

## Forty Activities for Forty Days in an FDK classroom

[TN- Teacher's Note – The Lenten season begins on March 6 and goes until April 18, when the Triduum begins. The Easter season begins on April 21 – June 9. Please leave Easter crafts until the Easter season. You have fifty days to do Easter crafts.]

Monday March 4 is the Monday before Lent begins. Explain to the children that Lent is about to begin on Wednesday. Lent is a time of forty days when the Church throughout the world prepares for Easter. Forty days is a very long time. Do some activity to explore the number 40.

Tuesday March 5 is the Tuesday before Lent begins. Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the day when all of us are signed with a cross of ashes on our forehead. This sign helps us to remember that we belong to God and we need to make sure we are living holy lives. When we know we have made a mistake the ashes remind us to seek forgiveness. Bring in a bowl of ashes and let the students touch the ashes...if they want to. Ask the students not to do anything else with the ashes. You may want to invite them to make a cross on a white sheet of paper [by placing their thumb or fingers in the ashes and then make a cross on the paper.]

Wednesday March 6 is **Ash Wednesday** and the beginning of Lent. Explain to the children that during Lent the Church invites us to do three things: fasting – going without something; praying – doing a bit more praying than usual; and almsgiving – sharing what we have with others, especially the poor. Some people decide to do one thing throughout the forty days of Lent. For example, some people decide to exercise more; some people decide to eat more healthily (by giving up candy/chocolate.) Some people decide to pray more. Some people decide to share their money with people in the global south where they are very poor. Ask your students what they might do during these forty days of Lent. Maybe the students will decide to try to make the classroom a peaceful place.

Thursday March 7 is the **first Thursday of Lent**. Change the cloth in the prayer centre to purple. Explain that the colour purple reminds us that we are in the season of Lent. Ask the students to explain of what the colour purple reminds them. When the class goes to Church they will see that the Church is decorated with purple too.

Friday March 8 is the **first Friday of Lent**. **Bury the Alleluia**. We do not sing Alleluia during Lent. So get some soil in a pot, put the Alleluia in pot and cover it.

[TN – March Break begins – maybe you want to post the actions for these days on your classroom website or send home the suggestions so Lent continues during March Break.]

Saturday March 9 is the **first Saturday of Lent** and the first day of March Break. Invite your students to play outdoors for an hour to get some fresh air to make their bodies healthy. Lent is like spring cleaning for the body.

Sunday March 10 is the **First Sunday of Lent**. Go to Church and sing God's praises. Sundays are not included in the Lenten 40 days because Sunday is the Lord's Day and we celebrate the Risen Jesus on Sundays. It is also Daylight Savings. Our clocks spring ahead one hour.

Monday March 11 is the **first Monday of Lent**. Ask your students to share a smile with each other during the day today. When we share a smile we share God's love.

Tuesday March 12 is the **first Tuesday of Lent**. Tell your father that you love him. That is sure to make his day.

Wednesday March 13 is the **second Wednesday of Lent**. Invite the students to fast from the word "NO" as a response to requests by their parents today. So when your parents ask you to do something, **JUST DO IT!**

Thursday March 14 is the **second Thursday of Lent**. Do a random act of kindness. Try to do it as a secret.

Friday March 15 is the **second Friday of Lent**. Think about a child in Africa and send them good thoughts and good energy for today.

Saturday March 16 is the **second Saturday of Lent**. Tell your mother that you love her. That is sure to make her day.

Sunday March 17 is the **Second Sunday of Lent**. Make a snow angel in the snow and act like an angel all day. You may want to put some green food colouring on the angel to make it Irish.

Monday March 18 is the **second Monday of Lent**. Play a game of I SPY with my Little Eye something that is purple. The students can use the whole classroom for this game. There ought to be purple on the prayer centre and probably in people's clothing. Remind the students that Purple is the colour of Lent.

Tuesday March 19 is the **second Tuesday of Lent**. Today is Jesus' foster father's feast day, St. Joseph's Day. Did you know that St. Joseph is the patron saint of Canada? Joseph was not alive when Jesus died on the cross. Joseph had already

died, but before he died he taught Jesus how to be a good carpenter. What has your father taught you?

Wednesday March 20 is the **third Wednesday of Lent**. Pope Francis invites us to serve others. When someone needs help today, jump in and help them. In this way we serve the people around us like Pope Francis says. Today is also the first day of Spring. Any signs of Spring yet?

Thursday March 21 is the **third Thursday of Lent**. Fast from saying the word “Stupid!” or the word “Shut up!” These words are usually used when someone is frustrated. Take three deep breaths instead of using these words when you are frustrated by someone or something.

Friday March 22 is the **third Friday of Lent**. Reflection on the Cross  
Get a crucifix and hold it in front of the children. Ask them to look at it and tell you what they see. Wood in the shape of the cross. A man on the cross. The man has nails in his hands and feet. He has a crown of thorns on his head. There is a sign on the top of the cross that has the letters INRI. The man has some cloth wrapped around his private parts. Ask them if they know the name of the man [Jesus]. Why is he on the cross this way? [because some people did not like what he said about God – he said he was God’s son] On what day did this happen? [Good Friday] INRI stands for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews in Latin. In Latin Js are written as Is. Lent is the time in the Church that we prepare to celebrate Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. What happened on Easter Sunday? [Jesus rose from the dead] The Cross is a symbol for all people who believe in Jesus [Christians] because Jesus rose from the dead and showed us how much God loves us.

Saturday March 23 is the **third Saturday of Lent**. Do a little spring cleaning in your bedroom!

Sunday March 24 is the **third Sunday of Lent**. Draw a picture of God.

Monday March 25 is the **third Monday of Lent**. Share Hot Cross buns with the class. This Lenten treat was designed to remind people of Lent and the importance of the cross.

Tuesday March 26 is the **third Tuesday of Lent**. Give people the sign of peace today. When we are at church, to share the sign of peace, we shake a person’s hand and say “Peace be with you.” The person may respond back “And also with you.” That way we are spreading peace in our classroom and in the school yard and in our homes.

Wednesday March 27 is the **fourth Wednesday of Lent**. The Hunger Site – feed a hungry person. This is a great way to GIVE ALMS! Get the computers and invite the students to log on to the website [www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com) This is a site that gives food to hungry people. The companies that advertise on the site pay for food for the poor. The students can visit this site once a day and hit the Click here – It's free! And food is given to people who need it.

Thursday March 28 is the **fourth Thursday of Lent**. Action Rhymes help to involve young children in learning. The following action rhyme helps children learn essential lessons about Lent. You say the words and demonstrate the actions. The children repeat the words and imitate the actions.

Lent is a time to grow in faith	(crouch and straighten up)
and remember to pray.	(fold hand in prayer)
Lent is a season to care about others	(hands on heart)
in all we do and say.	(nod head)
Lent is a time to walk in peace	(walk in place)
along Jesus' way.	(point to each palm)
Lent is a season to listen to God	(hands cup ears)
and get ready for Easter day.	(raise arms over head)

\* adapted from Bundles of Faith with Tons of Fun by Patricia Mathson

Friday March 29 is the **fourth Friday of Lent**. Invite someone that you don't usually play with to join your centre time learning. Everyone can be our friend if we include them in our circle of friends. This is a form of ALMSGIVING. That's what Jesus would do!

Saturday March 30 is the **fourth Saturday of Lent**. Call your grandma/nonna and tell her that you love her. It will make her day.

Sunday March 31 is the **fourth Sunday of Lent**. Enjoy a walk outdoors.

Monday April 1 is the **fourth Monday of Lent**. Sing the song "Peace is flowing like a river, flowing out of you and me. Flowing out into the desert, setting all the captives free." Talk about what the word captives means and why they need to be set free. If you sing more than one verse, **do not** sing the Alleluia verse because we do not sing or say the word Alleluia during Lent.

Tuesday April 2 is the **fourth Tuesday of Lent**. Invite the students to collect bags for St. Vincent Place or the local food bank. When people go to get food from the food bank, they need bags to carry the food home. [Make a small sign of care to put in each bag. i.e. Hope you are having a good Lent.]

Wednesday April 3 is the **fifth Wednesday of Lent**. When we meditate today, let us open wide our hearts for Jesus to come to us.

Thursday April 4 is the **fifth Thursday of Lent**. Let us listen attentively today whenever someone is speaking. It is respectful to listen and it is helpful to listen!

Friday April 5 is the **fifth Friday of Lent**. Praying the Lenten sign of the Cross  
Make the sign of the Cross slower and larger than usual on your body. Students and teacher say: "In the name of the Father"

And hand touches forehead and stays – while teacher says  
"who created me because he loved me."

Students and teacher say: "and of the Son" and hand touches belly and stays – while teacher says "who shows me how to love God."

Students and teacher say: "and of the Holy Spirit" and hand touches left shoulder then right – while teacher says "who teaches me to love everyone." Everyone says "AMEN" together.

Saturday April 6 is the **fifth Saturday of Lent**. Call your grandpa/nonno and tell him that you love him. He will be so happy.

Sunday April 7 is the **fifth Sunday of Lent**. Sing a happy song today.

Monday April 8 is the **fifth Monday of Lent**. Talk about Development & Peace – an organization in Canada that responds to the needs of people in the developing world – in the Global South. Development & Peace gives money to people when they want to do something to make their community better. Development & Peace also gives money to people when disasters happen in their part of the world. Our Walk for Justice will focus on the theme of refugees. Sometimes people are forced to leave their homes and walk to a safer place. These people take refuge in other parts of their country or another country close by.

Tuesday April 9 is the **fifth Tuesday of Lent**. Jesus loved to teach us about Social Justice. Let us listen to how Jesus meets Zacchaeus. Read the passage of Jesus meets Zacchaeus to the students.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Jesus was going through the city of Jericho, and many people came out to see him. There was a man there, named Zacchaeus, who was the head of all the tax collectors and was very rich. Zacchaeus also wanted to see Jesus and find out who he was. But Zacchaeus was a very short man and couldn't see Jesus through the crowd, so he ran ahead and climbed into a tree and waited for Jesus to pass. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down! Hurry! I want to stay at your

house today!” Zacchaeus was so excited that he hurried down and welcomed Jesus into his home. The people who saw this were angry and said, “Look, Jesus, is staying in the home of a sinner!” But Zacchaeus said to Jesus, “Lord, I am going to give half of everything I have to the poor. And if I ever cheated anyone out of money, I am going to pay them back four times as much.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Zacchaeus is an example for us to follow. [TN – You may want to use the new 42 Bible Stories For Little Ones page 76-77 or page 36 of Tell Me About the Catholic Faith for Small Children]

Wednesday April 10 is the **sixth Wednesday of Lent**. A Special Lenten Food The pretzel is a symbol of prayer and fasting. In the Roman Empire, long, long ago, the faithful Christians kept a strict fast all through Lent: that meant they ate no milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream or meat. They ate only water, flour and salt. People then prayed with their arms crossed in front of them on their chests (like when we go up for a blessing at Mass.) One monk decided to make a treat for his brother monks to remind them to pray during Lent. So he made pretzels. The pretzels looked like little arms crossed in prayer. Today in many European countries, pretzels are served only from Ash Wednesday to Easter, to keep this ancient practice alive. Pass out twisted pretzels to your students and once they have eaten them, ask them to cross their arms across their chest and pray a short prayer that they know.

Thursday April 11 is the **sixth Thursday of Lent**. Share the story of the Good Shepherd. Use 42 Bible Stories for Little Ones page 72-73. The students might like to act out the story (take turns being the lost sheep and being the Good Shepherd.)

Friday April 12 is the **sixth Friday of Lent**. Lent is 40 days long. How many other things do you know that are least that long? Do you know why Lent is 40 days long? After Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River he went into the desert to fast and pray for his preparation to do his work on earth. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. We are preparing for our celebration of Easter so we have been fasting, and praying and giving alms. It is a bit like spring training for teams. Lent is a time when we look at our lives, we try to remove the bad habits and clean up our acts.

Saturday April 13 is the **sixth Saturday of Lent**. Pick up some garbage left behind where the snow has melted especially around our home.

Sunday April 14 the **sixth Sunday of Lent**. This is a special Sunday called **Palm Sunday**. On this Sunday we remember that Jesus entered Jerusalem sitting on a donkey and the people waved palms in the air. They were excited to see Jesus. They

also put the palms on the ground so the air would have less dust. Get a palm for your class too.

Monday April 15 is the **sixth Monday of Lent**. Make a Palm Sunday Banner. Take small paper plates and punch a hole in what will be the top of the paper plate banner. Teacher or students can write the word Hosanna! on the top of the paper plate. We say Hosanna! when we remember that Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem. Have the children put their hand in purple paint and put it on the centre of paper plate. Be sure most of the paint lands on the plate and then get the students to wash their hands. Send the banners home once the paint has dried. [TN – If time permits read pages 78-79 “Here comes the king!” from 42 Bible Stories for Little Ones.]

Tuesday April 16 is the **sixth Tuesday of Lent**. Bring in a canned food for the food bank. This is a way to give alms.

Wednesday April 17 is the **seventh Wednesday of Lent**. This week has a special name. It is called Holy Week because it ends with Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. Judas received 30 pieces of silver for his betrayal of Jesus. Betrayal means that he took the soldiers to where Jesus was so they could arrest him. Put 30 coins in the prayer centre – fake coins, better if they are silver in colour. Put the coins in a small basket so they can be counted and played with.

Thursday April 18 is **Holy Thursday**. Put a small bowl of water and a few towels in the prayer centre. Invite the children to wash each other’s feet like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The ECE may want to be close at hand so the students do not become silly and get water all over the place. This activity is a solemn one, a serious one. It reminds us to be a person of service.

Friday April 19 is **Good Friday**. Invite students to go to Church at 3:00 p.m. to participate in the Good Friday service. It is the day we remember Jesus’ death on the cross. After he died, he was placed in the tomb. It is a sad day. [TN – at some churches there is a Children’s celebration of Good Friday, find out if this is available at the parish of your school and inform the children and parents if it is.]

Saturday April 20 is **Holy Saturday**. It is the day we remember that Jesus was in the tomb. Jesus’ body was buried like our bodies will be buried when we die. Holy Saturday is a day of resting and waiting for Easter.

Sunday April 21 is **Easter Sunday**. The best day of the year. We remember that Jesus rose from the dead. Now we have 50 days of Easter celebrations.

**Tuesday April 22 is the first day of School in the Easter Season.** There are three stories to share with the class about Easter. A very happy day – about Mary Magdalene, pages 82-83; Thomas believes, pages 84-85; and A Picnic breakfast – pages 86-87 – This is the time to do Easter crafts and to share the stories in the Gospels about Easter.