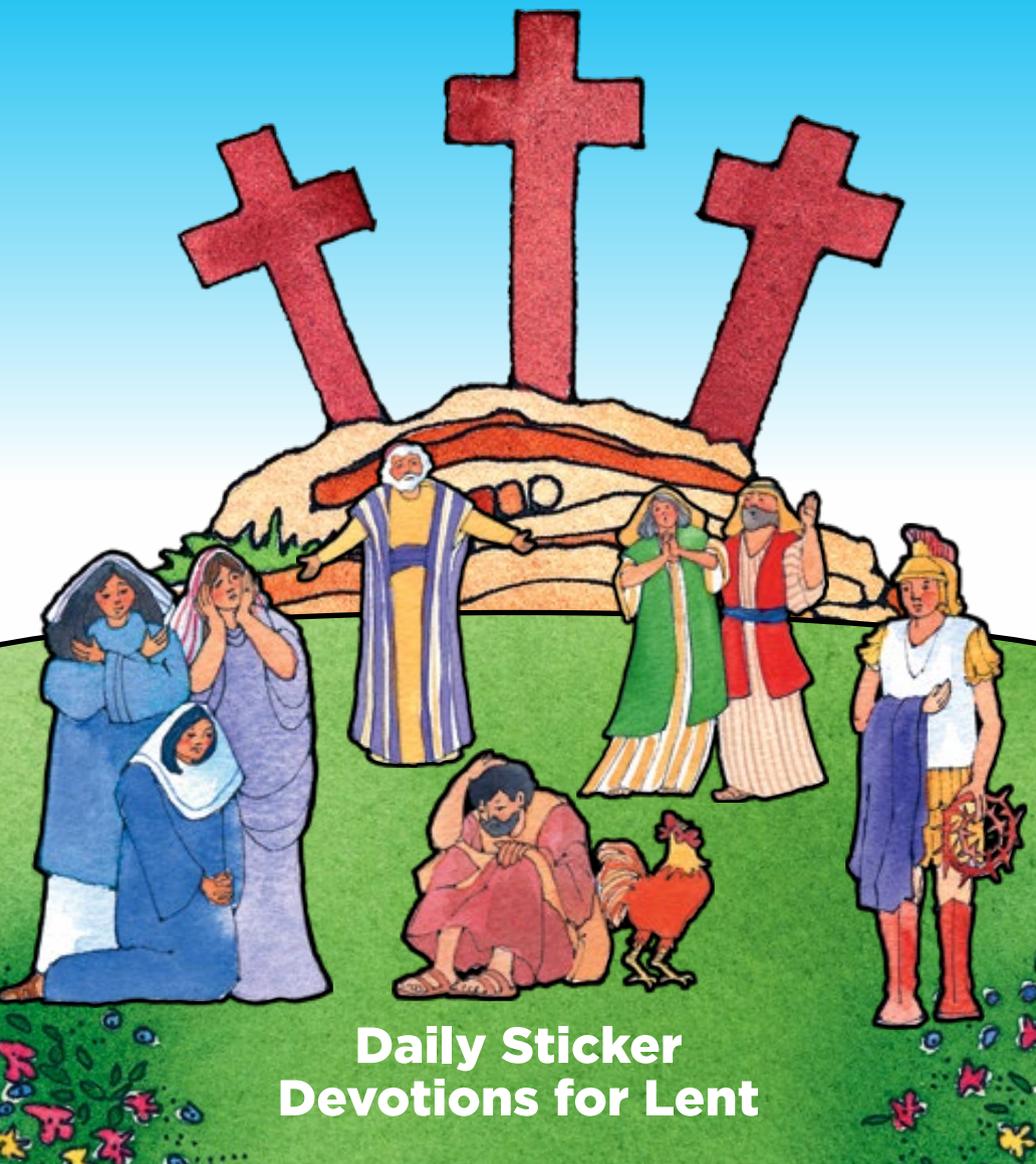


Gather 'Round the **CROSS**



**Daily Sticker
Devotions for Lent**

Gather 'Round the CROSS

This Lent we will gather 'round the cross ... but not alone. In fact, there will be quite a crowd. You may be surprised at some of the people who join us. Some of the people are quite good. Some are a little scary ... and a little mean. Some have been waiting around this cross for a long time. Some have come much more recently.

All of the people gathered 'round this cross are here for the same reason. They are here to watch Jesus. And that is why WE are here, too. During this Lent we will be reading parts of the Book of Matthew. Each day, after reading the day's Scripture and prayer, you are invited to place a sticker on the cross centerpiece. And each day you will learn a little about Jesus, and what he endured, and what he did, so that the whole world could be saved. So, let's gather round the cross!



Ash Wednesday.....Matthew 26:14-16

1. Judas

I suppose it had to begin here—with a plot to kill you, Jesus. We're headed to the cross, after all ... and to the grave. But I wasn't expecting it to happen so suddenly. I hoped to ease into Lent—to start with something less shocking. But already your death is being plotted. And by a FRIEND! And for MONEY! How could you, Judas? How, I suppose, can I? I'm sorry when I betray you, Lord—for money ... or for even less.



Thursday.....Genesis 3:17-24

2. Adam and Eve

I forgot someone, didn't I, Jesus? Two people, actually. I forgot Adam and Eve. I suppose I could spend a lot of time blaming them for all of the trouble they got everyone into ... myself included ... yourself included, too. But we're all in this together, aren't we? And they have been waiting here the longest time of all—ever since they lost the paradise that you are here to regain. Adam and Eve are here, Lord. And so am I.

Friday.....Matthew 26:14-16

3. The Priests

I don't like these priests, Lord. I don't like the reason they're here. They're here because they put you here. They caused your death. They put a price on your head. They wanted you dead. And they're PRIESTS! They're supposed to be doing God's work. So why are they plotting against God's Son? Why?



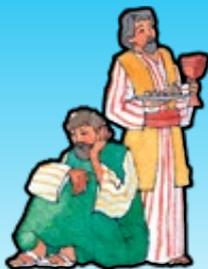
Saturday.....Matthew 26:15

4. Silver Coins

Blood money. That's what it's called, isn't it, Lord? Well, Judas got what he asked for. And that's all he got—money. It was cold, wasn't it? And it wasn't even very much. Especially considering what he LOST in order to get it. He lost you, Jesus. How could it have possibly been worth it? Don't let anything tempt me away from you, Lord. Keep me from temptation.



Monday.....Matthew 26:17-30



5. Disciples

Jesus, if I were one of your disciples, my head would have been spinning. First you asked them to prepare the Passover meal, which they did. Then you told them that one of them would BETRAY you! And then you shared your body and blood with them at the same meal. They

had no idea what was ahead. But I do. Keep my head from spinning, Lord. Help me to keep my eyes on you.

Tuesday.....Matthew 26:31-32

6. Sheep

I know that when you mentioned sheep—sheep that run away when their shepherd leaves—you weren't being literal. You were talking about the disciples. And you were the shepherd, weren't you? I know that. So I want to remember this sheep. For now, let it represent me—for all the times when I feel like a sheep without a shepherd—a scared, leaderless sheep. I want this sheep to gather around your cross, too. You are my shepherd, Lord.



Wednesday.....Matthew 26:33-40



7. Sleeping Disciple

How could those disciples be sleeping?

I know you asked them that question, too, Lord. "Can't you stay awake with me for just one hour?" It was important to you! And their drowsiness must have made you feel all the more alone. You were alone, Lord. Keep me from forgetting that. The job that you had to do, you did all by yourself. What a sacrifice you made ... a lonely, terrible sacrifice.

Thursday.....Matthew 26:41-46

8. One Praying Disciple

None of your disciples stayed awake to pray with you, Lord. You needed their prayers that night. I often don't take the time to pray. And I'm sorry when that happens, Jesus. So I want to put this one praying disciple near your cross. I AM praying to you this Lent—the prayers in this book, and at other times. This disciple will remind me of all the times I should pray.



Friday.....Matthew 26:47-50

9. Men With Swords & Clubs



Clubs and swords. Who did they think you were, Lord Jesus? Why did they think they needed clubs and swords to capture you? The most violent thing you had ever done was to clear the temple. You were a man of kindness. You healed the sick. You fed people! Still, don't let me forget that you are GOD. Those puny clubs and swords are no match for the power that you REALLY have.

Saturday.....Matthew 26:51-52

10. A Wounded Man

I want to make sure this man gathers near your cross, Lord. Though Matthew doesn't say much about it, I know that you healed this man's ear. It was the last miracle before your death. I want him here. I want him to see the man who healed him. Without you, he would have gone through life without an ear. He helps me to remember the way I would be without you, Lord.



Gather 'Round the **CROSS**

Easter Sunday.....Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

41. Jesus, Alive!

Jesus, my Lord! You have risen from the grave! You are alive—as alive—as a butterfly on a bright spring morning! As alive as the blossoms that are sprouting on the trees! You have been raised from the dead! And you bring me a special promise! I will rise someday, too! I will live forever with you in heaven! This butterfly will remind me that you are alive ... and that you have brought new life to me! Alleluia! Praise the Lord! Alleluia! Amen!

