

♥ Post-Its with Purpose: Our Lenten Countdown ♥

Throughout each week there will be opportunities to:

PRAY ~ for someone, about something, or perhaps learn a new prayer

GIVE ~ monies (by reducing our wastefulness/consumerism), extra help and attention for those who need it

FAST ~ from meat/certain foods, from negative behaviors

OBSERVE ~ Faith traditions at home

Below is my outline for the 40 days of Lent, and as I mentioned before, the activities are quite particular to my own family, so they may or may not be something that would appeal to you and your children ... but in the spirit of sharing, here they are! I am happy if something here is helpful to you, and you are welcome to print this out if you wish. The *italicized dark purple text* is what I'm actually writing on the post-it for the children to read - just a sentence or two.

The *text in violet* is for me ~ my own notes and reminders for that day.

1. 2/10 *"No meat today! Let's set up our Lenten altar."* On Ash Wednesday we'll bury the "Alleluia" (golden letters) in a butterfly-shaped box. This will rest on our mantel throughout Lent. We'll also burn last year's palms (as we've done before) and sprinkle ashes over a pot of soil in which stands a plain white candle. Set pot on Lenten altar (library mantel).
2. 2/11 *"Today we'll set up a donation box in the foyer."* Our Lady of Lourdes. All help set up our family donation box to be kept in the foyer throughout Lent. Decorate with words and symbols of love.
3. 2/12 *"No meat or dessert today! Let's make treats for the hungry birds, and watch a family movie together."* As "Friends of Francis," our mission is to care for creation. We'll make suet treats - a valentine for the birds! Tonight is family movie night: *The Song of Bernadette*.
4. 2/13 *"Gather donations for parish pet drive. Make hearts for St. Valentine's Branch."* On heart shaped doilies, we'll each write things we love about one another. No peeking! Mom will gather the hearts and tomorrow morning they'll be hanging from a pretty branch on the breakfast table.

♥ Sunday, 2/14: At our family meeting, we'll talk about awareness and consumerism. Instead of just giving money to charity, what if we also worked on buying less and wasting less? How can we respect our resources? Let's learn about how children live all over the world. Some have much less than we do! Measure this week's grocery bill against the average - any saved money goes in the alms jar.

5. 2/15 *"Help Mom clean out refrigerator. How much food waste did we find?"* Create a pile of food that has gone by and tally the waste dollars. Later in the day I'll introduce the

idea of a “peace corner” where we’ll spend time learning how children live all over the world. Read [Let There Be Llamas!](#)

6. 2/16 *“Help Dad set up a compost pail for the kitchen.”* Brainstorm ways to waste less food. Set up our peace board in library corner - let the boys decorate with flag stickers and add first prayer cards (made from plain index cards). As we find people and situations to pray for, we’ll decorate a card to post on our board.
7. 2/17 *“Use Amazon gift cards to buy toys to donate.”* Go online and buy items for the community toy drive at the first of the month. (Use some of their Amazon Christmas gift money to do this.) While online, we’ll watch the Pope’s video, [Care for Creation](#). Look through [Children Like Me](#). Ask: Where would you live if you could live anywhere in the world? Why?
8. 2/18 *“Choose a toy or book to add to the donation box today.”* Encourage the children to choose at least one item each. Look through [A Life Like Mine](#). What do we need to live safely and happily everyday? Make a list for our peace corner. Pray that all children, everywhere, have those things.
9. 2/19 *“No meat today! Help Mom launder clothing to donate.”* Work together to clean the clothes we’re donating - fold them and place in donation box. Read [What We Wear: Dressing up around the World](#).
10. 2/20 *“Help Mom food shop today.”* Encourage the boys to skip the snacks and processed foods. Compare food costs. How do we save when we’re careful to buy only what we need? (Money, excess trash, extra sugars and fats we don’t need.) Read [What the World Eats](#).

♥ Sunday, February 21st: At our family meeting, we’ll talk about forgiveness and examining our conscience. What might you have done that you are sorry for? (Inner thoughts.) Give this some thought this week. Can you ask for forgiveness - from the person you sinned against, from God, from yourself? Can you forgive someone who has wronged you? What does that do for your heart to let go of that hurt? Also, look at grocery bill for savings to be deposited in alms jar.

11. 2/22 *“No complaining today!”* Chair of St. Peter. Stop yourself before complaining - if the urge arises, stop and write one thing you are grateful for on the white board. How many blessings came up today? (If time and interest, [make a holy-spirit stained glass and/or learn about St. Peter's Basilica](#).)
12. 2/23 *“Forgive someone today.”* This could be something that happens today or something that’s happened in the past - tell them it’s ok and that you forgive them - and then let it go. Also, go to store with Mom to purchase diapers for community drive. Add to donations box.
13. 2/24 *“Ask for forgiveness today.”* Think of something you wish you’d done better, or something you wish you hadn’t done. Apologize - to the person you wronged and/or to God and know you will do better. Forgive yourself for things you wish you could change. Promise to work on these things and feel good inside that you’re doing something positive!
14. 2/25 *“Do something for your brothers today.”* Offer suggestions: neaten desks, make beds, fold laundry, clear dishes, clean lunch bag, play with the little one, let someone use your

computer, make a welcome home sign for L. Read *Brothers* and offer thanks to God for each other.

15. 2/26 *“No meat today! Pray the stations together.”* We’ll gather in the library to look at the stations I’ve set up along the Lenten mantel. (Pinned to burlap garland.) First we’ll talk about what these pictures portray ... ask how Jesus may have felt and what he might have needed? How would we have helped him if we could? What about now?

16. 2/27 *“Make pretzels with Mom. Family movie night!”* Talk about why pretzels are a Lenten tradition as well as a wholesome, homemade snack. What other healthy snacks can we make instead of buy? Read *Brother Giovanni’s Little Reward; How the Pretzel Was Born*. Watch *Bells of St. Mary’s* tonight.

♥ Sunday, February 28th: At our family meeting we’ll talk about our local community (neighborhood, parish, family). How can we help those that live around us? How can we contribute to our community? Also, look at grocery bill for savings to be deposited in alms jar.

17. 2/29 *“Bring cookies to our elderly neighbors.”* Include a note with our phone numbers in case they ever need us. Offer to help with spring yard work. At home, start our *“pink roses”* for Sunday.

18. 3/1 *“Take a clean up-walk through the neighborhood.”* Walk the neighborhood and clean up trash that might have blown about. Bring trash bins back up driveways for neighbors. (Help mom make daffodil pins for St. David’s Day - or perhaps sit and color with Mom while she works.)

19. 3/2 *“Make a card for someone who needs cheering up.”* Talk about who we know that might miss us or feel lonely sometimes. Make cards at home (say a prayer over each), then help Mom mail them. Be polite and cheerful with the folks at the village post office. How many smiles can we offer?

20. 3/3 *“Buy pajamas for library drive.”* Go to store and buy pajamas for children whose families can’t afford new clothing. What does homeless mean? Let’s add to our peace board today and give thanks for the comforts we enjoy in our own home.

21. 3/4 *“No meat today! Pray the stations together.”* After praying the stations, read aloud from our parish bulletin and talk about the groups that need assistance. Where can we offer out time/talent/treasure? Tonight at supper read aloud from our local paper and do the same. Where is help needed? How can we pitch in?

22. 3/5 *“Think about this person and what they need.”* Each person receives a name and is encouraged to think about what that person might need (physically, spiritually), then choose a way to help. Keep it to yourself, but do what you can as you can. Read *One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference*

♥ Sunday, March 6th: Today is Rose Sunday! We will have a special family brunch after Mass. Nana’s delicious egg custard will be served. Today let’s talk about our prayer

habits and how we can make room for prayer in our life. Ask the grandparents about their favorite prayers. Also, look at grocery bill for savings to be deposited in alms jar.

23. 3/7 *“Learn a new prayer this week.”* Each of us chooses a new prayer (have suggestions ready) to learn by heart this week, with the goal of sharing at next Sunday’s family dinner. Write them out on index cards.

24. 3/8 *“Pray for people who are sick and their caregivers.”* St. John of God, patron of hospitals, nurses and the sick. Do we know anyone who is sick or recovering in some way? Do we know people who care for someone in need? These folks need special prayers!

25. 3/9 *“Write a letter to Jesus.”* Set the table with paper, colored pens and stickers, and let’s write a letter to Jesus together. This can be about anything - giving thanks, saying hi, telling him a bit about ourselves. Attend Adoration in the evening (older boys and Mom).

26. 3/10 *“Fast from electronics tonight.”* After supper, turn off all tech devices - and read, talk, sing - or just visit with each other. How are the prayers coming along?

27. 3/11 *“No meat today! Pray the stations together.”* Look in our donations box - what can we add? Look at our local food pantry’s list online and add items to our Saturday shopping list.

28. 3/12 *“Do something nice for someone today in secret.”* *Shhhh!* Encourage the children to engage in a conspiracy of kindness today. Offer quiet suggestions.

♥ Sunday, March 13th: Daylight Savings Begins! Isn’t light wonderful? How is Christ a Light in our lives? Let’s talk about Easter Sunday - how can each of us pitch in and prepare? (If possible, have children present their memorized prayers.) Mention early rising time tomorrow - 6:30 a.m. Also, look at grocery bill for savings to be deposited in alms jar.

29. 3/14 *“Let’s have a sunrise prayer this morning.”* Sun rises at 6:56 a.m. so we’ll gather shortly before in the family room - which will be fairly dark. As sunrise approaches, I’ll open a window so we can listen. We’ll watch the sun rise behind the trees and the light grow ... I’ll read a little prayer thanking God for our new day. (If it’s mild enough, we may even walk outside.)

30. 3/15 *“Today we’ll drink only water.”* I’ll keep a pitcher in the fridge and we’ll focus on the blessing of fresh, clean water at our disposal Read *One Well: The Story of Water on Earth*

31. 3/16 *“Today we’ll prepare for St. Patrick’s Day.”* The boys will work on a shamrock craft (how does it represent the Holy trinity?) and help Mom make scones for tomorrow.

32. 3/17 *“Let’s learn about our family today.”* St. Patrick, patron of Ireland. Today we’ll have an Irish tea for Nana (scones, tea) and talk about our family history. Where in Ireland did our ancestors live? (Have a map ready.) Read *Patrick: Patron Saint of Ireland*. Irish supper tonight!

33. 3/18 *“Let’s surprise Dad with a big thank-you!”* Fathers work so hard for their families! Make a big sign thanking Dad for working so hard for us. Surprise him with a text picture of the boys holding up the sign. (Also no meat, stations in the afternoon.)

34. 3/19 *“Help Dad with tasks around the yard today.”* St. Joseph, patron of workers and fathers. We’ll have a simple St. Joseph’s supper tonight. Read *Song of the Swallows*.

♥ Sunday, March 20th: It’s Palm Sunday ~ Holy Week begins! Also, it is the first day of Spring! Today we’ll bless our garden patch with a little of our Lenten soil (prepared on Ash Wednesday). The rest of the soil will be planted with grass seed. If the day is nice we’ll have a little procession around the property. Look for pussy willows by the creek. (English “palms.”) Read *The Colt and the King*. Also, look at grocery bill for savings to be deposited in alms jar.

35. 3/21 *“Today we spring clean: tables and chairs!”* The first three days of Holy Week are spent preparing the house for Easter. We will use a natural cleaner to wash the dining and kitchen tables as well as all the chairs. If it’s a nice day, the windows will be open to allow in fresh air. Mama will launder the linens for Easter dinner. Read *The Donkey’s Easter Tale*.

36. 3/22 *“Today we spring clean: windows and doorways!”* Spring cleaning continues ... note how brightly the sun shines through the clean windows. How much easier it is to let in that light when our windows are clean! (symbolism) Decorate doorways for spring. Read *Petook: An Easter Story*.

37. 3/23 *“Today we spring clean: floors and rugs!”* Help mop and vacuum. It is also Spy Wednesday so we will have “silver dollar” pancakes for dinner. Read *The Tale of the Three Trees*.

38. 3/24 *“Create paschal candle today.”* Decorate the plain pillar standing in soil pot on mantel. Eat dinner by candlelight tonight, using our baptismal candles. At the end of the meal, say a prayer together, and blow out candles. Sit in darkness for a few moments.

39. 3/25 *“No meat today! Pray the stations together.”* It’s Good Friday, so this will be a quiet day, close to home. Hot cross buns for breakfast, and let’s walk the stations outdoors. (I will have this set up beforehand.) Read *The Jesus Garden: An Easter Legend*.

40. 3/26 *“Today we’ll take a Praise Walk.”* It’s Holy Saturday, the last day of Lent! Today we’ll color eggs and bake for tomorrow’s feast! But we’ll take time to walk through the spring woods and look for signs of life, marveling at the wold God has made for us. Tonight we’ll light our Paschal candle from the Easter Vigil fire.

♥ ALLELUIA! HE IS RISEN! ♥