

# Children and Family Ministry Lent & Easter Resource Guide

by Christine V. Hides

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# Welcome!

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Whether this is your first time planning Lent or your twentieth, this guide will assist you in finding resources to help children and families participate in meaningful activities that engage the wonder and mystery of the Christian faith.

The tools in this guide have been curated and developed over a decade of working with children and youth in a variety of church settings and with my own children.

## In this guide:

- Tools to equip parents
- Faith forming take-home resources
- Inter-generational Event Options
- Children's Messages
- Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, & Easter resources
- & a BONUS Easter welcome check list

Grace and peace,

*Christine V. Hides*

# Getting Started: Re-framing Lent

## *What is Lent?*

Lent is the church season of getting ready for the great mystery of Easter. During this reflective time, we focus on turning our lives more fully toward God. We may fast from things that disconnect us from God and one another or we might take on new practices of living more like Christ. Historically this 6-week period was a time to prepare for baptism on Easter.

Faith is a lifelong journey. Each year during Lent we gain new insight and understanding as we practice our faith and tune our hearts to God. Jesus' life, death and resurrection shape our lives with God both now and forevermore.

Many parents today have little knowledge of Lent. Those that have heard of it usually think of it as the time to give up chocolate. This presents an opportunity for children and family ministers to guide families in creating new, meaningful traditions that enrich family faith practices.

Use this ["What is Lent" newsletter](#) I shared with parents last year as an example of how to invite families to a new Lenten journey.

# Lent at Home Resources

## My Favorite Ash Wednesday, Lent, & Easter Books are listed in my new Bookshop

Click [here](#) to visit my Bookshop. Each purchase made through this affiliate link supports independent bookstores and this website.

## Best of At Home Holy Week

Free Holy Week downloads from trusted websites.

## Seven Ideas for Holy Week at Home

Ideas that work in a pandemic.

## At Home Hosanna Project

Started in 2020, this project invites families to create outdoor art to share on social media.

## A Collection of Free Lenten Devotionals for Many Ages

This list will be updated as resources become available in 2021.

# Especially for Parents: Thinking Developmentally

Easter is the essential story of our faith, but parts of it are not child friendly. Not only that, but whatever version of the Easter story you use (and there are many!), there are theological implications for how we understand who God is and how we understand human nature.

**1**

## **Before You Read the Story to Children**

Important points to consider given the violence of Jesus' death

[Review of Children's Bible](#) versions of the Easter story

[Spoiler Alert - tips for reading](#)

**2**

## **Maundy Thursday**

A recipe for wonder

[Holy Thursday, Communion and Bread](#)

**3**

## **Images of God in Challenging Times**

Not just for Easter - thinking about who God is

[Who is God?](#)

**4**

## **Love and Grace in the Ashes**

A short reflection on grace versus guilt

[Ash Wednesday Reflection](#)

# Lent Begins: Pretzel Sunday & Ash Wednesday

**1**

## **Pretzel Sunday**

Recipe and tips for the Sunday before Lent

[Pretzel Sunday](#)

**2**

## **Inviting Families to Ash Wednesday**

Answering questions parents have about this day

[Ash Wednesday and Children](#)

**3**

## **Four Things I Tell Children the Sunday before Lent**

Packing the alleluias, ashes connect us all

[Preparing Children for Lent](#)

**4**

## **Ash Wednesday Coloring Pages**

"We are interconnected with the earth, each other, and God because we are made of the same beloved dust and atoms of all CREATION" [Coloring Page on Etsy](#)

[Palm Branch Coloring Page](#)

# Take Home Materials

Lent is an opportunity to equip families with new ways to grow in faith. There is no one right way to do Lent. God meets us in a wide variety of spiritual practices. A few options:

**1**

## March Groundedness Bracket

Choose a Lenten practice, then add days each week. This printable is a simple tool to form a new habit.

[From Madness to Groundedness](#)

**2**

## Devotionals

Use these readings developed in years past as inspiration to develop your own

[Psalm a Day](#)

[Readings and Simple Objects for the Dinner Table](#)

[#PictureLent](#) a daily email that I have contributed to

**3**

## Holy Week in a Box

Families I work with enjoy this travel-sized devotional (not written by me)

[Holy Week in a Box](#)

[Sample Holy Week on the Go Letter](#)

**4**

## Holy Week Bookmarks

Customizable, printable bookmarks with a reading per day

[Bookmarks Printable](#)

# Intergenerational Event Ideas

Lent offers opportunities to gather people of all ages together for special events grounded in worship and prayer.

**1**

## **Psalm Prayer Stations for all ages**

Full color station directions and instructions. One of a handful of downloads offered through Etsy which fund the website.

[Psalms Prayer Stations](#)

**2**

## **Create Easter Flags Together**

Read the stories of Holy Week as you paint, then display the flags on Easter

[Holy Week Art Project](#)

**3**

## **Talk about Transformation**

Wooden crosses are painted with two sides: black for Good Friday, and vibrant colors to display on Easter.

[Pictures here](#)

**4**

## **Talk about Resurrection with Poetry**

Use this simple method to create prayers from short stories and articles. Then share your poem and discuss what you discovered. Suitable for adults and teens.

[The First Time Resurrection Mattered to Me](#)

# Not Just for Children: Messages for Worship & Chapel

These children's messages engage the congregation on Sunday mornings during Lent.

**1**

## Who is This Man?

A Lenten series which builds each week using candles and a felt symbol

Download for [Subscribers to ChristineVHides](#)

[A reflection on the power of the story](#)

**2**

## Palm Sunday

A brief retelling of the events of Holy Week.

[Palm Sunday Children's Message](#)

**3**

## Three Easter Sunday Messages

Creative ways to engage children - one with a parachute!

[Easter Sunday Children's Messages](#)

**4**

## Outside the Children's Time Box

Five other opportunities to share the Easter story

[Don't Forget to Teach Easter](#)

# Easter Welcome Checklist

There are three parts to welcoming guest with children to Easter services:

**Invite-** Both personal and group invitations are an important part of Easter preparation.

**Include** - Plan ways for children (even first-time guests) to be a part of the service.

**Inspire** - In addition to declaring the Good News of Easter loudly and proudly, don't forget to highlight meaningful and easy-entry ways for families to get involved in your church.

- Personally invite families to services. "Egging" with plastic eggs and a note is a fun way to do this.
- Advertise on social media.
- Prepare take-home worship bags. Add things like scratch off crosses, an Easter coloring book, & Wikistix.
- Plan a joyful and meaningful children's message.
- Use your announcements, slideshow, bulletin and/or pew cards to communicate the ways you welcome children in worship.
- Invite guests to the next thing. Host an [open house](#) or a family-friendly service project.
- Check that your website and calendar are up to date so guests can find the information they are looking for.

# Christine V. Hides

*weaving faith into everyday life*

## About Me:

I enjoy writing and speaking on the topic of faith formation because I enjoy meeting and working with others who share my passion.

I am a provisional deacon in the United Methodist Church, serving full time as a Director of Christian Education in the northern suburbs of Chicago. I began blogging as an experiment 8 years ago. My website now includes over 260 articles, in addition to articles I have written for Building Faith, Grow Christians and elsewhere.

Readers make this labor of love worthwhile. I am grateful for each visit, comment, and share. Thank you for your support. Please visit [ChristineVHides.com](http://ChristineVHides.com) or follow @BlessEachOne on [Facebook](#).

Please let me know what resources you found helpful and what you additional resources you are looking for but cannot find!

Christine V. Hides

Let's Connect