LENTEN RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (AGE 7 - 18)
CHILDREN’S RESOURCES

How to use these resources:

These resources are designed to be a springboard – you’ll need to adapt them to your own group. We’ve worked from the lectionary and assumed that your children might be in church for part of the service, with the opportunity to report back to the congregation at some point.

Many people will already have engaged with Lent Event projects before and need to go deeper; others are entirely new to Lent Event and UnitingWorld. Please feel free to go to our website for background info or further resources. We suggest you have a look at each of the videos for the weekly projects on our Lent Event website to make sure they’ll be suitable for your group as you plan the activities for the week.

Explorer Task sheets:

Each week we’ve provided an “Explorer Task” for the following week. Young people are used to finding out their own information and are usually pretty confident using the internet to answer questions. They also ‘own’ the information if they find it themselves. Perhaps give one research point to each child, depending on their age. Ask them to jot down a few ideas and be ready to present it to the group (or to the congregation if you can negotiate this) the following week.

The Explorer Sheet also prompts your children to think about what they can give up or take up for Lent each week and reminds them about their targets for giving to the projects.

Useful equipment:
Cardboard, paper, pens, paints, a map of the world, laptop, internet access, your imagination. We’ve tried to keep it fairly simple!

Other alternatives – Use our Guide To Living Lent and go online to work from the weekly suggestions there. You’ll find blog entries and articles to discuss that might round out your time together for older youth, as well as fundraising activities if you’d like to work on a project with your group.

One great suggestion is the World Dinner for Zimbabwe – find details online at www.lentevent.com

Note that this is a FIVE WEEK RESOURCE and that Palm Sunday should be celebrated as you would usually.
**Week 1: Zimbabwe Livelihood Projects**

**Lesson outcomes:**
- Children will be given a brief introduction to the season of Lent and what this means for us as disciples who are interested in journeying with brothers and sisters around the world.
- Children will understand that Jesus was tempted to be distracted but stayed true to his life goal of sharing the good news and looking after those who were poor.
- Children understand that keeping our commitments often requires the support of others.
- Children will learn about the work of MeDRA (Methodist Development Relief Agency Zimbabwe) and the difference between supporting someone and “doing it for them”.
- Children together decide on a target project to work towards for Lent Event.

**What’s Lent? What’s Lent Event?**

Lent refers to the 40 days leading up to Easter. Traditionally it’s a time for Christians to spend thinking about their faith and what it means to follow Jesus. Often, people have given up a meal (fasting) to focus their thoughts, live more simply and show they’re serious about their commitment to being a Christian.

Lent Event uses the 40 days of Lent to encourage people to live simply, think about what it means to have faith in Jesus and learn more about people who live in poverty in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. It encourages us to think about how we can use what we have to support people’s efforts to live healthier, happier lives.

We encourage you to give up something from your daily life – like eating chocolate, buying lunch from the canteen, drinking orange juice, watching TV – and instead use the money you would’ve spent or make a donation towards the projects that UnitingWorld is running with our partners overseas.

Is it easy? Not always! But then, over these 40 days you’ll learn that life isn’t easy for people overseas either, and by doing something a little bit difficult we hope you’ll be standing alongside them and encouraging them at the same time as earning money for their projects.
Engaging with the Scripture: 10 minutes


Today’s reading is about Jesus early in his ministry being ‘tried out’ by Satan. Will he stay true to God or will he crack and become distracted, using God’s power to feed himself, become a King or do flashy miracles? In the end Jesus is content to start his ministry in a very ordinary way – returning from his time in the Wilderness and teaching in the Synagogues. Jesus stayed committed to his call to “bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captive, recover sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

He wasn’t tempted by the idea of having power or doing flashy miracles.

Ideas to discuss with the children:

- What do you feel very committed to? (can be more than one thing – perhaps your sport, your school work, your family)
- What makes you feel better when you have a hard job you need to stay committed to: when other people ‘do it for you’ or when you get some help to do it for yourself? Why do you feel that way? What happens when someone does it for you? What happens when you get some help, but do it mostly yourself?

Engaging with the project: 10 minutes

- Watch the Lent Event video about Zimbabwe (perhaps a second time if you have already watched it in Church)

On a large piece of paper:

- Write or draw the kinds of things you think the people you saw in the video might feel strongly committed to (for example, seeing their children healthy, having enough to eat, being able to look after their animals, send their children to school…)
- What kind of support do you think they need to achieve these goals? (Perhaps some tools, training, money to build things, teachers or schools etc)

Look together at the project description on the powerpoint – how is UnitingWorld supporting the people of Muzarabani?
Get active: 10 minutes

Make up a short play together that shows the difference between helping a family in Zimbabwe reach their own goals vs doing it for them.

For example: you could show a family who wants to send their child to school but don’t have enough money. Then a rich Australian family sends them a cheque in the mail. They send their child to school but the money runs out and they can’t send them anymore!

In the next act you could show the same family without enough money to send their child to school. Their local church has some money from some Australians that they use to show the family how to buy and breed chickens and they sell the eggs at the market so they have the money to send their child to school, but the chickens keep laying eggs to they have the money to send their child for a whole year!

Try and show all the emotions you think people would experience in both these cases, including how they feel about themselves and how they feel about the people who have helped them.

Have a look at the project goals below. Ask your group to choose a goal to work toward over the next five weeks. Hand out the Lent Event money boxes and ask your group to begin saving toward the goal. They can save the money by:

- Giving up pocket money or money for the canteen
- Doing jobs for mum and dad around the house
- Giving up going to the movies or for special outings and donating the money to their project instead.

Perhaps your group could hold a Zimbabwe Global Dinner/Lunch at some time over the next five weeks? All the details are at www.lentevent.com

For next week: Hand out sheet with EXPLORER TASK about Sri Lanka. Give one point to each person (or allocate according to your group size and age of children). Let them know they’ll be reporting back next week, in church for a few minutes before the Lent Event session if your congregation is open to that. Tell them a few minutes on the internet should be enough to help them answer their research question.

Pray: Ask each person to complete the sentence: “God today I am thankful for…. Please be with…..”
EXPLORER TASK for Sri Lanka.

Where is Sri Lanka?
How many people live there? Are there people from Sri Lanka now living in Australia?
What are some of the beautiful sights to see in Sri Lanka?
What kind of food do people eat?
What languages are spoken?
What religions do the people practise?
What happened in the Civil War?
How many people have disabilities as a result of the war?
Who is the leader now and are things improving?

REMEMBER: What have you decided to give up this week for Lent Event? Canteen money? Some pocket money? Are you going to do some extra jobs for your family or neighbour to help earn some money for your project?

$10 can buy three chickens for a farming family to start a small business in Zimbabwe!

$240 can buy five goats to help a family begin a successful business that will help them send their children to school.

Pray for the people of Muzarabani this week.

Remember that whatever you give up can go towards your goal of ..................
Week 2: Sri Lanka – Inclusive Education

Genesis 15: 1-6: Abram and a promise for the future.

Lesson outcomes:

- Children learn that God made a promise to Abram that it took many years to fulfil. Abram had to hang on through tough times. This promise is an example of God’s promise to us that God is at work in the world, even when we can’t see that with our own eyes.

- Children learn about the work of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, who are working with children many others reject. The Church sees these children differently and believe they have as much potential as anyone else.

- Children encourage the workers and children in Sri Lanka to hang on in tough times.

Engaging with the Scripture: 10 minutes

Today’s reading is about a promise made to an old Hebrew man called Abram. Worried that he has no sons to follow him and take his family name, he asks God what will happen to his family after he dies. God tells him that he will actually have more children than all the stars in the sky. This seems a bit strange to Abram because he is already an old man and he and his wife haven’t yet had children… but he believes God anyway. And although it takes time for this promise to come true, eventually Abram does have a son who then becomes (over hundreds of years) directly related to Jesus. This seems like a random story but it’s often used as an example of the way we are sometimes asked to hang on and have faith in God’s promises for the future, even if we can’t see much evidence for them in the present.

Ideas to discuss with children:

- What are some promises that you know about - from the Bible or your teaching in Sunday School - that God makes to us? (God loves everybody equally, God will forgive us when we do something wrong, God is working in the world to bring justice etc)

- Which ones do you sometimes find hard to believe? Why is that?
Engaging with the UnitingWorld project.

Watch the video about the work of UnitingWorld’s partner Deaflink in Sri Lanka.

- Share what you found out about Sri Lanka in your research this week. Give everybody a turn to speak. If you didn’t have a chance to do the research, somebody probably has a smart phone you can use.

- The workers from Deaflink are all from the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka and part of what motivates them is the promise that God is at work through them and in their country. What do you think would make it difficult in a country like Sri Lanka to hold on to hope for the future? What do you think would make it even harder if you were a child or a young person with a disability?

- Look together at the Powerpoint about the Deaflink project.

Get active: 10 minutes

Decorate (colour, paint, use stickers, draw patterns) the letters you’ll find below to spell out the words “STAY STRONG” and take a photo of yourselves as a group holding them. Write a short message and the name of your group on one of the letters and send them all to DEAFLINK at...

Pray together: Ask each person to complete the sentence: “God today I am thankful for…. Please be with…..”

Hand out next weeks EXPLORER TASK for the Pacific.
Children’s Resources

Explorer Task: So... the Pacific! Where’s that and who lives there?

What countries make up the Pacific?
What are some of the beautiful sights to see throughout the Pacific?
What languages are spoken?
How many people live there?
What percentage of people are Christian in the Pacific?
What are some of the challenges that people face living in the Pacific Islands?
What are some of the serious challenges that women face?

Guess what? When you go without chocolate milk, your takeaway food, your trip to the movies or your iphone for a week and donating the money you would have spent to UnitingWorld projects, you’re contributing to people who may never have access to any of those luxuries!

Just $20 can help a child with a disability attend school in Sri Lanka where teachers are specially trained to include them. This might not sound like a bit deal here in Australia, but these schools are not very common in Sri Lanka yet. Unless a child with a disability can go to a school like this, they sit at home alone without anything to do.

Most young people with disabilities don’t have any way to get a job or go on to earn a living. They have to stay with their parents and usually live in poverty. But $55 can support a young person with a disability to complete a short course which teaches them how to fix mobile phones so they can go on to earn a living for themselves.
Week 3: Partnering Pacific Women 4 Change

Background - Psalm 63:1-8

Lesson outcomes:

- Children understand that belief in God and a passionate faith is pretty useless unless it creates change
- Children learn about the problems facing women in the Pacific – inequality and family violence
- Children understand that the church can act to create change for women and girls, but that there are many pieces to the puzzle. The church needs help to lead this change.

Engaging with Scripture

Today’s reading is a Psalm – a song or poem written to express the writer’s feelings about their relationship with God. This one was probably written by David while he was alone in the wilderness. It uses a lot of imagery about water and dry land, and compares David’s love for God and his longing to know God as being like someone who is desperately thirsty. David says that when he feels God’s love it’s as though he has eaten a great meal after being very hungry. He describes God as protecting and helping him.

In many cultures, including among our Pacific neighbours like Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu, almost all of the population are Christian (around 90%). Individual Christians feel as strongly about their faith today as David did in the time when he wrote his Psalm. People are hungry to know what God really thinks and Christian leaders have a lot of influence in their communities.

Ideas to discuss with children

- In what ways do you feel God’s love? Do you feel it when you sing, when you pray, through your parents, family or friends, when you’re in the bush, at special times like Christmas?
- What difference does knowing God make to the way you treat other people?
Engaging with the UnitingWorld project

Watch the video of the project – a second time if you wish.

- What surprising things did you find out about the Pacific, either from your research or from watching the video?
- If many people are Christians in the Pacific, why do you think women and children are still being treated badly?
- Look together at the Powerpoint about the Partnering Women 4 Change project. What do you think is the best thing this project will do for women?

Get active (10 minutes)

On a large piece of butchers paper have the children make a jig saw puzzle from the words:

Biblical teaching
Safe places for women
Male supporters
Women leaders
Women in politics
Stopping male violence
Gender equality
Equal pay
Respect for women
Boys and girls equal
Equality in schools

Ask them if they can think of other things that would help male and female equality and put an end to family violence. Then have them cut out the puzzle pieces and let them time each other putting the puzzle back together.

Pray: Ask each person to complete the sentence: “God today I am thankful for…. Please be with…..”

Ask: How are things going with giving up something for Lent? Is it easy? What makes it difficult? Encourage children to remember to be putting aside money toward their target project.

Hand out next week’s Explorer Tasks for South Sudan.
Explorer Task: What’s the go with South Sudan?

Where is South Sudan?
How old is this country?
Why was it formed?
What kind of food do people eat?
What religions are the people?
Are there any wars there at the moment? How many people are affected?
Do any people from South Sudan live in Australia?
Can you find a picture of someone from South Sudan or the way South Sudanese people live?

Do you want to help women and girls get a fair go in the Pacific?

This week, think about some of the qualities that women in the Pacific must have in order to survive - courage, persistence and determination, forgiveness… can you think of others? Think about how you might ‘take up’ some of these qualities this week in your own life.

$50 can run workshops that help men and women understand that equality is important and that give women the confidence to speak out and find help when they feel unsafe in their homes.
Week 4: South Sudan Midwifery Training

Lesson Outcomes

- Children will hear of the surprising love of God through the story of the Prodigal Son, when God acts as a Father who forgives even when we deserve it least
- Children will consider what it feels like to forgive and be forgiven
- Children will hear the stories of midwives who are living in difficult conditions themselves, away from a country in conflict
- Children will be encouraged to think about what it might take for these midwives to return home where forgiveness will be necessary for the future of their country


Most of the children will be familiar with the story of the Prodigal son. Watch this short film to remind them of the story. [https://youtu.be/1xONjIJDWyJ8](https://youtu.be/1xONjIJDWyJ8)

There are many messages that come from this story, but one to focus on today is the idea that God the Father welcomes everyone home, no matter where they’ve come from or what they’ve been doing. God is ready to forgive no matter what people have done.

For older children this is a SOCIAL MEDIA RETELLING of the story (12-18) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n1IhTkCOak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n1IhTkCOak)

Ideas to discuss with children:

- Have you ever thought you’d done something that you couldn’t be forgiven for? How did that feel?
- Have you been forgiven for something that was pretty bad? Or have you forgiven someone something that was difficult?
Engaging with the UnitingWorld project.

Watch the South Sudanese midwives video

- All the midwives in this video are living away from their family and friends. At first they chose to live away from their family because they wanted to train as midwives; then the war came and they ended up living across the border in Kenya, away from their own country. How do you think this would feel?

- Most of the midwives want to go back to their country of South Sudan and help other women give birth. For their country to move forward, people will have to be ready to forgive each other and build a new future. If this was you, how difficult do you think this would be?

Look together at the South Sudan Midwives Powerpoint.

Get Active (10 minutes)

These midwives are already some of the only midwives helping to save the lives of mums and babies in their countries. That’s pretty amazing! What kind of people do you think they must be already to have given up so much to train? What qualities do you think the South Sudanese midwives will need right now and when they return to their home in South Sudan?

Make a poster together using the words below and spend some time praying for the midwives and also for each member of your group by name, asking that in your life you would learn to be all these things. As you work this week on the quality of FORGIVENESS, try to remember the women who are training to be midwives and also the people of South Sudan.

Brave
Kind
Gentle
Forgiving
Strong
Patient
Wise
Determined

Give out the Explorer Task for West Papua.
Lenten Worship Resources

Children’s resources

Explorer Task: West Papua? Never heard of it!

Where is West Papua? (It’s different from Papua New Guinea, just a hint!)

How many people live there and what language do they speak?

What are some of the main challenges facing West Papuans?

What are some of the beautiful sights to see in West Papua?

What are the main religions of West Papua?

Have there been any wars or conflicts?

What’s the weather like?

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Don’t forget!

When you give up something this week and save the money, you could be contributing toward saving lives in South Sudan!

$250 helps train one of those midwives you met last week! She’ll go on to help deliver babies and save the lives of mothers who would otherwise probably have their babies in very unsafe conditions. 100,000 mothers die every year in South Sudan because there are not enough trained midwives and very few well equipped hospitals. Your hard work supporting Lent Event is helping change that.
**Children’s Resources**

**Week 5: Walihole West Papua – HIV and TB Clinic.**
John 12:1-8 – A woman stands up for Jesus.

**Lesson outcomes:**

- Children will consider what the woman gave up to show her commitment to Jesus, as well as Jesus’ commitment to the woman
- They hear about another woman who has given up family, friends and country to look after people who experience serious sickness in West Papua
- Children reflect on all the stories they’ve heard of commitment, faith and determination over the course of the past five weeks. They report on what qualities in our partners they admire and would like to develop in themselves.

**Engaging with the Scripture John 12: 1-8**

This week’s story is about a woman who came to speak with Jesus. She broke a very expensive jar of perfume over his feet to show how valuable she thought he was. But the other men in the room thought this was a great waste and wanted to know why the perfume hadn’t been sold and the money given to the poor? This seems like a good question, but Jesus saw things differently. He suggested that the woman was showing her commitment to him and both he and the woman risked going against other people’s opinions by speaking up. The story shows both the way Jesus was willing to speak up in defense of a woman in a room full of men and the way a woman was willing to go to great lengths to show her commitment to someone she believed in.

**Ideas to discuss with the children:**

- How do you think the woman would have felt when the men criticized her for breaking the jar of perfume?
- Have you ever done something in front of other people to show that you were very committed to something or someone? (Maybe made a speech about something important, been on a march, stood up for someone when they were being bullied, told someone about your faith, given up your time to help on a project at school)
Children's Resources

Engaging with the UnitingWorld Project

Watch the video together.

How do you think Agnella might have felt about leaving her family behind to come and work in West Papua with the Aids and Tuberculosis patients? How do you think her family felt about it?

What do you think keeps her strong when she misses her family and friends? Did you learn anything about West Papua that might keep encouraging her when she feels like giving in?

Look at the Project Powerpoint together.

Get active (10 minutes)

Ask your group to think back over the last five weeks. Which project do they remember best? From the resources provided, ask them to create a poster collage to display and prepare a short report to bring to their congregation for next week about what they’ve learnt. The report could include feedback on:

- What did you learn about the kinds of strengths that people have overseas that you admire?
- What kind of qualities do you think people have overseas that you would like to develop for yourself?
- What kind of difficult thing are our partners facing that we face too? (equality for women, needing to forgive etc?)
- If you don’t think you will be able to report to your congregation, perhaps just talk about this as a group.

Next week is also the week to make your donation to Lent Event – each person should donate online and let their Sunday School teacher know what they have raised or bring their money in next Sunday so it can all be donated together.

Pray together. Give thanks for all that you’ve learned, the people you’ve met, for the challenges they face, their strengths and all that you can do together to overcome poverty. Ask that you might grow in faith, hope and love for God’s people and each other.
Week 6 – Palm Sunday

During the service –

Bring a short report to your congregation about what you’ve learnt during the five weeks of Lent Event. Celebrate the amount of money as a group you’ve been able to raise to send to support our partners in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, the Pacific, South Sudan and West Papua.

During your Sunday School time, learn about Palm Sunday using your regular Sunday School resources.