

# Praying our way through Lent: A basket of prayer intentions

Over the years I've tried a few different Lenten sacrifices. One year I gave up iced tea. Another year I went to daily Mass. That was before I was a mother of two. I'm not sure I could manage either of those now.

Last year, though, we tried something different as a family.

Before Ash Wednesday, we sat down and filled 47 strips of paper with names. Then we put them into a basket.

Every morning at breakfast, one of the boys picked a name, and we would pray for that person—or family—that day. If we were in touch with the person we were praying for, I would reach out with a call or a text or an email sharing that news. People always seemed touched to be included.

Every night at dinner we would talk about the person we were praying for and share stories. As Lent continued, I learned more about my husband's deceased friends and relatives, and he learned more about mine.

So although I'm still trying to decide what I'll give up for Lent, I knew I wanted to have a family prayer basket again.

So last night I cut strips of paper and grabbed a pencil.

"OK, where do we start?" I said.

"Georgie, of course," Daniel said. He always reminds us to pray for his cousin Georgie in Heaven.

The names kept coming. Thinking of 47 is never hard. In fact, I'm pretty sure we have closer to 50. We listed teachers and priests and colleagues and classmates and friends. We wrote down people we know by name and even a few people we don't know by name, though of course God knows who they are from our descriptions.

Then we folded the slips of paper and piled them in the basket.

It's such a simple thing. It's not particularly creative. And the intentions are spilling over onto our table.

But praying is something we can each do, and it's something we can do together.

Whatever you decide to give up or take on, I hope your Lent is a fruitful one.