



MAKING A LENTEN TREE

As a parent of young children, I am always looking for ways to help build my children's faith—as well as my own—and to strengthen the Christian identity of my family. Lent provides an opportunity for this to happen. The forty days of Lent carve out a time for Christians families (with or without children) to reflect on their faith and to engage in practices that prepare them spiritually for the most joyful day of the Christian year—Easter!

Recognizing the power of ritual and the practice of decorating as a way of focusing and remembering, many families are creating Lenten Trees. Lenten Trees are a simple decoration that encourages families to learn and experience the depth of the with-God life. There are a number of ways that families can engage in this practice.

In its simplest form, the Lenten Tree can be made by sticking branches into an emptied out coffee can filled with soft plaster. Once the plaster has hardened, families hang simple ornaments made from construction paper cut in the shape of an oval with a hand-drawn word or picture that illustrates one of the stories of Jesus. This can be done daily or weekly.

In their more elaborate form, Lenten Trees can be carefully planned out spiritual practices for families featuring daily Bible readings and special ornaments to highlight the theme of each reading.

For an outline of a Lenten Tree family project visit the following website:

<http://www.theyoungfamilyfarm.com/crafts/easter-tree/>