

Blessing for Lent

Background: The word Lent comes from the English word for “lengthen”. It is a time for becoming intentional in our faith practices. It is a time of preparation, too. We get ready to meet the Risen Christ—but to do so we prepare with prayer, confession, asking for forgiveness and studying the scriptures.

Preparation: A purple cloth may be placed on the table along with six purple candles to represent each week of Lent. A Bible and a “begging bowl”¹ may be added. You may plant some flower seeds, such as marigolds, at the beginning of Lent. Watch them grow as the days lengthen and as you prepare.

The Blessing Ritual

Welcome (say): *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.*
Welcome to this Lenten Season of quiet growth and mystery.

Bible Texts to read aloud:

Choose a Bible Text from the Messiah Church 2012 Lenten Devotional booklet which is assigned to the week.

Reflection: Discuss with delight your responses to the questions:

- What can I learn from this story?
- How can this story help me to grow in faith?

Ritual Action: Hold the begging bowl in turn. Ask God to help you to grow in your relationship with Jesus.

Prayer: Pray the squeeze prayer or the Lord’s Prayer. Be sure to include prayers for people in need. (Squeeze prayer: join hands. Each person takes a turn to pray “I thank God for...” and “I ask God to help...” When one person finishes or if they “pass” they gently squeeze the hand of the person to the right. The prayer ends when it completes the circle.)

Blessing: ***“May our loving and gracious God walk with us during this time of mystery and growth.” Amen*** (Have each family member give the blessing to the person next to them, until each has received the blessing.)

¹ During the Middle Ages monks would go out in the morning with an empty bowl, believing that God would work through other people to supply the day’s food. Choose a small bowl as your begging bowl and use it for ritual action. Let the begging bowl remind you that God gives you your daily bread. Acknowledge you are dependent on God for everything. Trust that God will meet your true needs.