



The CROSS and ME

Daily
Devotions
for LENT



Plans and Predictions

Ash Wednesday • Matthew 17:22-23

Jaden jumped out of bed, ready for his soccer game. He pulled up the shade on his bedroom window. Raindrops splashed against the glass. No game today, he thought sadly. Sometimes people plan on things that don't happen.

One day Jesus told his disciples something that he would do. "Some people will hurt and kill me," he said. "But after three days, I will come alive again." The disciples were sad. They didn't want their friend to die.

Today is the first day of Lent. We remember that Jesus died on the cross to take our sins away. It makes us sad to think that Jesus had to die, but we are happy to know that His prediction came true. He did come alive again!



Jesus, I'm sorry that you had to plan to die on the cross. Thank you for keeping your promise and taking away my sin. Amen.

Do: Save the weather forecasts for each day this week. Were the weather predictions always correct? Whose predictions are more sure —God's or mankind's?

Who is the Greatest?

Thursday • Matthew 18:1-5

Kayla held her new baby sister Savanna in her arms. “She’s the best baby in the whole world, isn’t she, Mom?” Mom cuddled them both in her arms. “I don’t know about that. You’re both #1 with me!”

Long ago Jesus’ friends asked him, “Who will be the most important when we get to heaven?” Jesus called to a little child and put him in the middle of the disciples. He said, “Whoever believes in me like a little child will be the greatest in heaven.”

Jesus loves little children and adults and everybody in-between. And Jesus’ love makes each of us #1!

Jesus, thank you for making me #1 with you! Amen.

Do: Look at your family’s photos. Ask God to help all the people in your family love him just like a little child.



A Little Lunch Makes a Big Dinner

Friday • Luke 9:10-17

Jesus had been helping sick people all day. The people loved to be with Jesus. Even when it started to get dark, they didn't want to go home. Jesus said, "We need to give these people something to eat."

The disciples found one little boy who had brought his lunch—five little loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus blessed the food and broke it into pieces. The disciples gave over 5,000 people bread and fish. They never ran out! Everybody ate until they were full. When the disciples cleaned up, the leftovers filled 12 baskets!

Jesus loved the people so much, he didn't want them to be hungry. He turned a little boy's lunch into a big miracle!

Jesus, thank you for good things to eat. Bless the small things I can do to share your huge love. Amen.

Do: Write a note to put in someone's lunch. Tell them, "Jesus loves you. He even gives you good food to eat!"



Again and Again

Saturday • Matthew 18:21-22

Bailey had already dropped one ice cream cone on the floor and the nice boy at the store had given her a new one. Then a kid bumped her and knocked the second cone out of Bailey's hand. Bailey heard the boy behind the counter call her.

“Hey, come back here. I've never replaced two ice cream cones, but there's always a first time.”

Maybe you've had a time when you kept making the same mistake again and again. Sometimes we even do things that we know are wrong. Doing something that we want to do instead of what God wants us to do is called a sin, and each one of us sins every day. But God never stops loving us. He works in our hearts to help us feel sorry and not sin again. Every time Bailey dropped her ice cream cone she got a new one.

Every time we sin God forgives us. He even helps us forgive people who hurt us, every single time.

God, thank you for forgiving me in Jesus. When my friends hurt me, help me to forgive. Amen.

Do: See how many times you use the words “I'm sorry” and “I forgive you” this week.



How Much Do You Owe?

First Sunday in Lent • Matthew 18:23-35

Bartholomew had never felt so scared. “Please, sir,” he begged, “I promise to pay you back.” The king forgave Bartholomew. “You don’t have to pay back anything.” Bartholomew sang on his way home. Then he met Dan, who owed him \$15.00. He grabbed Dan by the throat and yelled, “Pay me now!” Dan choked and whispered, “Please wait. I’ll pay you.” “No,” Bartholomew yelled. “Pay me or I’ll have you thrown in jail.” The king was angry when he heard what Bartholomew had done. “You should have been kind to Dan as I was kind to you,” he said. “Now you will have to go to jail until you can pay me.”

Jesus told that story to help us understand how God forgives us. Jesus died to pay for every one of our sins. He will help us forgive everyone who hurts us.

Jesus, help me to forgive other people just as you forgive me. Amen.

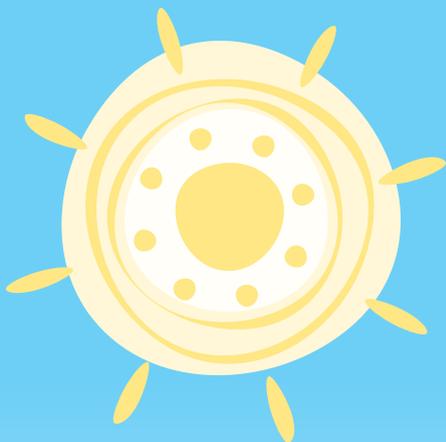
Do: Make a list of people who have forgiven you. Pray for each of those people. Be sure to include Jesus on your list.



Jesus Is My Light

Monday • John 8:12

The Bowers had helped Grandmother move into her new house. Now it was time to go home. Hannah and Chase sat in the back seat and watched the rivers of white and red lights on the cars around them. Then Chase saw a golden light. It was McDonald's! "Mom," he called, "let's stop for ice cream." "Okay," Mom said. "But I'll have my coffee drink." After a while, Mom saw the best light of all. Dad stood under the porch light of their own house. He picked Chase up in his arms and carried him to bed.



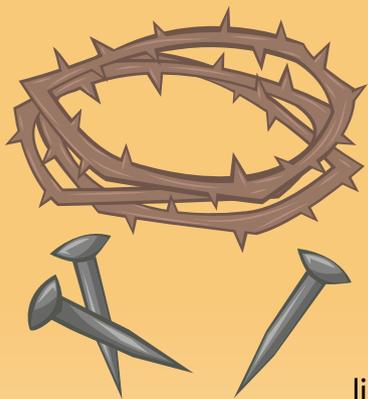
We might feel afraid in the dark but Jesus is like a strong light that makes us feel safe. He forgives the darkness of our sins and lights our way to heaven.

Jesus, thank you for being my light and showing me the way to heaven. Amen.

Do: *Darken the room and read John 8:12 by the light of a single candle or flashlight. How is Jesus like a light?*

Breaking a Chain

Tuesday • John 8:31-36



One day Jesus told people listening to him, “If you obey my word and listen to the truth about me, you will be free.” “Wait a minute,” the people said. “Why do you say, ‘We will be free?’ We aren’t slaves!” These people thought that Jesus meant they would be tied up with chains and forced to work hard like the slaves they had seen. But Jesus was talking about a different kind of slavery. He said, “If you sin, you are a slave to sin.”

Without Jesus we would be a slave to our sins. We would never get to heaven and live with Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, he broke the chain of our sins. Now we are free to love him and live with him.

Jesus, thank you for breaking the chain of my sin and making me free. Amen.

Do: Make a paper chain, or string macaroni, cereal, or beads. Thank Jesus for breaking the chain of sin.

Seeing in the Dark

Wednesday • John 9:1-11

Do you know about Helen Keller? She was a healthy baby, but when she was still small a serious illness left her deaf and blind. Helen could not see or hear or talk. When Helen was six, a teacher named Anne Sullivan came to live at the Keller home. Miss Sullivan made letters with her fingers and let Helen feel them. She helped Helen learn about her world.

Even though many of us have eyes that work well, we sometimes don't see the good things we could do to help people. Jesus is the teacher who opens our eyes to his love. He has the power to forgive the blindness of our sin. When Helen became an adult, she traveled all over the world and told how Miss Sullivan had helped her.

We need to tell people about our teacher, too. And when we get to heaven, we will see him with our eyes!

Jesus, help me to look for ways to share your love with others. Amen.

Do: Wear a blindfold and try to do a task like pouring a glass of milk or emptying the trash. Thank God for all the beautiful things he gives us to see.



Empty Cross—Empty Grave

Easter Sunday • Matthew 28:1-10

Plan an Easter surprise for someone in your family. Give them an empty plastic egg and tell them it is the best Easter present ever. When they open the egg, explain that it is empty, just as Jesus' grave was empty. Jesus is alive! When the women

went to the grave on Easter morning, they were afraid. The grave was empty—their friend was gone. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid. Jesus is alive!" The women were so happy that they ran to tell their friends the good news that Jesus was alive again.

Easter is a day to be happy and say thank you to God. Look at Easter decorations in your church and home and celebrate the good news that Jesus is alive. You will live with him forever!



*Jesus, I am so glad you are alive.
Help me to always remember the
true meaning of Easter. Amen.*

Do: *Share the good news. Shout, "Alleluia!
He is risen!" as often as possible today.*