

 **TAKE UP YOUR CROSS**

**Introduction to Prayer**

During Lent we walk with Jesus. We hope to share in the Resurrection of Easter.

**Prayer**

L: Let us pray.

 Loving God,

 Guide our steps as we follow Your Son, Jesus. Take our hands and

 lead us along a Lenten path of love for you and for others. Brings us

 to the joy of Easter.

L: We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**R: Amen**

*Adapted from Prayer of Lenten Reflection,* [*https://go.sadlier.com/religion/prayer-for-lenten-reflection*](https://go.sadlier.com/religion/prayer-for-lenten-reflection)

**Introduction to Word of God**

God’s Word guides us on our Lenten journey with Jesus.

**Reading from the Word of God**

Matthew 16: 24-26

L: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**.**

 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me

 must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever

 wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my

 sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the

 whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange

 for his life?

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

R: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Take Up Your Cross**

L: Jesus looked ahead to the cross he would bear.

 Are you willing to take up your crosses this Lent?

 What do you know you need to do to be more Jesus?

 Maybe you need to

* Tell the truth
* Pray every day
* Go to Mass
* Do your chores
* Be kind to others
* Help someone in trouble
* Share what you have with those in need
* Make the world a better place

 Think quietly now about one thing you know you need to do this

 Lent to be more like Jesus.

 *Leader instructs participants to take a cross from the baskets passed through the pews by*

 *volunteers. Then leader instructs all to hold up their crosses over their heads throughout the*

 *Take Up Your Cross Prayer.*

L: Will you take up your Lenten cross and follow Jesus?

R: Yes!

**Take Up Your Cross Prayer**

L: Let us pray.

 Loving God, you alone are our source of strength and faith. Help us

 support one another as we take up our crosses, signs of our love for

 Jesus, who carried his Cross because of his great love for each of us.

L: As we take up our Lenten crosses and begin our Lenten journey, we

 pray

R: Lord, help us follow you.

L: As we walk with each other, answering your call to love God and

 neighbor, we pray

R: Lord, help us follow you.

L: At home, at school, at church, and when with friends, we pray

R: Lord, help us follow you.

L: As we walk in faith toward the joy of Easter, we pray

R: Lord, help us follow you.

 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

L: Loving God, help us during Lent to follow the example of Your Son,

 Jesus. He carried his cross because of his great love for each of us.

 We want to grow in love for you and others.

 We offer this prayer through, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives

 and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and

 ever.

R: Amen.

 *Adapted from* [*https://www.rclbenziger.com/TakeUpYourCross.pdf*](https://www.rclbenziger.com/TakeUpYourCross.pdf)

**Song:** *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* vv. 1-4

 (Ritual Song #830)