

# Springtime And Lent

## LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** The season of Lent; Planting seeds of love in the hearts of others.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:3

**Memory Verse:** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. - Ephesians 1:3

## The Children's Sermon

This week was the beginning of a very important season in our church year- the season of Lent. Do you remember how long Lent lasts? That's right, Lent is the 40 days before Palm Sunday which leads right into Holy Week and Easter Sunday. The word "Lent" comes from another word "Lente" which means springtime. That makes sense...since Lent and Easter always happen during springtime.

Lent is a special time for us to get our hearts ready for Easter, when we celebrate Jesus coming back to life. It's like getting our gardens ready in spring. We do some special things during Lent to help us grow closer to Jesus. These special things are called Lenten spiritual practices. Let's talk about some ways we can do this.

For Lent, it is good to OPEN UP our Bibles. Just like opening windows to let in fresh air, opening our Bibles lets God's words freshen up our hearts. We can read stories about Jesus, learn how much He loves us, and find out how we can love others. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us know Jesus better.

Another thing we can do is to CLEAR OUT the things in our lives that we don't really need—things that get in the way of following Jesus. Maybe we spend too much time watching TV or playing video games. We can put those away for a while and use that extra time to pray or help others. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us make more room for Jesus in our lives.

For Lent, it is also good to SWEEP UP. Just like we clean up our rooms, we can clean up our hearts. We can think about times we haven't been very nice or haven't listened well. We can say sorry to God and to anyone we've hurt. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us have cleaner, happier hearts.

In the springtime, I love to PLANT. I plant seeds in my garden pots and water them as I wait and watch them grow into something beautiful. For Lent, we can PLANT different kinds of seeds. We can plant seeds of love in the hearts of others when we are kind, helpful, or when we tell someone about Jesus. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us spread love and kindness, just like Jesus did.

Sometimes, we can SHARE what we have with others. If we have toys or clothes we don't use, we can give them to someone who needs them. We can also share our time by helping our family with chores or being a good friend. Sharing is a Lenten spiritual practice that teaches us to be generous, like Jesus.

Another idea is to LISTEN more. We can listen to our friends when they're sad or need to talk. We can listen to our parents or teachers when they're trying to teach us something important. And we can listen to God by being quiet and thinking about His love for us. Listening is a Lenten spiritual practice that helps us understand and care for others better.

We can also SAY THANK YOU more often. Saying thank you to our parents for taking care of us, to our friends for being there for us, and to God for all the good things in our lives is important. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us remember all the blessings we have and makes us happier.

Lastly, we can INVITE Jesus into our day. Every morning, we can say a little prayer, asking Jesus to be with us all day, to help us make good choices, and to show His love through us. This Lenten spiritual practice helps us remember that Jesus is our friend and is always with us.

Dear Jesus, We love you. Help us to OPEN UP our Bibles, CLEAR OUT our clutter, SWEEP UP our messes, PLANT seeds of Love, SHARE what we have, LISTEN more, SAY THANK YOU often, and INVITE you into our days. These Lenten spiritual practices can help us grow closer to you. Amen.

## Bible Memory Verse

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. - Ephesians 1:3**

You Will Need:

- Construction paper in various colors
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers or crayons
- Seed packets (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut out heart shapes from the construction paper ahead of time, one for each child.
- Write the memory verse on a large piece of paper or a whiteboard where everyone can see it.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped piece of construction paper and markers or crayons. Ask them to decorate their heart with things they are thankful for, inspired by the blessings mentioned in Ephesians 1:3.
2. While they work, discuss what it means to be blessed by God and how we can share those blessings with others, planting seeds of love in their hearts during the season of Lent.
3. Once everyone is done decorating, have them use the glue sticks to attach a seed packet to their heart (if using) or draw seeds on their heart, symbolizing the seeds of love they can plant in others' hearts. Encourage them to share their heart with someone this week as a way to spread love and blessings.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Small pots or paper cups
- Potting soil
- Seeds (flowers or herbs work well)
- Watering can or spray bottle
- Heart-shaped stickers or markers
- Small index cards
- Pens or pencils

Get Ready:

1. Set up a table with all the materials neatly arranged: pots, soil, seeds, watering cans, stickers, index cards, and writing tools.
2. Write Ephesians 1:3 on a large poster or whiteboard where everyone can see it:  
"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Do this:

1. Begin with a short discussion: Ask the children what they know about Lent and explain it's a time to prepare our hearts for Easter, focusing on love and kindness. Introduce Ephesians 1:3, explaining that God has given us many blessings, and one way we can show our thanks is by sharing love with others.
2. Activity start: Give each child a pot (or paper cup) and let them fill it halfway with potting soil. As they do this, talk about how planting seeds is like planting seeds of love in the hearts of others - sometimes we don't see the results right away, but with care and kindness, beautiful things can grow.
3. Planting seeds: Let each child choose seeds to plant in their pot. Guide them to gently cover the seeds with more soil and lightly water them. Discuss how caring for their plants (watering, making sure they get sunlight) is similar to caring for the relationships in their lives, showing love and kindness.
4. Decorating pots: Use heart-shaped stickers or markers to decorate the pots. While they decorate, encourage them to think of specific ways they can show love to others during Lent. Examples could be helping at home, being kind to a sibling, or writing a note to a friend.

5. Reflection and commitment cards: Hand out index cards and pens. Ask each child to write or draw one way they plan to plant seeds of love in someone's heart during Lent. They can stick these cards in their pot as a reminder.

6. Closing: Gather the children and their pots in a circle. Lead a short prayer asking God to help them grow in love and kindness during Lent, just like their plants will grow. Encourage them to take their pots home and to remember to care for their plant and carry out the act of love they wrote on their card.

7. Send-off: Remind the kids to bring updates on both their plant's growth and their acts of love the next time they meet.

## Snack Activity: Planting Love Seed Snack

You'll Need:

- A small cup of pudding (chocolate or vanilla, based on preference)
- Oreo cookies (crushed)
- Gummy worms
- Pretzel sticks
- Green food coloring
- Small plastic cups and spoons

Get Ready: Mix a few drops of green food coloring into the crushed Oreo cookies until you get a 'dirt' like appearance. This will represent the soil where we plant seeds of love.

Do this:

1. Fill the bottom of your plastic cup with pudding to create a base. Explain that just like the pudding, God's love is the foundation in our lives (Ephesians 1:3).

2. Add a layer of your green-colored crushed Oreos on top of the pudding. Share that this represents the soil, and just like we plant seeds in soil, we can plant seeds of love in the hearts of others during Lent.

3. Place a few gummy worms and pretzel sticks into the 'soil'. The gummy worms can remind us that just like worms help plants grow by aerating the soil, our acts of love help the seeds of faith grow in others. The pretzel sticks can represent the cross, reminding us of Jesus' love and sacrifice.

4. As they enjoy their snack, encourage the children to think of ways they can plant seeds of love in someone's heart this week, such as helping a friend, being kind to a sibling, or writing a thank you note to a teacher.

## Game Activity: Garden of Kindness Hopscotch

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- Small stones or beanbags
- A list of kind acts (helping someone, sharing, saying kind words, etc.)

Get Ready: Draw a large hopscotch grid on the sidewalk or pavement. Instead of numbers in each square, write simple acts of kindness.

Do this:

1. Each player tosses a stone or beanbag onto the hopscotch grid. They must hop over the square where their stone lands.
2. Before jumping, the player reads the act of kindness written in their landing square aloud. They share a time when they did this act or how they could do it during Lent.

3. After hopping through the grid and back, the player picks up their stone, performing a small gesture of kindness for someone in the group as they exit the game. This could be a compliment, a helpful act, or sharing something.
4. The game continues until all players have had a turn. Encourage the children to practice the acts of kindness they talked about during the week.

## Craft Activity: Planting Seeds of Love

You'll Need:

- A small pot for each child
- Potting soil
- Flower seeds (choose easy-to-grow varieties like marigolds or sunflowers)
- Watering can or spray bottle
- Colorful markers or paint
- Stickers with words of love and kindness

Get Ready: Gather all materials on a large table where children can easily reach everything. Make sure each child has enough space to work on their pot.

Do this:

1. Start by discussing Ephesians 1:3 and how we are blessed with every spiritual blessing. Explain that during Lent, we can spread blessings by planting seeds of love in the hearts of others. Ask the children how they can show love and kindness every day.
2. Have each child decorate their pot with the markers, paint, and stickers. Encourage them to think of someone they want to show love to as they decorate.
3. Fill the pots halfway with potting soil. Let each child plant some seeds in their pot, then cover the seeds with a little more soil. Explain that just like the seeds need water, sunlight, and love to grow, our love for others grows when we take care of it.



4. Finish by watering the seeds lightly. Encourage the children to take their pots home, place them in a sunny spot, and care for them. Remind them to think of the person they chose to show love to as they care for their plant, and discuss how they can do acts of kindness for them during Lent.

## Prayer Activity: Planting Seeds of Love Prayer Garden

You'll Need:

- Potted plants from prior activities
- Prayer cards (small pieces of paper)

Get Ready: Write Ephesians 1:3 on a poster or whiteboard for everyone to see.

Do this:

1. Start by reading Ephesians 1:3 together: 'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.' Discuss how we can be a blessing to others by planting seeds of love during Lent.
2. Have each child write their act of love on a prayer card. Then, they should place the card in the pot with their seeds. Explain that as their plant grows, it will remind them to carry out their act of love. Finish by praying together, asking God to help the seeds of love grow in their hearts and in the hearts of those they reach out to during Lent.