

# Worship Resources for Lent

Dear Worship Leader,

You may already be aware of PresCare, a partnership between the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support.

PresCare looks for ways our shared faith and commitment can respond to the needs and nurture the wellbeing of children and families in Aotearoa.

A collection of meditations, one for each day in Lent, has been prepared and is being made available to all congregations.

In addition, PresCare wants to offer some resources to help provide a brief focus within worship on the needs of children and families.

The resources include:

- A prayer for families that may be used each Sunday in Lent
- A short blessing for children and families
- An insight into the situation of a New Zealander whose family is broken or at risk
- A bible passage or prayer linking this insight to Sunday's worship and the PresCare meditations for the week.

The resources are available as PowerPoint slides.

They can be used in any way and in any combination you want – whatever best suits your style of worship.

They can become a special focus within a service or supply the basis for discussion.

However you use them, we hope these offerings will provide a way to remind your congregation as we travel towards Easter of our common calling to extend Christian care to the families within our land whose life lacks the warmth and joy so many of us take for granted.

Martin Baker, Assembly Executive Secretary.



# Worship Resources for Lent



**Family  
Works**  
A PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT  
SERVICE



# Worship Resource

## Lent 1 - Sunday March 13



## Prayer for Families

Creating and loving God,  
We give thanks that your son Jesus was born into a human family and knew the joys and challenges of everyday family life.

We give thanks for the many families in New Zealand,  
For parents and children, brothers and sisters,  
aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.

But we know that not all families reflect your hope for family life,  
That many struggle to be safe places marked  
by love, joy and respect.





Open us to hear your invitation to be your agents of mission,  
So that the fullness of life you offer us in Jesus Christ  
may be enjoyed by all members of all New Zealand's families.

We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ,  
our Lord.

Amen.





Sophie stays very quiet when Mum and Dad fight, which is all the time now.

She knows not to say anything, or look at them, or even be seen – or home won't be a safe place for her tonight. Or tomorrow.

When a child is afraid in their own home ... don't you want to help?

Worshipping God means living the love demonstrated through the life and death of Jesus

“I’ll tell you what it really means to worship God...  
Remove the chains of prisoners who are chained unjustly.  
Free those who are abused!  
Share your food with everyone who is hungry.  
Open your home to the poor.  
Clothe those in need and don’t turn away your relatives.”  
– Isaiah 58: 6-7



## Blessing

God bless Aotearoa, and all its families.  
Guide our parents.  
Guard our children.  
And bring us peace.  
Amen.







# Worship Resource

## Lent 2 - Sunday March 20



## Prayer for Families

Creating and loving God,  
We give thanks that your son Jesus was born into a human family and knew the joys and challenges of everyday family life.

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For parents and children, brothers and sisters,  
aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.

But we know that not all families reflect your hope for family life,  
That many struggle to be safe places marked  
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We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.





Bruises and black eyes are bad enough, but Alex is chewed up by fear – that he will come home from school to find his mother dead.

When a child like Alex is terrified by the anger and violence in his house, have you ever wanted to keep him safe?



How can we sow God's peace in a broken world?

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

– The prayer of St Francis of Assisi





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Amen.





# Worship Resource

## Lent 3 - Sunday March 27



## Prayer for Families

Creating and loving God,  
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We give thanks for the many families in New Zealand,  
For parents and children, brothers and sisters,  
aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.

But we know that not all families reflect your hope for family life,  
That many struggle to be safe places marked  
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We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.





Jaden tried to defend his Mum during a family fight. He felt he had to. But it didn't help and both of them suffered very very badly.

As a result, he not only got hurt, he feels responsible and he's overwhelmed by enormous guilt and shame.



“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” – James 1:27

The Bible constantly reminds us to care for people in need, the “widow and the orphan.”

Who are the “widow and the orphan” in 21st century New Zealand?



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Amen.





# Worship Resource

## Lent 4 - Sunday April 3



## Prayer for Families

Creating and loving God,  
We give thanks that your son Jesus was born into a human family and knew the joys and challenges of everyday family life.

We give thanks for the many families in New Zealand,  
For parents and children, brothers and sisters,  
aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.

But we know that not all families reflect your hope for family life,  
That many struggle to be safe places marked  
by love, joy and respect.



Open us to hear your invitation to be your agents of mission,  
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We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.







Ollie is angry. He doesn't know why, but it makes him do things he hates. Breaking glass, hitting kids, shouting at his Mum just like Dad does.

No matter how hard he tries, the only thing he's ever been good at is being bad.



“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” – Matthew 18:11

“People brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” – Matthew 19: 13-14

What is hindering our children?



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# Worship Resource

## Lent 5 - Sunday April 10



## Prayer for Families

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We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.





When times are hard people take desperate measures. Money is so tight for Diane that she has even been watering down the family's milk, turning a 2 litre bottle into 10 litres.

That's what some families have to do in New Zealand, especially if they've never learned to budget.

“One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home.”  
– Acts 16: 14-15

Can we make the offer of true life promised in baptism real to families whose lives are challenged and broken?



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Amen.





# Worship Resource

## Lent 6 - Palm Sunday April 17



## Prayer for Families

Creating and loving God,  
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We give thanks for the many families in New Zealand,  
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aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.

But we know that not all families reflect your hope for family life,  
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may be enjoyed by all members of all New Zealand's families.

We pray in the name of that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.





“Please don’t go,” squeals Zac, crying in the hall. “Daddy don’t leave.”

When Zac’s Dad says he’s never coming back, Zac believes him, and it feels like his Dad just died.

Family breakdown plunges children into the realm of grief and loss



Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

– Revelation 21:1, 3-4

God will have the final word. And in the meantime we can help people discern the love and life of God already in their midst.



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Amen.

