Ways to Involve Children during Great Lent

1. Prayer | Молитва
– If you are not already doing so, begin a time of family prayers in the evening, morning, or both.
– During evening prayers, pray the Prayer of St. Ephrem. Young children, especially, seem to intuitively understand that the entire body should be involved in prayer and enjoy the prostrations.

2. Almsgiving | Милостиня
– Set up a family change jar. Watch it grow throughout Lent and then decide as a family how best to donate it.
– Collect and donate food to a local food bank or volunteer together at a local charity.

3. Fasting | Піст
– There are many different views about how and at what age fasting is appropriate for children. Speak to your spiritual father about this matter first.
– Children can fast from certain excesses such as candy, ice cream, soda, etc.
– Speak to your children about why you are fasting. Read passages in the Scriptures and from the Church Fathers about the importance of fasting.
– Try new recipes (vegan or vegetarian) from a Lenten cookbook and cook meals together as a family.

4. Repentance | Покаяння
– Talk about repentance and forgiveness, and how they apply to your child’s life.
– Bring your child with you to vespers and other services during Lent. These services are extremely powerful to children. The prostrations and the repetition of asking others to forgive them can make a deep and lasting impression.
– Discuss confession as a family. For children of age, encourage them to go to confession and be an example yourself.