



On your marks

The season of Lent begins and ends with the cross. On Ash Wednesday there is the tradition of receiving the cross of ashes on the forehead to mark the beginning of a six-week period of prayer and reflection before Easter; and on Good Friday, we finally come to the cross of history on the hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus died.

The following outline would provide a link to further work during Lent on crosses that are found in the *Barnabas* book [A-cross the World](#).

This idea could be used in a variety of ways:

as material for a Sunday group session with children for the third Sunday in Lent

as a resource for a special event with children and adults during the week

as part of a special Lenten display.

Get set

You will need a copy of [A-cross the World](#) from *Barnabas*. This book has information and creative ideas based on 40 different crosses from around the world. It also includes ideas for all-age worship, study sessions, games, outlines for special events, collective worship in school and also for R.E. lessons.

Go!

1. **Lent 3-** an Irish Cross

Key Theme: *Forgiving*

Use the ideas for games and icebreakers on the cross from Pages 107 -112 in *A-cross the World*.

2. The story of St Bridget's cross reminds us of how much we need both to forgive others and to give to others, if we are to truly follow Jesus. The craft idea for this cross is on page 76 of *A-cross the World*.
3. The Bible parable for this is that of 'The Unforgiving Servant' (Matthew 18:23 -35). Jesus is quite clear that we can't ourselves experience God's forgiving love if we refuse to pass this on to others; but it isn't easy. Peter's question that prompts this story is a very real one. He asks in effect: surely there must be a limit to how many times we forgive other people? But Jesus is clear. Showing forgiveness is absolutely crucial (=of the cross!) to becoming the sort of people he wants us to be. Unwillingness to forgive makes us much less than our best.
4. I wonder if the children have people who they find hard to forgive? I wonder where the power comes from to forgive again and again? I wonder if it is really possible to forgive people who have done terrible things to us or to others? Is Jesus asking the impossible?



The truth is that, unless we open our hands to give and be forgiven, we can't really receive the blessings God has for us (e.g. try opening a wrapped sweet with clenched fists!).

5. Each child could make the crosses individually or perhaps there could be one large version made co-operatively by the children and which can then be brought into church for display, building up to the events of Holy Week and Easter morning.
6. For this session there are a number of possible ideas for prayers, both formal and creative, in *A-cross the World*- see pages 113 -119 and pages 123 -128.