



# Countdown *to the* Cross

## *A Lent Activity Paper Chain*

Help your family internalize Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection with a fun, kid-friendly Lent paper chain! We've got engaging activities on our countdown to Easter—allowing you to build anticipation and introduce spiritual disciplines for a lifetime.

**Tip:** Lent doesn't include Sundays. They're celebrations of Jesus' death and resurrection, not days of the historical fast. But if you want to keep the momentum going, we've included Sundays as a bonus!



# 40

Wednesday



With a parent's permission, write this verse on your arm in washable marker: "Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God" (1 Peter 5:6). See if you can say it to your parent tomorrow.

# 39

Thursday



On YouTube, listen to "The Word of the Lord (1 Peter 1:24-25)" song from Seeds Family Worship. What does it mean? How does it make you feel that people are like "grass and flowers"?

# 38

Friday



Find a plant outside that's dead. We heard yesterday that the Bible says people are like plants that wither, whose bodies eventually turn back into dirt. Why does God want us to remember this? What could happen if we don't remember it?

# 37

Saturday



Fill a shallow dish with 1" of water and sprinkle it with pepper. Dip a toothpick in some dish soap and touch the water with it. What happens? God is holy—and like your toothpick and the pepper—cannot be near sin. That's why it's great Jesus came. He made a way for sinful people to be close to God again! (Read Ephesians 2:13 together.)

# Sunday



**STOP!** Take a minute to read this under the table. Seriously. When we are "humble", we see ourselves like God sees us—not more important, not less. It also means we see God as bigger and more important than we are. We choose to put ourselves under God, rather than think we have to be in charge and keep ourselves safe. A little like being under this table.

# 36

Monday



Find a clean jar to be your "worship jar." As a family, drop in slips of paper throughout Lent with pictures or words about what you love about God, verses that capture what you feel for Him, or names of God that are meaningful to you right now.

# 35

Tuesday



With permission, use a dry-erase marker to write on your bathroom mirror one of the verses you're learning about during Lent. (Or ask a parent to write it for you.)

# 34

Wednesday



Jesus' death for us was so generous! Find things today in your house you can give to people who need them.

# 33

Thursday



Today, fast from something you really like: sugar, TV, video games, meat . . .

# 32

Friday

"[Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3). Ask a parent to carve a "stamp" of a simple shape on the cut end of a raw potato. Dip your potato stamp in washable paint to make art! Or try one of these: the chopped-off end of a celery heart (looks like a rose!), a toilet paper tube pressed into the shape of a heart, a pencil eraser for small circles.

# 31

Saturday



Part of preparing our hearts for Easter involves looking inside and getting honest about ways we sin. On YouTube, look up, "1 John 1:8-9 – If We Confess" by Seeds Family Worship. Can you memorize it by this time tomorrow?

# Sunday



**Can you believe Jesus didn't complain once when He went to the cross? (See Isaiah 53:7). Today, do your chores and what your parents ask of you without complaining once.**

# 30

Monday



Read Romans 5:8. Can you believe Jesus died for us while we were His enemies? Today, pray for someone who sometimes isn't nice to you.

# 29

Tuesday



Read Isaiah 53:3. While Jesus was dying, people didn't even want to look at Him; they hid their faces. Can you think of something else that isn't beautiful to look at, but is beautiful on the inside?

# 28

Wednesday



As we continue humbling ourselves, it's good to think about how we all sin against God and how good the gift of Jesus is. On YouTube, look up Seeds Family Worship's song, "Romans 3:23/6:23 - All Have Sinned."

# 27

Thursday



Have you been fasting for Lent? Is it easier or harder than you thought?

# 26

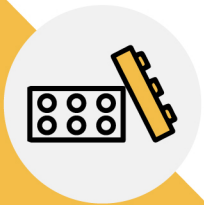
Friday



Lent reflects on the time Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness by himself. Build a fort (of cushions, sheets; under a table...) in your house or even outside. Spend some time alone and even being quiet today, praying in your fort.

# 25

Saturday



Using Legos, stuffed animals, or another toy, show what it might have looked like when Jesus prayed in the wilderness for 40 days.

# Sunday



Spring is coming! But like Lent, sometimes we have to wait. Go outside and take a picture of something that will need time before it becomes beautiful.

# 24

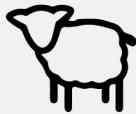
Monday



Jesus died during a Jewish holiday called Passover. Today, watch The Prince of Egypt or search for the “Smiting of the first born scene” on YouTube (might be scary for small children).

# 23

Tuesday



Why did the Israelites put a lamb's blood on their doors?  
Read what John the Baptist calls Jesus in John 1:29.

# 22

Wednesday



Depending on where you live, things may be starting to grow outside.  
Read John 12:24. What do you think Jesus meant when he said this?  
How would his body, when it was buried, become like a seed?

# 21

Thursday



Lent involves a lot of waiting as we get our hearts ready for Easter. Use sidewalk chalk to draw a life-sized maze on your driveway or at the park—a maze that will take you a while to walk through. Make a few symbols along the way in your maze to remind you to pray for someone, tell God something you love about Him, or thank Him for something.

# 20

Friday



As you continue waiting for Easter, listen to Seeds Family Worship's song, "Wait for Him": [bit.ly/39pHDiP](https://bit.ly/39pHDiP)

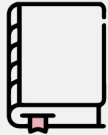
# 19

Saturday



Read John 2:19-20—and then build a "temple" with blocks, Legos, Lincoln Logs, or even cushions. Jesus said God's real temple wasn't one that people built. It was his own body—and he would rebuild God's temple in three days! What did he mean? (If you want, you can smash and rebuild your "temple"...but you don't have to take three days.)

# Sunday



All through the Old Testament, God leaves clues that Jesus is coming! It's like a red thread that God weaves through the Old Testament. In a children's Bible (or straight from the Bible in Genesis 22:1-19), read the story of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Can you see any "red threads" here?

# 18

Monday



Remember how God put the "red thread" of clues about Jesus throughout the Old Testament? Parent: Weave some red yarn or thread around a room of your house. Have your child wind up the yarn as they find its trail.

# 17

Tuesday



Elementary kids and older: Watch the video "The Test" from [TheBibleProject.com](http://TheBibleProject.com). Think about Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac. Why might God have been testing Abraham this way?

# 16

Wednesday



Passover begins soon. Read the story of Passover in a children's Bible, then dip a paintbrush in water and (with an adult's help) brush it over your door.

# 15

Thursday



In the New Testament, "leaven"—something that makes bread rise and get puffy, like yeast—was sometimes compared to sin, because both sin and yeast grow. At Passover, Jews couldn't have any yeast in their houses. They also didn't use leaven because God told them to be ready to leave Egypt; they didn't have time for bread to rise! Look up a recipe for easy matzoh, and ask a parent if you can make some.

# 14

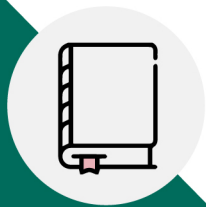
Friday



Did you know Judas' betrayal of Jesus was prophesied hundreds of years before it happened? Read Zechariah 11:12–13 and see if you can find 30 coins in your house. If you want, act out the betrayal with a sibling (Matthew 26:14–15, Matthew 27:9–10).

# 13

Saturday



During the first Passover, the Israelites were slaves. Read John 8:34. Without Jesus, what are we slaves to? (Sin.)

# Sunday



Read John 10:9. Why does Jesus call himself a door? Check out Seeds Family Worship's "John 10:9 - I Am The Door" on YouTube.

# 12

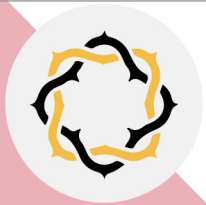
Monday



Next Sunday, we'll celebrate "Palm Sunday"—a day when people had a parade for Jesus because they wanted Him to be king. Today, trace around your hand, and flip the drawing so the outline of your fingers points to your tummy. Make a donkey: your thumb is the donkey's head, and your fingers are its legs (don't forget the tail!). As you color, your parent can read Zechariah 9:9.

# 11

Tuesday



When Jesus died, soldiers made a crown for Him, to make fun of Him being the "King of the Jews"—only they made it out of thorns that really hurt. Try making a crown of thorns out of a paper plate with the inside circle cut out. Color or paint it brown.

# 10

Wednesday



Jesus died on a Jewish holiday called Passover. When people celebrate Passover today, they eat a dish called "charoset" made of apples and nuts that remind them of the bricks and mortar Jews used as slaves in Egypt. Why is it important to remember they were slaves? (*They need to remember how God saved them!*) With a parent's permission, look up and make an easy recipe for charoset.

9

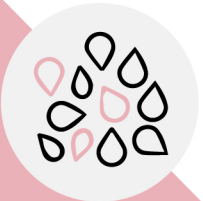
Thursday



Next Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. That's when Jesus had His last dinner with His disciples. During that meal, He did something funny: He washed His disciples' dirty, stinky feet! He showed them that even though He was God, He would serve them. He considered Himself below them. Today, wash each other's feet to remind you that, like Jesus, we treat others as more important.

8

Friday



Today, if you have seeds somewhere in your house, plant one in some dirt you've put in an eggshell. Seeds remind us that even though they're buried and we can't see them, they make new life! Who else can you think of that brought new life after they were buried? *(Jesus!)*

7

Saturday



Next Saturday, we'll remember the day Jesus was buried. When Jewish kids eat Passover dinner, they play a game where an adult hides a cracker folded in a cloth napkin. It's a game to find something "buried." Parents: hide the cracker before a meal.

## Palm Sunday

Read Matthew 21:1-11 together. Lay out your jackets, and take turns walking across them. Why do you think people put their coats down for Jesus? Why were they excited? *(They wanted Jesus to be their King. They were tired and angry of the Romans being in charge.)*

6

Monday



Do you think it's ever good to be angry? On the Monday before Easter, Jesus went into the Temple and got REALLY ANGRY. Read what happened in Matthew 21:12-16. Why was Jesus so angry? *(People were cheating in God's house and costing the poor a lot of money to buy animals to worship. That's like stealing from people who come to worship God!)* What things are okay to be angry about? *(When someone is hurt by someone else, etc.)* The Pharisees were angry, too. Why were they angry? *(They didn't want people thinking Jesus was God and praising Him.)*

5

Tuesday

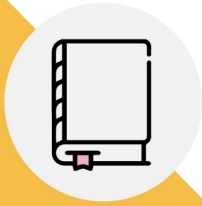


Parents: Using a white crayon or pencil on a black piece of paper, draw a cross one to two inches wide and about eight inches tall. Grab a box of toothpicks, and let kids glue toothpicks into the shape of the cross, covering it. Ask kids, "Do you think Jesus knew He would die on a cross?" Read Mark 9:30-32 together to find out.



# 4

Wednesday



On the Wednesday before the first Easter, Jesus had dinner at the house of a man He'd healed from leprosy, called Simon. Read about what happened in Mark 14:1-11. What would that house have smelled like? Why was Judas angry, and what did he do?

# 3

Thursday



The Thursday before the first Easter was the day Jesus had His last meal with His disciples and was arrested. On YouTube, look up “The Story of Easter (the Last Supper)” and watch the video from Saddleback Kids.

# 2

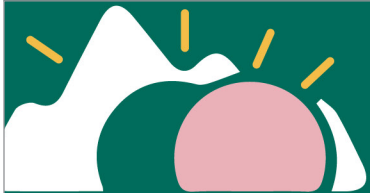
Friday

The Friday before Easter was the saddest day of all time: Jesus, God's Son, died on a cross. Why was this the best and the worst day ever? Wear something black today and tomorrow to remind you these are sad days, because Jesus needed to die for our sins.

# 1

Saturday

What's one time you had to trust God when you were afraid? On the Saturday before Easter, Jesus' friends and disciples didn't know He was going to rise again. They thought He was just ... dead. They didn't know they were waiting. They just had to trust God with all their questions. Today, decide on something good you will skip—like a snack, or dessert—so you can remember what it was like for the disciples to wait. What will you skip?



## Easter Sunday!

It's **PARTY DAY!** Jesus is **ALIVE!!** On YouTube, look up “The Story of Easter (Jesus’ Sacrifice)” and watch the video from Saddleback Kids. If you had seen Jesus alive, what would you have felt?