

# HOW TO

*talk to your children about fasting*



Lent, the season of penitence, fasting, self-denial, and prayer, prepares us for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This sounds heavy, and you may be wondering, “what kid would be super excited about this season, especially coming after Advent and Epiphany?” The subject matter tends to be more hefty than that of Christ, the babe, lying in the manger. How do you even talk to your children about Lent? Our hope is that this guide will help get you started!

## *what is lent?*

---

Lent is a time where we prepare our hearts and minds for Easter through prayer, fasting, and giving. The traditional practices of Lent are drawn from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and include almsgiving (*Matthew 6:2–4*), prayer (*Matthew 6:5–15*), and fasting (*Matthew 6:16–18*).

## *when is lent?*

---

Lent begins Ash Wednesday and ends Holy Saturday. It lasts 40 days.

# *how do we talk to children about lent & fasting?*

---

## **BE POSITIVE**

Children learn more from our attitudes than our words. The more you talk about fasting like it's a dreary activity, the less interested your children are going to be. The more excited you are about fasting—and we should be excited because it is a great spiritual privilege—the more excited your children will be.

## **IT'S ALL ABOUT GOD**

When communicating with your children, it is important to make fasting about God. Help your child realize that fasting is not a punishment. But it is a privilege so that we can hear and see Jesus more clearly.

## **TAKE BABY STEPS**

Ultimately, we want our children to learn about fasting so that they can grow into this spiritual discipline over the course of their lifetimes. And you know your child best. What baby step can you encourage your children towards? Maybe this week it's just TV on Fridays. Maybe next week it's TV on Wednesday and Friday. Maybe the week after it's Monday, Wednesday, and Friday... you get the idea.

## **FAST AND FEAST**

Encourage your children to fast from something you know isn't edifying for them. But replace it with something edifying. For example, if your child is encouraged about fasting from TV, replace that time with reading a Children's Bible together, or other Christian literature like the Chronicles of Narnia. If your child is fasting from sugary treats, teach them how to donate the cost of that treat to serve the poor and needy.

## **BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR FAST**

What did you give up? Why? What is God showing or teaching you through this time? If you had a cheat day, be honest with your children about it.

# *what are we supposed to do during lent?*

---

The goal of lent is to pray, fast and be penitent.  
With that in mind, here are some practical  
ways to do Lent with your children.

- Attend our Ash Wednesday and Good Friday services.  
ASH WEDNESDAY: FEBRUARY 26 Services at 7 am, Noon, and 6 pm  
GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 10 Services at Noon, and 6 pm  
(6 pm Children's Good Friday Liturgy available at the Main Campus).
- Attend our weekly Friday Lenten programming  
5:30–6:30 PM MEATLESS MEAL & TALK WITH KIDS' ACTIVITIES.  
6:30–7 PM STATIONS OF THE CROSS  
*(available at both campuses)*
- Encourage your child to fast from something during Lent.  
While it isn't expected for children to follow a complete fast  
from food, here are some ideas of other age appropriate  
items from which they can fast.
  - Television
  - Electronics (smart phones, video games, etc.)
  - A favorite dessert or drink, or sugary treats.
- Teach your children to pray. The easiest prayer to teach  
them is the Lord's Prayer.



CHURCH *of the*  
**INCARNATION**

MAIN CAMPUS 3966 MCKINNEY AVE. • DALLAS, TX • 75204

NORTH CAMPUS 12727 HILLCREST RD. • DALLAS, TX • 75230

INCARNATION.ORG

# HOW TO

*children's fasting guide*



# *how can you fast for lent?*

Fasting means to “go without.” During the season of Lent, Christians fast in order to make room for God. It is a simple reminder that Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for us.



## **ELECTRONICS**

Do you spend too much time on your iPad or on video games?



## **TELEVISION**

Is TV taking up a big part of your day?



## **SUGARY DRINKS OR TREATS**

Do you eat or drink a lot of sugar?



## **MEATLESS FRIDAYS**

Consider giving up meat one day a week.

# MY LENTEN COMMITMENT

This year for Lent, I, along with help from my parents, commit to

*Check as many as you feel God is calling.*

## ASH WEDNESDAY & GOOD FRIDAY

- On Ash Wednesday, from 6 am–6 pm, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

- On Good Friday, from 6 am–6 pm, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Join us also for our children's Ash Wednesday and Good Friday children's services.*

## LENT WEEK 1: MARCH 1–7

- This week, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- M  T  W  TH  F  S

- On Friday, I will join my parents for Family activities and Stations of the Cross at the church.

*Begin your fast with the Lord's Prayer.*

## LENT WEEK 2: MARCH 8–14

- This week, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- M  T  W  TH  F  S

- On Friday, I will join my parents for Family activities and Stations of the Cross at the church.

*Begin your fast with the Lord's Prayer.*

## LENT WEEK 3: MARCH 15–21

- This week, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- M  T  W  TH  F  S

- On Friday, I will join my parents for Family activities and Stations of the Cross at the church.

*Begin your fast with the Lord's Prayer.*

## LENT WEEK 4: MARCH 29–APRIL 4

- This week, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- M  T  W  TH  F  S

- On Friday, I will join my parents for Family activities and Stations of the Cross at the church.

## LENT WEEK 5: APRIL 5–11

- This week, I will fast from
- Sugary treats and drinks
  - Electronics
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- M  T  W  TH  F  S

- On Friday, I will join my parents for Family activities and Stations of the Cross at the church.

*Begin your fast with the Lord's Prayer.*

*Begin your fast with the Lord's Prayer.*

## LENTEN FEASTS

- Attend church every Sunday during Lent. Every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday when you can break your fasts!
- Replace your sugary treats or electronics fast with something else. What will you do instead?
- Other festive holy days to observe in Lent are the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25, when the angel Gabriel announces the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary). Break your Daily Fast with a feast!

**CHILD NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT NAMES:**

\_\_\_\_\_