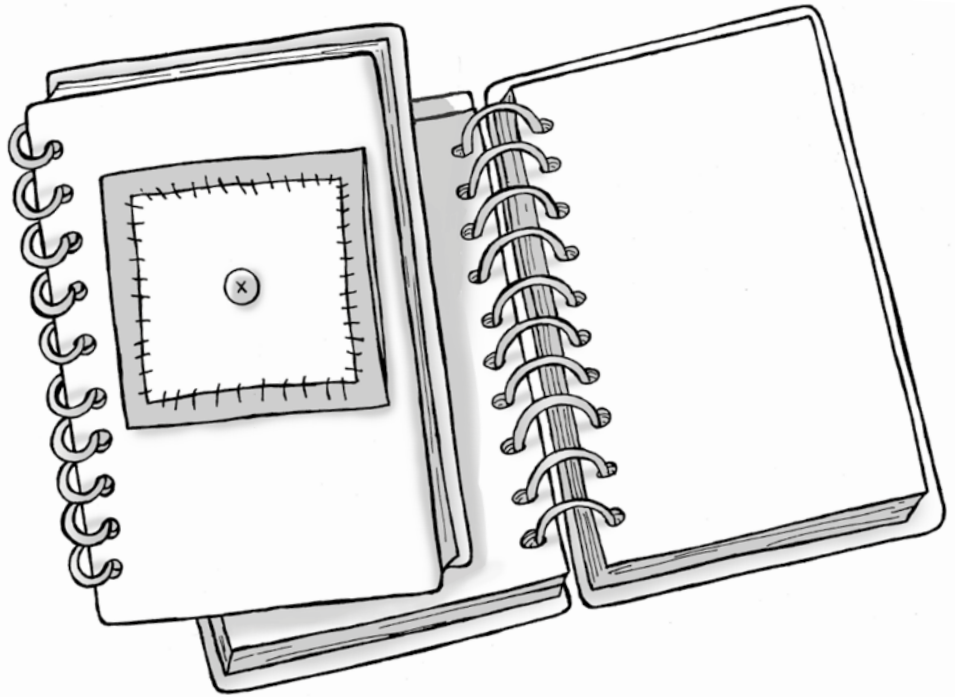


# 40 Messy Lent family challenges and activities

1. Make an ash alms jar (see Take-home ideas, page 24) and decide which charity you will collect coins for during Lent.
2. Think about what you could give up during Lent to enable you to redirect your money to the alms jar.



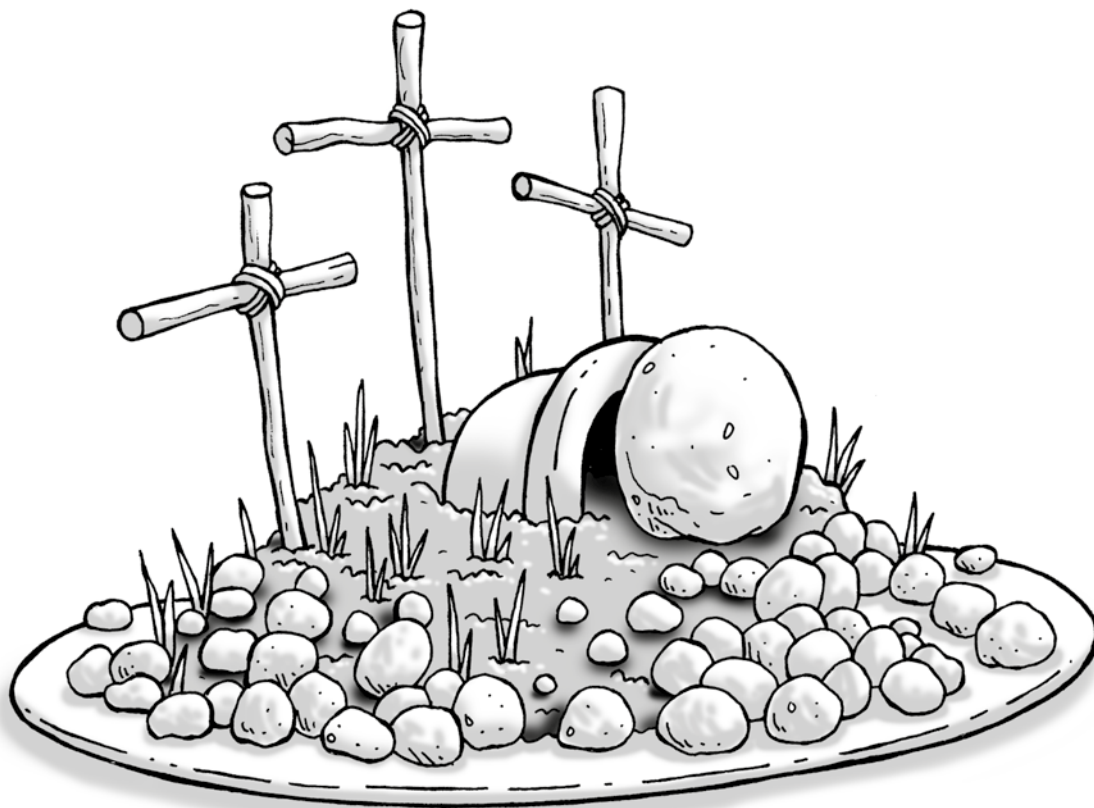
3. Decorate an exercise book to make a Lent family journal. Chat together each evening and write about how you feel; thank God for something and pray for someone else.
4. Messy moaning: add a coin to the alms jar every time you moan about something.
5. Try a sugarless Saturday. You'll be surprised how much of what we eat contains sugar.
6. Choose a Bible story to read together.
7. The western church doesn't count Sundays in the 40 days of Lent. Take the opportunity to spend quality time together as a family and enjoy your Sundays.
8. Take it in turns to ask each member of the family to choose one story from the daily newspaper, cut it out with scissors and paste it in the Lent family journal for prayer.
9. Keep a Bible and a book of Bible stories on top of the coffee table all through Lent.
10. Declutter your kitchen cupboards. Check 'use by' dates on food items. Which recipe books have you never used? How can you recycle those books?
11. Look at your remaining recipe books together and give each other a health check by choosing healthy options more regularly. Create a family recipe binder of favourites from [bbc.co.uk/food](http://bbc.co.uk/food).
12. Mothering Sunday falls on the fourth Sunday in Lent. Prepare a loving day for the mums in the family and think particularly about people who do not have a mum with whom to celebrate this day.
13. Experience a 'turn off' day with your computers, TV, radio, mobile phones, tablets and so on. How difficult is it to spend time away from these gadgets? What do you find yourself turning to instead?



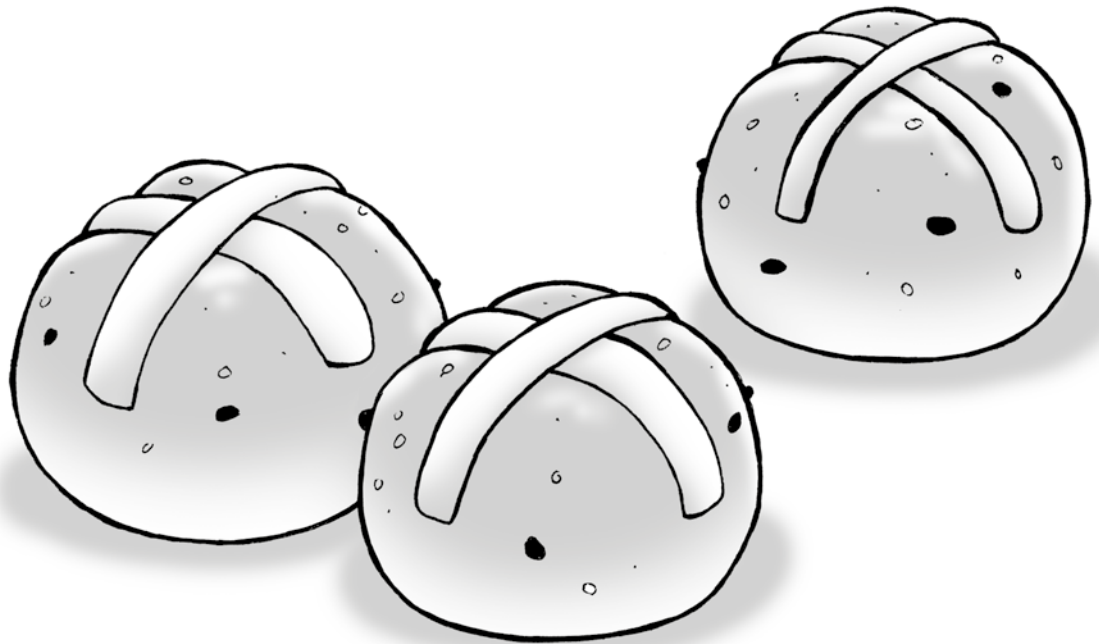
14. Become a volunteer for a local organisation. Could you do this as a family?
15. Sort out the clothes in your wardrobes and drawers. Can you give any to a charity shop?
16. Create your own designs for Easter card making. Help others to celebrate this time of year by sending them a card.
17. Cut up lots of thin strips of paper and ask each member of the family to write the name of a family member or friend on each separate piece. Put them in a box or jar, take one out each day and pray for that person.
18. Invite someone to your next Messy Church.
19. Think of God's creation and recycle more. Simplify your life.
20. Watch 'One solitary life', a poem by James A. Francis, on YouTube (approximately three minutes).
21. Messy memorise: learn the Lord's Prayer together.
22. Which household chore do you dislike the most? Think of ways to make it more fun.
23. If you have a car, how could it be of use for someone who does not have one?
24. Messy media: think about your daily choices. Which TV programmes do you watch? Which books do you read? Which websites do you regularly view? Are they a help to your spiritual growth?
25. Sort out your airing/linen cupboard. Give old towels and blankets to animal charities.
26. Make a paper palm leaf, ready for Palm Sunday. Draw around your hand on green paper, cut out three hand shapes and tape them, slightly overlapping, to a green drinking straw. (There are also many palm leaf templates on the internet.)
27. Visit someone who is housebound.
28. Join some keep-fit classes and check out your personal health.
29. Begin to create an Easter garden for Easter Day. You will need a clay/plastic/foil saucer, a small clay/plastic pot, soil, pebbles, grass seed, six small sticks, string and a stone. Place the soil in a mound on the saucer and



tuck the pot into the soil to make a cave. Place the stone across the pot opening. Spread pebbles around the front and sides of the mound. Add seed to the soil and spray regularly with water. Tie the sticks together with string to make three small crosses and push them into the back of the mound of soil. Regularly sprayed with water, the grass takes 7-10 days to sprout.



30. Sort out the toys in your home to donate to local organisations.
31. Supermarket checkout: include an extra item in your regular shop each time to donate to your local Foodbank project.
32. On Palm Sunday, talk about all the times your family have enjoyed celebrations. How did you celebrate? Write down those celebrations on the back of your palm leaf. How did you show your excitement? Read Matthew 21:1–11. How did the crowds show their excitement as Jesus entered Jerusalem?
33. At the last supper, Jesus shared food with his friends. Design a place mat for your friend, using card or strong paper. After colouring it, laminate it to make it wipe-clean. Perhaps draw a caterpillar on one side and a butterfly on the other: turn over to show the butterfly on Easter Day.
34. Bake bread together using bread mix, ready for Maundy Thursday, when Jesus broke bread with his friends.
35. Watch [friendsandheroes.com/us/easter-video](http://friendsandheroes.com/us/easter-video) (three minutes).
36. Share a print of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* painting and learn the names of all of the disciples.
37. Eat hot cross buns together to remember Jesus dying on the cross.



38. Decorate a plain white tablecloth or sheet, ready for the family meal on Easter Day.
39. Happy Easter! Roll away the stone on your grassy Easter garden. Use magic candles on Easter cakes, remembering that the disciples thought the light of Jesus had died forever on Good Friday – but on Easter Day his light shone again and is still shining now.
40. Check out [brf.org.uk/resources](http://brf.org.uk/resources) for lots more family Lent and Easter activities.

