



Learning LAMENT

A Lenten Activity
for Families

BY EQUIPFAMILY.COM

What is Lament?

Lament isn't something we talk a lot about in Christian circles - especially with our kids.

Lent however, is a deeply biblical practice, finding its root in the Psalms. Lament is different than simply complaining or venting - in that it is directed towards God. It is the practice of:

✦
Pouring out our sorrows to God,
accompanied by a call for Him to act.

Lament has been historically linked to the season of Lent. In this somber season of self-reflection & spiritual discipline, lament seems to be incredibly fitting.

Especially in light of all that is happening in our world, it is important to give our kids space to express their feelings - good, bad and ugly - to God. We want them to be secure enough in their relationship with God that they understand God is big enough, strong enough and loving enough to handle all of our feelings. When there are things we don't understand, we can bring them to God!

This guide includes **6 activities** based around the idea of Lament for you and your family to use! You can use them as they are written, or adapt them to fit your family.

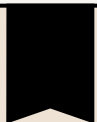
May they enrich your journey this Lenten season!

Start Here

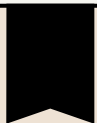
Read this page with your family as you begin!



We are starting a special season for Christians called Lent! This season is the 6 weeks leading up to Easter - and it is a special time for us to reflect and draw closer to God.



This year during Lent, our family is going to practice sharing all our feelings with God. In the Bible, this is called lament. Have you heard that word before?



Lament is a way of talking to God! We lament when we pray by telling God exactly how we feel - even if it's bad! - and asking Him to hear us.



Each week during Lent, we will be practicing a different type of "lament prayer." Do you have any questions for me?

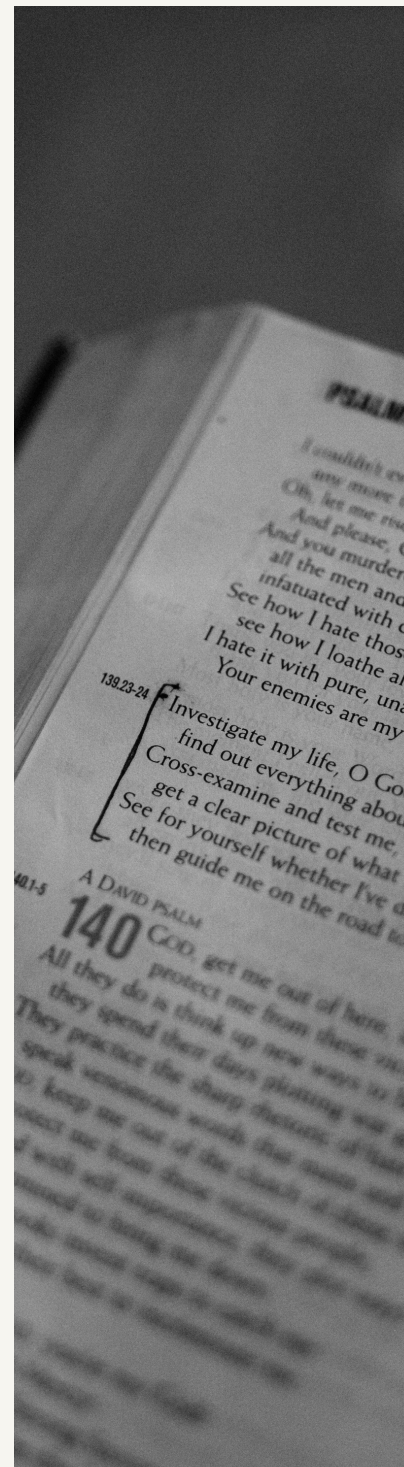
Activity 1: Psalms of Lament

The Bible is full of prayers of lament! Even people who did great things for God - like King David - sometimes felt sad, overwhelmed or frustrated.

Instead of hiding their feelings, they were honest with God. They even wrote these feelings down in prayers.

We can find these prayers in our Bibles, in the book of Psalms. These Psalms that are full of feelings are called **psalms of Lament**.

We are going to read one of the psalms of Lament together. We will read it twice! The first time we read it, **just listen!** The second time, take a piece of paper and **draw or doodle** the things that come to mind as you listen.



Psalm 130

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- Read the Psalm once slowly.
- Pause and ask anyone if they have any questions.
- If there are any words you don't understand, take the time to explore and explain!
- Read the Psalm for a second time. This time, have everyone in your family draw or doodle what comes to mind as you read.
- Discuss after everyone's finished - why did you draw that? What did you think of?

From the depths of despair, O Lord,
I call for your help.

2 Hear my cry, O Lord.

Pay attention to my prayer.

3 Lord, if you kept a record of our sins,
who, O Lord, could ever survive?

4 But you offer forgiveness,
that we might learn to fear you.

5 I am counting on the Lord;
yes, I am counting on him.

I have put my hope in his word.

6 I long for the Lord
more than sentries long for the
dawn,

yes, more than sentries long for the
dawn.

7 O Israel, hope in the Lord;
for with the Lord there is unfailing
love.

His redemption overflows.

8 He himself will redeem Israel
from every kind of sin.

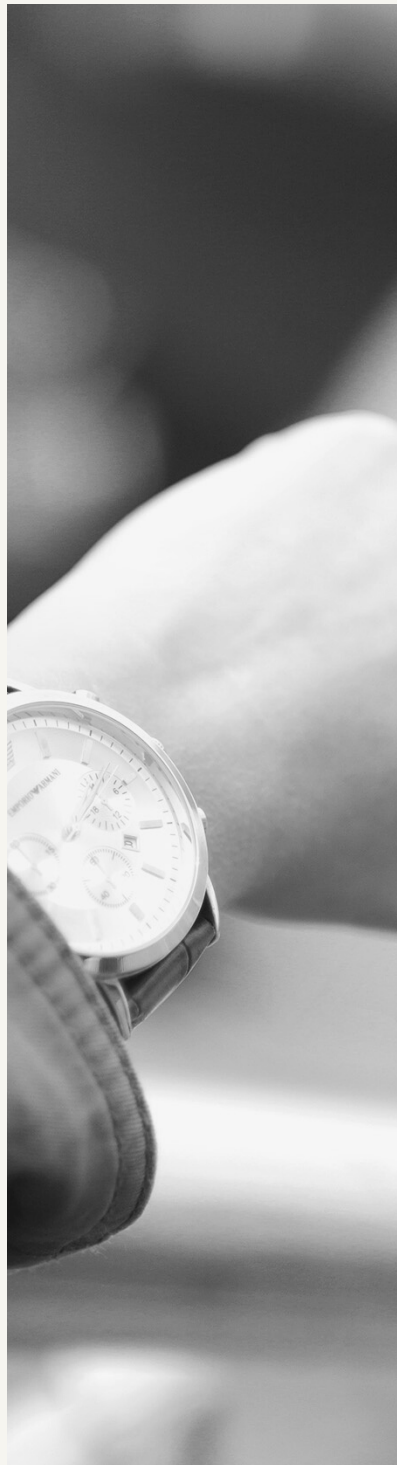
Activity 2: How Long, oh Lord?

A common phrase used when people are praying lament prayers is "How long, oh Lord?"

When people are tired of waiting for God to act, or when they feel like suffering, hurt, or pain are lasting a long time - they ask "How long oh Lord?" They want God to do something!

It is okay for us to tell God about the situations that are making us feel sad, frustrated and overwhelmed - and to ask Him, "How long, oh Lord?"

In our activity, we will make a list of things that make us feel sad or frustrated - in our family, and in our world - and then pray together as a family - "How long, oh Lord?"



Date:

How Long?

Make a list on this page of all the things that you are feeling sad, overwhelmed or confused. These can be personal things (eg. we haven't seen our grandparents in a long time!) or global things (eg. conflict in Ukraine). Allow everyone to contribute. Nothing is too big or too small!

After you've made the list, take turns reading the list out loud. After each item say "How long, oh Lord!?" Finish with a closing prayer led by a family member.

This image shows a full page of white paper with ten evenly spaced horizontal rows of small black dots, typical of primary school handwriting practice paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Activity 3: Light a Candle

Lighting a candle is a common tradition when people pray. When we light a candle during prayer, it is a reminder to us that Jesus is the **light of the world**. He can shine light even in the darkest situations!

At your next family meal, light a candle (or crack a glow stick!) and thank God for one good thing about your day. Follow this by telling Him one thing that made you feel sad or frustrated.

After everyone in your family has had a turn, close in prayer by saying:

"Thank you God that in good situations and in bad, your light still shines."



Activity 3: Light a Candle

As an extra activity, color these candles and write some prayers on them!



Activity 4: Write Your Own Psalm

Have you ever written a poem before?

A psalm is basically a poem. In the Bible, they were often set to music!

This week, you're going to write your own Psalm of Lament. We'll give you a guide to follow! You can do this as a family, or have each person write their own psalm.

If anyone in your family doesn't feel like writing, someone else can write it down for them!



Date:

My Own Psalm

Start off with your
favorite name for
God.



.....

.....

Tell God about a
PROBLEM you're
facing.



.....

.....

.....

.....

Ask God for what
you need!



.....

.....

.....

I PRAISE YOU,

.....

Write one more name for God!

Activity 5: Lament as Worship

Have you ever noticed that a lot of the songs we sing about God are happy and celebrate?

They celebrate good things about God and all that He has done!

That is a very important part of worship!

However, sometimes, if we are feeling sad, angry or overwhelmed, we may not feel like listening to a "happy" song about God!

We can still worship God no matter how we feel - and sometimes, songs of lament can help us do that! On the next page, you'll find a list of worship songs that include words of lament. Choose one to listen to as a family, and then talk about it later. How did the words make you feel?



Worship Songs of Lament

Please note that most of these songs can be listened to on YouTube, Spotify or another streaming service! These are meant for personal use, not to be streamed or shared with a group.

- "Weep With Me" by Rend Collective
- "Wake up Jesus" by Porter's Gate
- "Even When it Hurts" by Hillsong United
- "When my Heart is Torn Asunder" by Phil Wickham
- "Even If" by MercyMe
- "Be Still my Soul" by Kari Jobe
- "Desert Song" by Hillsong United
- "Is He Worthy?" by Andrew Peterson

Activity 6: All Things New



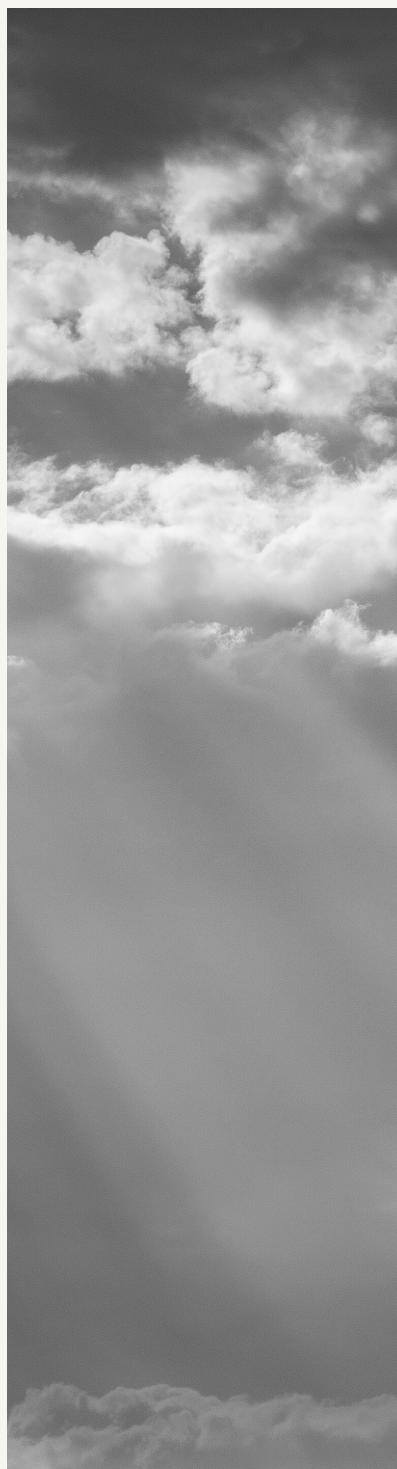
Sharing our problems, our feelings and our struggles with God is an important part of following Jesus!

When we lament, we aren't just complaining to God. We are sharing our struggles with Him, but we can also know that we have hope!

In this week's activity, we will be focusing on that hope.

Talk about the things that are scaring your family right now. When you're done, have everyone close their eyes, as an adult reads **Revelation 21:1-7** out loud.

Ask everyone what they imagined and how the verses made them feel. Conclude your time together - and this Lament journey - by thanking God for the hope of "all things made new" - even when things are hard!



Revelation 21:1-7

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Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

5 And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” 6 And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. 7 All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.