

Lent: *Lent takes us on a journey towards Holy Week and Easter. It is a time of preparation and it is a time of fasting and restraint, so not so much a time of celebration and feasting (although of course, every Sunday in Lent is still a feast day). Such times are important to help us ready ourselves for all there is to celebrate. It is also a time to consider how our lives are dependent on God's grace. How then might we keep Lent in this year of Feasts and Festivals? One way would be to remind ourselves that in order to celebrate and feast we need to step back and remind ourselves that such times are a gift of God, lent can be such a time.*

A feasting prayer and activity for Shrove Tuesday: *On Shrove Tuesday we ready ourselves for this time of preparation. Here are some words for a very simply time of worship and pancake making:*

This day is for feasting:
for eating, not wasting,
for chewing and tasting
all that God makes!

This day is for singing:
our ears will be ringing,
with songs we are bringing
to God - full of praise!

Sing a song of praise!

Bring eggs for the baking
add flour to the making
and stir up the cake in
a bowl nice and big!

Add milk to the bowl
then stir with your soul,
and cook 'til it's whole -
and eat all you can!

Eat!

Tomorrow's for praying,
for silently saying
to God that you're laying
your life down in love.

To wait on God's giving
God's food for your living,
God's grace, all forgiving,
as Easter comes near.....

Silent prayer

God's blessing for sharing,
for hoping, for caring.
God's life we are bearing
for us and the world!

The Sundays in Lent.

One way of connecting the season of Lent together is to have the same opening words on each of the 6 Sundays (rather like we might have for lighting candles through Advent). Here is one such set of words you could use. Or you might build from them to create your own that will draw on the themes and readings that you are using throughout Lent or on images that are particularly relevant to your context. It can also be good to use some of the images from the Lenten order in your Holy Week and Easter worship to remind us of the connection.

An opening prayer for the Sundays of Lent:

We are waiting.

God on whom our lives depend,

We are waiting for you and with you.

We are waiting and preparing.

Open us:

For then we will know your possibility.

Challenge us:

For then we will know your way.

Forgive us:

For then we will know your grace.

In this time, in all time.

In the name of Jesus Christ who journeyed to the cross

Amen.

A lent activity for all ages

Lent is a good time to encourage intergenerational conversations about faith. Lent doesn't hold the excitement of Advent (which holds Christmas on the horizon), but it is a good time to encourage those whose journey of faith has been longer to take time to share their stories of faithfulness with others whose journey might be much newer. Make time in your Lent services to encourage such conversations – ask people to share with someone younger in the faith what has been the most encouraging thing about their following of Jesus. Those who are younger in faith could also be asked to share something that encourages them to keep going in their faith.

A Lenten blessing:

As with the opening words you can connect the 6 Lent Sundays with the same or similar blessing. Here is one idea:

A blessing for weary people, who travel a long way,
wondering when the feast will be ready:

A blessing for us, when we are weary.

A blessing for lonely people, who stand and sit alone,
wondering when the invitation to the party will come:

A blessing for us, when we are lonely.

A blessing for all: weary, lonely, encouraged and held,
wondering how God holds eternity:

A blessing for us, for we are held by God.