

Jesus and the Journey to the Cross

Parent Preparation Guide

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Over the next four weeks, we are going to provide you with some special materials that will help you guide your children through the four weeks leading up to Easter. Sometimes it can be a challenge to know the best way to explain this season to children and make it a meaningful experience. Hopefully, the tools that we have put together will help you to do just that.

The season prior to Easter day has become known as Lent. Lent's history can be traced back to the earliest days of Christianity. Today, Lent is observed for 6 weeks prior to Easter, paralleling the 40-days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. Churches observing Lent typically begin Lent with "Ash Wednesday". Lent is designed to help believers reflect on the events prior to Easter, the cost and sacrifice made for us by Jesus death on the cross. It has been used as a time of fasting, repentance and tradition, which also points to Lent being a time of service to others.

During the four weeks leading up to Easter, you will get a guide sheet that will include:

- ◆ **Family Time with God** that includes an introductory activity, a Bible story to read and reflect on and suggestions for responding to what you have learned as a family.
- ◆ **Family Experience** is an opportunity for your family to live out one of the themes of this Easter season so, that you can grow closer to Jesus and to each other.
- ◆ Additional **Spiritual Conversation starters** are provided if you want help your family explore the Bible passage further during the week.

For the rest of this week, we would like to invite you to intentionally spend some time praying for your children with some directed scriptures and specific prayer prompts. Choose a time that will allow you at least 30 minutes to be quiet and meditate on scripture. Then use the prayers to guide your time with the Holy.

Enjoy the Journey with Your Family!!!

Establishing Family Devotions

Here are some good tips for having effective Bible time as a family. Use these ideas as you plan for your Family Time with God and your Family Experience each week.

- ◆ Set aside a regular time. Many families have devotions after breakfast or supper. Consistency is important because it shows that time with God is a high priority.
- ◆ Make sure that you have everything you need for your time together. Gather your Bible, devotional materials, writing instruments, and any other items that might enhance your time together. Make sure that your gathering time is age-appropriate and you include activities, questions and prayer time that will engage your entire family. If you keep your time participatory and relevant, your family will want to keep this time going.
- ◆ Make sure that your discussion is clear and concise. Be ready to make explanations if necessary. Encourage participation as much as possible and keep your time together reasonable — 30-45 minutes is adequate.



Baptist Convention of New England, 87 Lincoln Street, Northborough, MA 01532

Praying for Your Children — FROM HEAD TO TOE

Prayer is an important parenting tool in your toolbox! Here is a prayer to guide you in praying for your child(ren). You might consider praying the full prayer at one time or break the prayer down and focus on one area each day. Make the prayer your own by using your child's name(s) and needs as you pray.

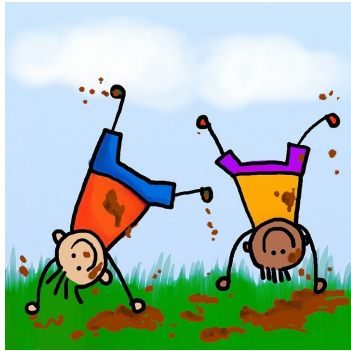
MIND

Father, give my child pure thoughts. More specifically, as Your Word exhorts in Philippians 4:8-9, pursue their minds to think on what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praise worthy! Help them to practice these things daily so that Your perfect peace will control them.



WORDS

Lord, there is so much hurt in this world and so much of it begins with our words! What we say to others has the power to give life or kill! May my child understand the value of hope-filled words! May they be kinder to those around them, especially the ones that are outcasts and forgotten. May You give them words of compassion to speak to others. May they know what great power that words have! Right now, I pray Proverbs 12:18 over my child which says, "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." May my child's tongue's wise words bring healing. Refrain their lips from speaking rash and hurtful words towards others!



HEART

Dear God, I pray that my child's heart will be softened towards the Gospel. There is nothing that saves but Jesus! You call Your children to Yourself by Your love. May Your love draw them even today! May they have a heart of compassion for lost souls. John 14:6 says that "Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus." You love my child even more than I do, and I thank You for that!

GUT

Heavenly Father, give my child a discerning spirit! May they know in their gut if something is right or wrong. Many things in this life are permissible, but not all things are necessary. Give them convictions to stand strong in their peer groups. May they be leaders and not followers. Give them a keen sense of what will benefit their life and not hinder it! Proverbs 3:21 talks about not losing sight of wisdom and having discretion. I pray that for my child right now!

FEET

Father, may my child's feet bring Your truth to the world they live in. May their feet go to the needy, go to the orphan, and go to the neglected. May they seek to give, and not receive. I ask that You show them the blessing of serving others. I ask right now that You give them mission-minded hearts in their community! Help them to know that they are never too young to use their feet to go places to serve You! 1 Timothy 4:12 says, "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set for the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." May You use my child today for Your glory, and not their own. Help me to be prepared to hold them with loose hands, however You may choose to lead them, even if it is across the nations one day on the mission field. They are Yours, Lord!

