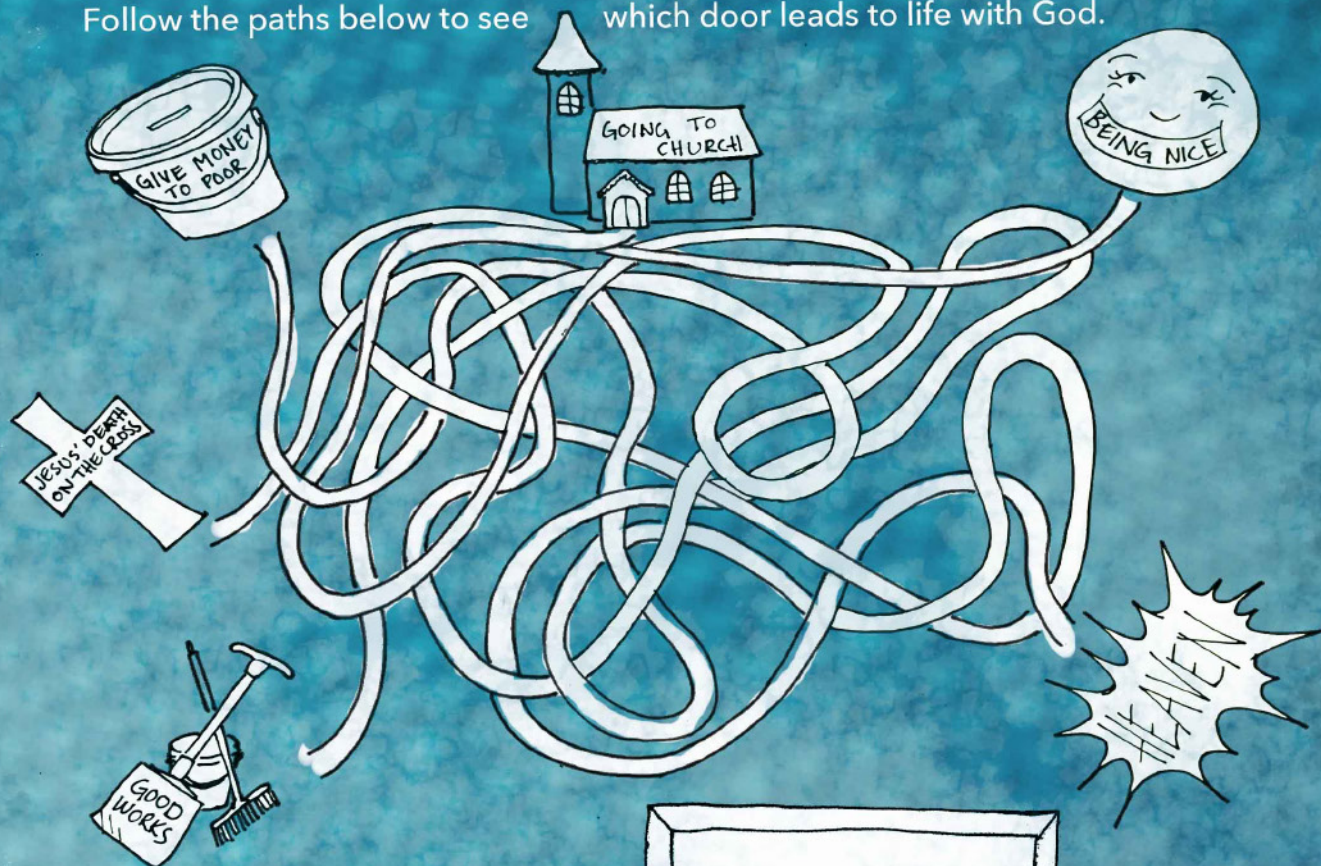


# Jesus' words from the cross: 2

"I ASSURE YOU, TODAY YOU WILL  
BE WITH ME IN PARADISE." Luke 23:43

Another reason Jesus died was to open up the door to Heaven.  
Heaven is where God is completely present, and his ways are followed perfectly.

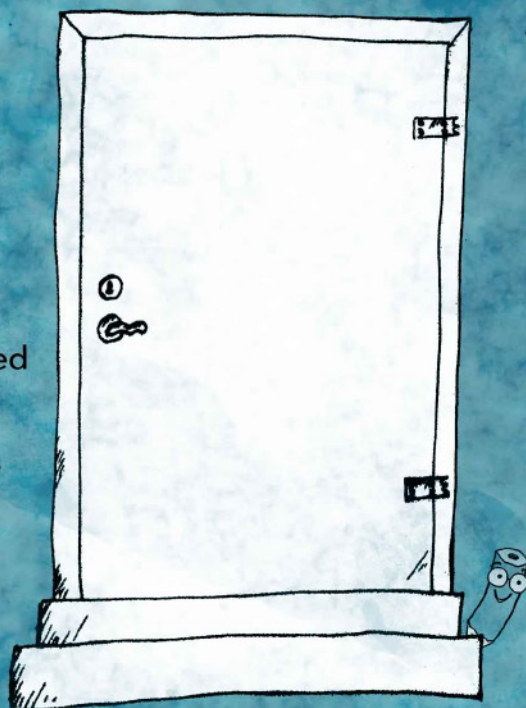
Follow the paths below to see which door leads to life with God.



The Bible says  
"By his death, Jesus opened  
a new life-giving way" into  
God's presence (Heb 10:20).

Do you want to go through the  
door to life with God? All you need  
to do is put your trust in Jesus.  
As a sign of this, you can write  
your name on this door, or draw  
a picture of yourself on it.

Pray and thank Jesus for opening  
the way to Heaven for you,  
and anyone who asks him.





# Jesus' words from the cross: 3

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED ME?"

"I AM THIRSTY." John 19:28

Matt 27:46

Have you ever felt alone? Or lost? Or that someone has rejected you?

How would you describe those feelings?

Write down some words below.



Find some modelling clay, or make your own using the recipe below.  
Make a model of each of your family. Then make one of Jesus.

When he was on earth, Jesus was made of the same stuff as you and me.  
The Bible says he was fully human (Phil 2:7).

On the cross, he experienced the worst  
things that we can go through.

He felt terrible physical pain and suffering,  
he felt desperately thirsty,  
and worst of all he felt as if God  
had abandoned him.

Because of the cross, we can know  
that God will never abandon us.

Jesus was rejected so that  
we can be accepted.

Read Isaiah 53:1-6 together,  
and then offer up your own prayers,  
thanking Jesus for becoming like us  
and dying in our place.

Modelling dough recipe:

2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
2 cups water  
2 tablespoons oil  
2 teaspoons cream of tartar  
drops of food colouring

Cook mixture in a pan over medium heat,  
stirring all the time to prevent sticking.

Remove from the heat when mixture  
comes away from the sides of the pan.

Cool a little, then knead and store  
in an airtight container.





# Jesus' words from the cross: 4

HE SAID TO HER, "DEAR WOMAN, HERE IS YOUR SON." John 19:26-27  
AND HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLE, "HERE IS YOUR MOTHER."

In this box write or draw the people you find it easy to love:

In this box write or draw the people you find difficult:

Jesus' death puts right our personal relationship with God.  
But it also makes it possible for us to put right our relationships with other people.

Writing about two groups who had always been enemies, Paul said:

"CHRIST RECONCILED BOTH GROUPS TO GOD BY...  
HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS, AND OUR HOSTILITY  
TOWARD EACH OTHER WAS PUT TO DEATH." (Eph 2:16).

Even as he was hanging on the cross, Jesus found the energy to bring together his mother and his best friend John, as a new family.

Jesus wants to help you heal relationships that you find difficult,  
and bring lonely people into new families.

Draw a cross linking the two boxes above.



Pray that God would help you to love the people you struggle with.

Can you think of a practical way you could bless someone who is lonely or struggling at the moment? How could you be part of the way that God "puts the lonely in a family"? (Psalm 86:6)



# Jesus' words from the cross: 5

"IT IS FINISHED!" John 19:30

"FATHER, I ENTRUST MY SPIRIT INTO YOUR HANDS!" Luke 23:46

Imagine these scenes...

The football team has just won the FA Cup. Just as the Captain is about to receive the trophy, the striker says "Stop! Lets play another 10 minutes! I am sure I can score another goal..."



The great painter unveils her masterpiece portrait at the exclusive art gallery. The gathered crowd applauds, all except one man who steps forward with a marker pen, saying "I think we should just add a few more lines here..."

The family finally unpack the last box after moving to another town. Just as the Dad sits down to finally enjoy his new living room, the Mum begins to wonder, "What if we were to buy back our old place..."



What would you say to these people? No! It is finished!

In Peter's first letter to the church, he says that  
"CHRIST SUFFERED FOR OUR SINS ONCE FOR ALL TIME." (1 Pet 3:18).

Nothing we can do can add or take away from what he has done. He has completed God's rescue plan for the world, dying on the cross and being raised to life again.

Under the 'it is finished' banner, draw things that worry you. It could be your own mistakes, or problems in the world, or issues that your friends are facing. Place them under the shadow of Jesus' finished work on the cross. Pray and trust these things to God's hands, just as Jesus committed himself into God's hands.



IT IS FINISHED!



# PALM SUNDAY!

"A LARGE CROWD... TOOK PALM BRANCHES AND WENT  
DOWN THE ROAD TO MEET HIM." John 12:12-13

Palm Sunday was a day of celebration! The crowds picked up palm branches,  
threw down their coats and began praising Jesus as God's promised King!

In the space below add colour, joyful people and words of praise to God.



Blessed is he!

Jesus is King!

When you've finished, you can have your own time to celebrate Jesus!  
Put on some joyful music, dance, sing, wave flags or do whatever  
you feel like to bring glory to the King of kings!



# Easter Gardens



You will need:

High-sided tray or planter,  
about 30x20 cm.

Soil, gravel and stones.

Plastic cup.

Tin foil, turf.

Small flowers or leaves.

Sticks and string.

Pipe-cleaner.

Arrange the soil and stones to create a garden  
in whatever design you like.

Put the cup on its side in one corner and cover  
with soil, leaving an opening to create a tomb.

Make a hill at the other end to represent Calvary.  
Create a 'pond' with tin foil, and decorate the  
garden with flowers, leaves, and grass.

Make three crosses by tying two sticks together,  
and push them into the hill.

Talk about the Easter story as you make the garden.

On Good Friday, make a 'Jesus' figure out of the pipe-cleaner,  
place him in the tomb and cover the opening with a big stone.

On Easter Sunday take the figure out to celebrate the resurrection!



# MAUNDY THURSDAY: footwashing

"JESUS... BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES' FEET, DRYING THEM WITH THE TOWEL" John 13:5

At the Last Supper, Jesus took a towel and a bowl and washed the disciples' feet.

Why do you think that Jesus did that?  
What do you think he was saying to them through this action?

Can you think of things today which we can do that are like washing people's feet?

For example, is washing someone else's car similar?

How can you serve and love other people in ways like Jesus did? (John 13:14)



As a fun creative project, get out some paints and big paper.  
Make an artwork using all your family's footprints - in whatever design you like!



When you've finished, take time to wash one another's feet in a bowl of warm soapy water. Pray prayers of thanks for one another.



# MAUNDY THURSDAY: passover

JESUS SAID, "I HAVE BEEN VERY EAGER TO EAT THIS PASSOVER MEAL WITH YOU" Luke 22:15

Jesus shared a Passover meal ('Seder') with his disciples, on the night before he died.

It already was full of amazing symbols about God saving his people from Egypt, but Jesus took these and transformed them in the light of his own death and resurrection.

Get together as many of these foods as you can. Set the table, light some candles and try each of the foods, whilst reading the Bible passages, talking about what they mean and praying whenever you feel inclined.



4 cups of wine or grape juice.

These cups represent God's four promises to Israel - read EXODUS 6:6-7.

Jesus took one of these cups of wine and said: "this is my blood of the new covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many."

(MATT 26:28).

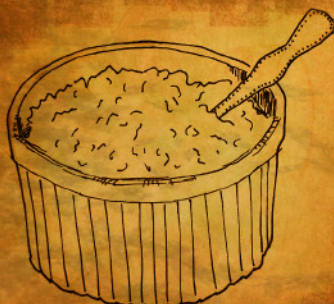
Matzoh - unleavened bread.

This is bread that has no yeast or bicarbonate of soda added to it. It is to remember the bread that the Jewish people had to hastily bake as they escaped from Egypt - read DEUT 16:3.

Jesus took some of this bread, broke it, and said:

"Take this and eat it, for this is my body."

(MATT 26:26). How is Jesus' body like life-giving bread for us?



Moror - bitter herbs (horseradish or parsley). These are to remember the bitterness of the suffering in Egypt - read EXODUS 12:8.

Jesus does not promise that life with him will be without problems, but what does he promise? Read JOHN 16:33.



## Lamb.

God saved Israel from Egypt by telling them to put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts  
- read **EXODUS 12:13**.

Jesus is often called the "Lamb of God" - how is he like the lamb that was killed to save the Israelites? Read **1 PETER 1:18-19**.



## Haroseth

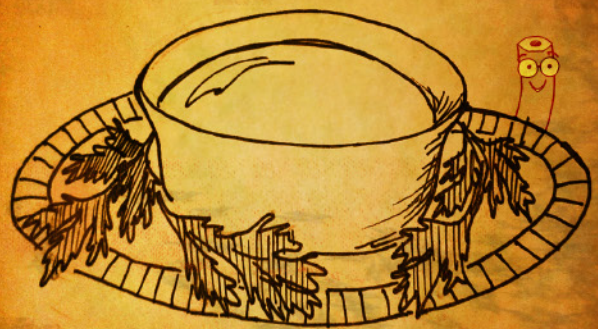
This is a sweet mix of finely chopped apples, walnuts, dried fruit like raisins or dates, and perhaps some honey or sugar, and cinnamon. This is to remember the mortar used by the Jewish slaves toiling in Egypt before the Exodus.

Has your family had hard times? Is there a food which would symbolise that?

## Green herbs and salt water

Serve the salt water in a bowl, dip the herb (eg. parsley or celery) in the water and eat. The green herbs are to represent new life and hope, the salt water is to represent the tears shed by the slaves in Egypt.

You may want to talk about the way that good and bad, sweet and bitter, often mingle in life (for the same point, the moror and the haroseth is often eaten together, sandwiched between some matzoh), and often tears lead to joy.



## Hard boiled egg

To represent new life, new hope, and growth.

You can read and talk about **2 CORINTHIANS 5:15**.

Traditionally, a Passover psalm is sung or read during the Seder; any Psalm between 113-118. This would have been what Jesus sang at the end of the Last Supper (Matt 26:30). You could read or sing one of these to close your time.





# GOOD FRIDAY

"THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN TO LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE FOR ONE'S FRIENDS." John 15:13

Good Friday is a sad day, because we remember Jesus dying on the cross.

But it is 'good' - because on the cross God-in-Jesus showed us just how much he loves us - enough to give up his own life, so that we can be his friends forever.

Read Mark 15:16-39, and talk about the ways that Jesus showed his love for us on the cross. Then write and draw your thoughts and prayers on the heart below.

You could listen to this song: [www.resoundworship.org/song/come\\_see\\_the\\_son](http://www.resoundworship.org/song/come_see_the_son) as you are writing and drawing.

**22**

Today is the day to put your pipecleaner Jesus in the tomb of your Easter Garden. Look forward to celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday!



# EASTER SUNDAY

"HE ISN'T HERE!     Mark 16:6  
HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!"

There is no bigger reason to celebrate than Resurrection Sunday!  
You can wear your best clothes, eat great food, dance, sing and be joyful,  
because Jesus has risen!

One way to celebrate this could be to make a huge banner or poster.  
You can use phrases from the selection below, add your own,  
and draw things which illustrate new life!

CHRIST IS ALIVE!

HALLELUJAH!

death is defeated!

glory to God!

new life has come!

ETERNAL PEACE IS OURS!

EVIL HAS LOST!

heaven is open!

JESUS HAS THE VICTORY!

love has won!

CREATION WILL BE RESTORED!

Another thing to do today is look back on your Lent journey.



Are there things you have learned? Did you try fasting, or giving, or new types of prayer?  
What creative things did you do? Are there things you want to continue through the year?

Talk about these together, and say a prayer of thanks for all God is doing in your family.