

## Sacred Conversation Hearts ... a Lenten Prayer Practice for Families

**Below is everything you need to create a great Lenten Family Sacred Conversation Kit for them to use during the 40 days of Lent!**

### **Lent: 40 Days of Sacred Family Conversations** **By: Leanne Hadley**

Lent is the church season where we spend time (40 days plus the six Sundays) creating spaces where we can grow closer to God in anticipation of Easter Sunday. Some people *give something up* as they prepare for Easter and others *take something on* as a prayer practice to help them grow closer to Christ during this holy season of Lent.

One of the things that most parents report to me is that they do not spend enough time together as a family. Scientists and psychologists are also noting that the lack of time listening to one another and simply *being together* as a family is impacting the close relationships children are able to form in their teen and adult years.

This Lenten Prayer Kit invited families to spend a few minutes together in sacred conversation each Sunday night during Lent.

What the *Lenten Family Sacred Conversation Hearts kit* needs:

- The attached letter explaining the hearts to the parents.
- A box, envelope or basket to place the *seven sacred conversation hearts* in.
- Seven conversation hearts with the *sacred conversation starters* written on them and stacked in order in the box. (We are using mailing labels with the starters written on them that we will stick to each heart instead of handwriting the questions.) Also... these hearts are going to be pastel colors, and the Easter heart should be either bright yellow or white so that it stands out.
  - **Week One:** My favorite thing about you is...
  - **Week Two:** I felt so proud of you when...
  - **Week Three:** I saw you really try hard when you...
  - **Week Four:** One unique thing about you is...
  - **Week Five:** You are special to our family because you...
  - **Week Six:** I am sorry for the time I...
  - **Week Seven/Easter Sunday: Easter Heart**
    - Front: Do not turn over until Easter.
    - Back: Today is Easter! Pass this card to each person and pray that they will always feel loved by our family and by Jesus!

When should the kits be given to families?

- They can be picked up following the Ash Wednesday Service at your church.
- They can be handed out at Sunday School or following Children's Worship.

- You might want to offer a special lunch and have the families create their kits (like an assembly line) to take home and use.

#### How Can We Help Our Families Remember to Use them?

- One of the easiest ways to remind the children during Sunday School to use them at home that night.
- You can also make similar sets with different questions for the children to use during prayer time at Sunday School or Children's Worship. This will remind them that they have a similar prayer practice to use at home that night.
  - Sample Sunday School Questions:
    - Share a time when you were scared but God was with you.
    - Share a time when you made a mistake and you are sorry about.
    - How often and when do you pray?
    - Do you ever wish you meet God face to face, in person? What would you ask God?
    - What is your favorite Bible Story and why?
    - If our class prayed for you today, what would you want us to pray?

[Directions for Parents to go along with each kit]

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We invite your family to *take on* sacred conversations together each Sunday night of Lent and on Easter by using *Sacred Conversation Hearts for Families*.

Directions:

- 1) Gather as a family at your table or in a circle on the floor. You can do this at dinner or as part of your bedtime ritual.
- 2) Open the box and read aloud the conversation starter on the heart for the current week of Lent.
- 3) Pass the heart to one member of your family. As that person holds the heart, every member of the family should finish the sentence started printed on the heart.
- 4) Each family member (including parents) should hold the heart while the others finish the sentence printed on the heart.

- 5) After everyone has shared, sit silently for about 30 seconds, just enjoying knowing that God is with your family.
- 6) Bless each other formally by saying, (name), you are blessing to this family and informally with lots of hugs!

There is a special heart to be used on Easter! Enjoy!

May God bless your family during this season of Lent!