

February 17, 2021

# Family Lent Devotion: Week 1\*

## WEEKLY SCRIPTURE: LUKE 4:1-13 (CEB)



Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted for forty days by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and afterward Jesus was starving. The devil said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus replied, “It’s written, People won’t live only by bread.” Next the devil led him to a high place and showed him in a single instant all the kingdoms of the world. The devil said, “I will give you this whole domain and the glory of all these kingdoms. It’s been entrusted to me and I can give it to anyone I want. Therefore, if you will worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It’s written, You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.” The devil brought him into Jerusalem and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down from here; for it’s written: He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.” Jesus answered, “It’s been said, Don’t test the Lord your God.” After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from him until the next opportunity.

## WEEKLY LENTEN DISCIPLINE: FASTING

*When you find yourself in a space such as Lent, where life seems thinner than usual and the journey more focused than normal, what do people of faith do to keep journeying on? In ancient times, rituals helped to remind the people of the promise, as yet unfulfilled, and gave reason to trust what seemed to be impossible.*

In this week’s Scripture, we hear how Jesus was tempted by the devil. We know that Jesus was not alone; Scripture reminds us that he was “full of the Holy Spirit” and that he was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” And yet, the devil tries to persuade Jesus to worship him. This week, we ask the question:

“What temptations keep your attention and love from God?”

This week’s Lenten discipline, fasting, provides another practice that helps us respond to God’s love and grace and gives us a tool that we can use to stay in relationship with our loving creator.

When people first hear the word “fasting,” they often think of giving up food and/or drink. This week, your family is invited to fast from something that tempts you, something that has power

and influence over you, or something that keeps you and your family from spending time with the Holy One. This might be TV, video games, Facebook, iphone apps, etc. The options/choices are not limited by this short brainstorm.

**Prepare:** As your family prepares to practice the spiritual discipline of fasting, take time this week to discuss with your family the following wonder questions:

- I wonder where we spend most of our time each day?
- I wonder how this activity/item brings us closer to God?
- I wonder how this activity/item might make us feel further away from God?
- I wonder what it might feel like to give this activity/item up for 12 hours in order to spend more time with God and with one another?

**Practice** the Spiritual Discipline of Fasting:

Starting at 6:00 am on Ash Wednesday morning, you are invited to practice fasting from one of the items discovered in the wondering discussion listed above. You might choose to fast for the day or for the entire five days in this first week of Lent.

As you feel pulled by the space this time of fasting creates, take time to say the following prayer (or you can create your own). As your children feel pulled, frustrated by this practice, and/or wanting to pick up the item/activity that they are trying to fast from, say this prayer with them and/or help them create their own prayer that honors God's presence in their life and the dedication of this time with our Creator:

*God, in this time I give up my use of \_\_\_\_\_. Help me focus on you and your presence in my life. Thank you for being with me during this time. Thank you for your presence and love. I give this time to you. Amen.*

Follow this time of prayer with a discussion on what you and your family might do during this time of fasting that can honor God and recognize God's presence in your life. (Examples: Service project, artwork response- making a card for a family member, loved one, friend; journaling and/or writing a letter to God; calling a loved one/friend saying, "I was thinking of you and wanted to tell you I love you.")

**Reflect:** After your time of fasting has ended, take time to reflect with your family on this experience, using the following wondering questions as a guide:

### WEEKLY WONDERING QUESTIONS:

- I wonder what you fasted from this week?
- I wonder why you chose to fast from this item/activity?
- I wonder how it felt to fast from this activity/item?
- I wonder when it was hard to fast from this activity/item?
- I wonder when it was easy to fast from this activity/item?
- I wonder when you felt far away from God during this time of fasting?
- I wonder when you felt close to God during this time of fasting?



- I wonder what you fasted from this week?
- I wonder what you felt during your time of fasting?
- I wonder when you talked to God this week?
- I wonder when you listened to God this week?
- I wonder what you heard God say?
- I wonder where you saw the color purple this week?
- I wonder when you felt close to God this week?
- I wonder who showed you God's love this week?
- I wonder how you showed God's love to others?

### WEEKLY FAMILY PRAYER:

*Loving God, You are always with us, guiding us and loving us. Sometimes we get so focused on our lives that we forget to spend time with you. This week, help us find new ways to focus on you. Getting ready for the mystery of Easter is big work. During this first week of our Lenten journey, help us learn how to trust you, love you, and share your love with others. Thank you for being with our family as we travel together, preparing our hearts and minds to enter into the mystery of Easter. Bless us in our work. It's in your holy name, we pray, Amen.*