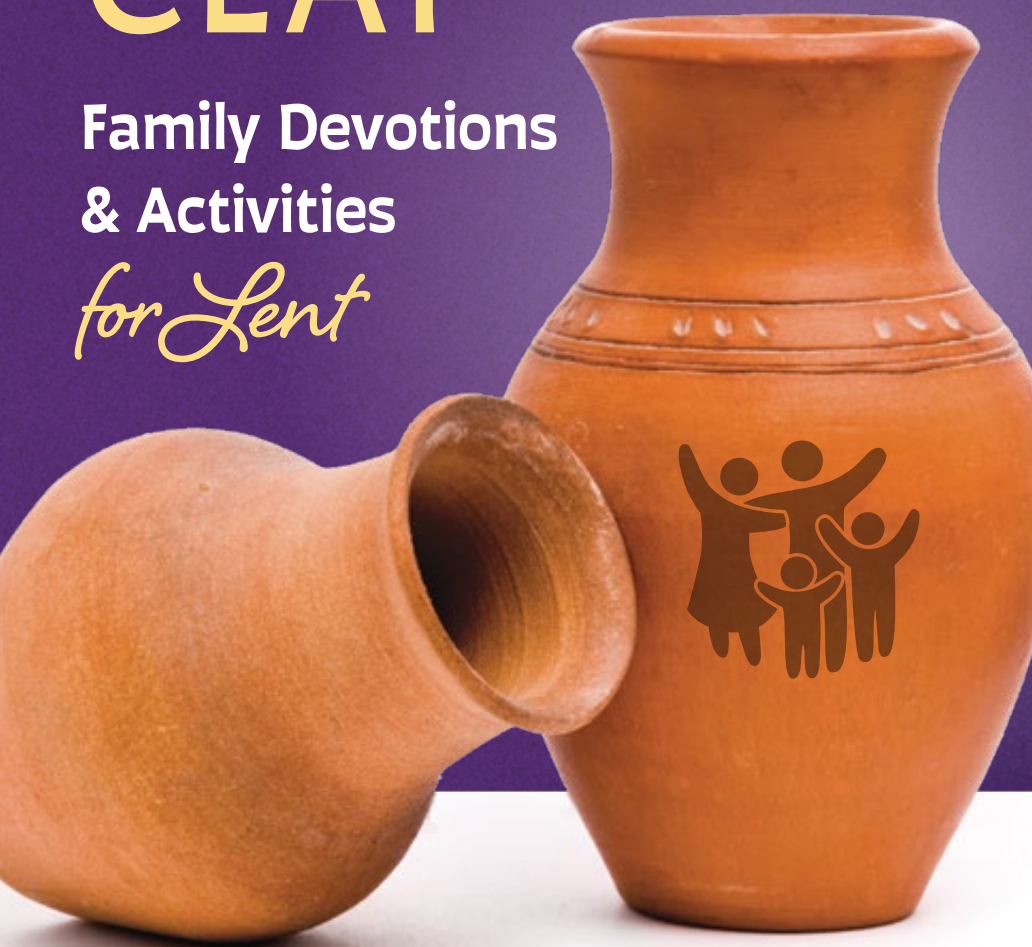


TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY

Family Devotions
& Activities

for Lent



STEVE *and* SUE GIVENS

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Treasure in Jars of Clay is a family walk with Jesus through the holy season of Lent. At the center of this journey is a large jar (or you could use a bowl) around which your family can gather each day for prayerful reflection. For each time of prayer, you will be invited to “Be Still” and enjoy a time of silence guided by this question: *What is Jesus saying to you today?* In addition, we suggest the following Lenten prayer to be recited together at the end of each prayer time:

***Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today.
Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need,
for that will always be enough. Amen.***

The jar is a container into which you will place visible signs of your prayers, concerns, requests and offerings. Anything relatively small can go into the jar, including written prayers to God, requests for forgiveness, coins (as an offering to be given away at the end of Lent), even a leaf or a small rock. Having an action each day, we believe, can be a very powerful part of your family Lenten journey.

Place the jar, the Lenten prayer poster and some scraps of paper in a central place in your home. Ideally, you would gather every day without distraction for a few minutes. Please ensure that no television, cell phones or computers will be allowed. On the following pages, for each day of Lent, we will give you suggestions for different ways to fill the jar. But let everyone know that they are free to add to the jar at any time. At the end of Lent, the jar can be placed somewhere in your home as a permanent reminder of your family’s commitment to a life of prayer and faith. Or the contents can be burned as a ritual sign of your prayers rising like incense to God!

May you and your family enjoy growing closer to the Lord all season long!

Steve and Sue Givens

THIS WEEK'S TREASURE: LENT BEGINS

Ash Wednesday

God Made Us for...What?

LISTEN » *But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from*

US. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

As we begin Lent, we are reminded that God loves us.

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » On a piece of paper, write something that you are very good at. Then, put it in the jar. Share what you wrote down with your family.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Help Through Hard Times

LISTEN » *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:8*

Being a child of God means that God will always be with us!

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Write down a memory of a time that made you very sad. Crush that piece of paper into a ball and toss it into the jar.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Friday after Ash Wednesday

A Chance to Start Over



LISTEN » *So we do not lose heart...our inner nature is being renewed day by day.* 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16

Have you ever heard the saying, “There’s always another day”? It’s just another way of saying that, no matter how you feel today, tomorrow always has the chance to be better. Have you ever felt sad or let down but then something great happened to make you feel better? Maybe a friend called just when you needed to have someone to talk to or the sun came out after a storm and made the day beautiful again. These are the ways we know God is with us. God shows up in our lives through other people and through the constantly changing beauty of the world. Each day we are being renewed by God, who is always living and working in us. If we let God into our lives, we will always have the hope for a better tomorrow.

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Cut a piece of paper into the shape of a heart (maybe even red paper). On your paper heart, write about some way that you felt renewed today by God and by others. Savor that feeling of being loved! Exchange your heart with someone else and have them read it and then place it in the jar.



PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Seeing Our Invisible God



LISTEN » ...because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen...what cannot be seen is eternal. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:18

Some people say that they don't believe in God because they cannot see God. "There is no proof!" they say. And in some ways, they are right. If we look only with our eyes, we cannot see God and we cannot really prove that God exists and loves us. But our faith in God and Jesus gives us a new kind of sight. Our faith gives us a way to believe with the "eyes of our heart." Because when we really look for God, we will surely see him—in our family, in our church, in others and in the way the earth sustains us and gives us signs of God's love and beauty.

BESTILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Make a list of other things that you know exist even though they can't be seen. See if you can memorize it. Then turn off all the lights, sit in the dark and hold hands. Share the things that are on your list. Listen to what others have to say and then see how many more things you can add. When you're finished, turn the lights back on and put your list in the jar.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*



First Sunday of Lent

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray



LISTEN » *He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:*

*Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.”* LUKE 11:1-4

When Jesus gave his disciples what we call the “Lord’s Prayer,” he gave us the perfect way to pray. In this short prayer, we acknowledge Holy God and his place in our lives, and we pray for his will to be done. We ask for the things we need and for forgiveness and the courage to forgive others. We ask to be protected from sin and evil. Jesus knew that we wouldn’t always find the right words to pray, so he gave us a prayer that would always help us.

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Pass a piece of paper around the table, taking turns writing one line of the Lord’s Prayer until it is complete. Then pray it together and place the prayer in the jar.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Monday, First Week of Lent

Finding Your Secret Place with God



LISTEN » *And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.* **MATTHEW 6:5-6**

One of the most important blessings of our lives is the gift of prayer. We can talk to God whenever and wherever we want. We can speak to God from our hearts and know that we are heard whether we are praying in our church, in our favorite place out in nature or in the privacy of our room. In fact, Jesus reminds us that praying in the secret and quiet of our own room is really important because it's just us and God. There's no one to impress and no other people to worry about or to think about.



BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Have each person go to some private place in the house. Spend five minutes writing a personal “letter prayer” to God. Return to the table and place the letter in the jar.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Tuesday, First Week of Lent

Never Stop Praying



LISTEN » *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.* **1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-19**

It's not possible, of course, to pray all day long without ever stopping. We have to do our chores and go to work and school, and we need to concentrate and focus when we do those things so we can do them well. But we are called to be mindful of God throughout our day, to stop every so often and thank God for something, to ask for help or just to be aware of the many blessings from God in our families, schools, churches and communities. And when we have trouble remembering to do that, we have the Holy Spirit to help us. Whether our day was great or difficult, God is with us.

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Have one person in the family serve as a “scribe” (writing down what the others say). Go around the table five times, asking each person to give an example of a blessing that they received during the day. In the end, everyone will have given the scribe five answers. You may need to prompt people by asking questions like: *What are you thankful for today? What nice thing happened? How did God help you today?* Put the completed “meeting notes” under the jar so that others can read them anytime they want to.

PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

Wednesday, First Week of Lent

Just Ask...



LISTEN » *So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.* LUKE 11:9-10

God is always available to us when we pray. And God *always* answers our prayers. That's the truth! But that doesn't mean we always get what we ask for! Try to keep in mind, especially during Lent, that God knows what we need better than we do. So when we pray for something and don't receive it, in order to better understand God's answer, maybe we could ask questions like: *Why do I think God said "no" to my prayer? Did God give me something different? Did I learn something about myself or about God by how my prayer was answered? What opportunities has God given me lately?*

BE STILL » What is Jesus saying to you today?

ACT » Spend some time sharing around the table about times when your prayers were answered or not answered in the way that you would have liked. Give everyone a handful of rice (or salt) and explain that the grains represent our prayers. As each person pours their grains into the jar, pray, "Lord, hear our prayers."



PRAY » *Jesus, walk beside me. Live in me. Help me find you today. Forgive me. Fill my life with everything you know I need, for that will always be enough. Amen.*

We want to grow closer to the Lord each day, but Lent can be long and difficult. However, we can come to better know that "...we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The reinforcement of our loving family members is only surpassed by the love and support of our God. Therefore, we strive to live and love as Jesus did. See how everyone can be enriched as you and your family members reflect on the treasures of the faith all season long!



This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on **amazonkindle** and **nook**by Barnes & Noble

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