

Thoughtful Moments

Love like God

God allows us to make choices. The reward for choosing to obey him is Heaven. The consequence of disobeying is punishment. Parents show God's love when they allow children to experience the consequences of their choices. *"For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives"* (Hebrews 12:6).

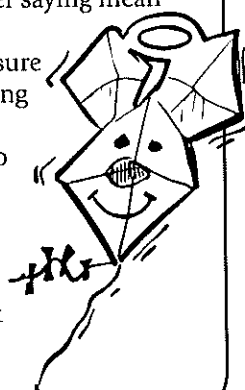
We're not alone

Although parenting can be tough, we don't have to go it alone. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths"* (Proverbs 3:5).



Gossip

Teach children the harmful nature of gossip. Gossip is talking about other people, either saying mean things, spreading stories you're not sure are true, or repeating information you have been asked to keep private. No one has a right to know someone else's business. If in doubt, don't let it out.



Enjoy the challenge of Lent

"Enjoy" isn't normally a word we associate with Lent, but its rich traditions help us connect with God's saving love and prepare us for the joy of Easter.

Helping children to experience God's love during Lent can be penitential and enjoyable when it involves activities bringing families together around penance, almsgiving, and prayer.

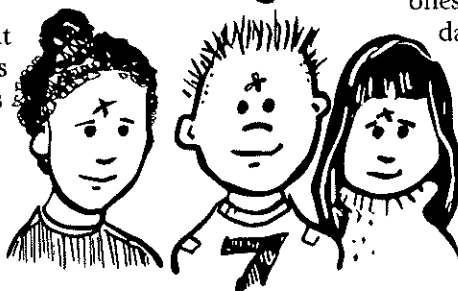
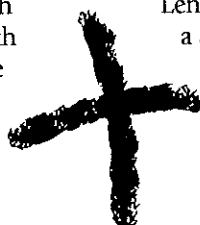
Ashes: The ashes we wear show repentance for our sins and help children understand we are all sinners dependent upon God's grace. Challenge children to keep their ashes on all day as an external witness to their hope that Christ's sacrifice will lead us to Heaven.

Almsgiving box: Set up a box and take turns putting an item from the

pantry into it each day. At the end of Lent, take the box to a needy family, a soup kitchen, or your local food pantry.

Add prayer: Pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. If this feels overwhelming with young ones, try just one decade a day. Or, consider praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet together. This is shorter than a Rosary and helps youngsters focus on God's mercy and forgiveness.

Meatless Fridays: Catholics are to avoid eating meat on Fridays - an ancient tradition going back to the early Church. Plan meatless Friday family meals and invite friends to join you to reinforce the practice of penance.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics eat fish on Fridays during Lent?

The Church requires Catholics to abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent, but permits eating fish. One explanation is that people didn't used to consider fish as meat. Another theory is fish was originally considered a "poor



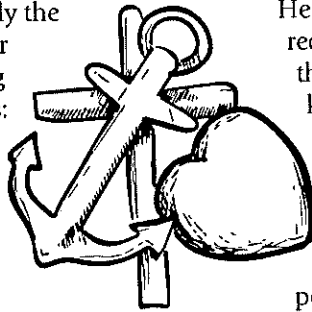
man's" meal; richer meats were for feasting. During Lent, we try to detach from earthly pleasures to prepare our hearts for eternal joys. We give up meat on a Friday because it was on a Friday that Jesus gave everything for us.

Form three essential virtues during Lent

Lent is the perfect time to grow virtues, especially the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help children grow in these three essential virtues:

Faith: Faith enables us to believe in God and connect with Him. To help children activate this virtue, teach them to pray beyond just the traditional Catholic prayers. Encourage them to talk to God like their best friend. He loves them and is always listening.

Hope: Hope is the gift of looking forward to God and



Heaven. It helps us to be joyful, even as we wait to receive the good for which we are hoping. Explain that making sacrifices during Lent reminds us to keep our eyes on the joys of Heaven that await us if we spend our lives on Earth living as God asks.

Charity: Almsgiving is love in action. Whether it's doing our chores, cleaning up after ourselves, or donating our excess possessions, almsgiving helps children grow in compassion, generosity, and patience.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32, He will always welcome us home

The scribes and the Pharisees were furious when Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners into his company. They didn't approve of Jesus befriending such people, especially when he was harsh with the scribes and Pharisees. In response, Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son.

The younger son asked his father for his share in the family estate and squandered it in a country far from home. With his money gone and his situation desperate, he returned to his father, humbled, and asked for mercy. Overjoyed by his son's return, the father



gave him a princely reception. This is the spirit in which God receives us when we come home to him.

Convinced he was the "good" son, however, the older brother resented the warm welcome his younger brother got. Like the Pharisees and scribes, he was miffed at the prospect of sinners becoming acceptable to God.

What can a parent do? Help your child to understand that no matter what we have done, we can always come home to God. He is always waiting to joyfully welcome us back.

Parent TALK

At first we appreciated the expensive game system my parents bought the children. They thought it was fun during quarantine. Then we noticed



the change in their behavior, especially twelve year old Jude. When he wasn't playing, he was rushing to get back to playing.

I limited gaming to two hours on weekends and Jude had a fit. When I found that he snuck down at 1:00am to play, I realized we had a problem. The next day, I took the whole system to a consignment store. Jude went ballistic when he found out. He cried, threatened to run away, and locked himself in his room refusing to speak to anyone.

After a few days, he started interacting again. He looked calmer, more relaxed. At dinner, Jude told us that he was relieved not to be playing video games anymore. It was painful, but I know we did the right thing.

Feasts & Celebrations

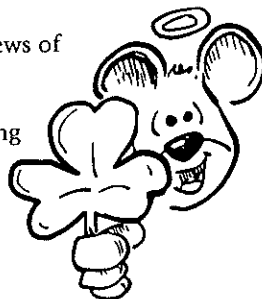
March 1 – St. David of Wales (c. 600). St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into Welsh nobility, but instead chose to become a priest. He was later consecrated a bishop. He is best known for founding an ascetic monastery and ridding the area of the Pelagian heresy.

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 24 – St. Margaret Clitherow (1586). St. Margaret Clitherow converted to Catholicism soon after she married, at a time when Catholicism was

illegal in England. St. Margaret continued to practice her faith, even hiding priests in her house so they could say Mass. Her peaceful, joyful attitude during her imprisonment, trial, and execution inspired those around her.

March 25 – The Annunciation of the Lord (1st century). The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the Mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)

Family Lent Calendar 2022

 = a day of fasting and abstinence
 = a day of abstinence from meat

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p>	<p>March</p>					
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Adopt a Lenten saint to be your family's patron. Learn about them and find ways to imitate their virtues.	Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.	Enjoy pretzels, a traditional Lenten food. Originally, their shape evoked arms folded in prayer.	Tonight, pray a decade of the Rosary together for the Church.	Have everyone choose a daily prayer to offer for your parish priest(s). Send him a card with everyone's promises.	Whenever someone does a good deed, put a jelly bean in a jar. Enjoy at Easter!	Bring a box of canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys to a homeless shelter.
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Explain today's homily in a way children can understand. Come up with a family resolution for this week.	Peace starts at home. Resolve to say only positive, kind things today.	Today, forego a favorite snack for those who can't afford to snack.	Talk about what you would say to Jesus if He came to your house to visit.	<i>St. Patrick's Day</i> In St. Patrick's honor, light a candle and pray for Catholic missions in other countries.	Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELPCRS, www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help.	<i>St. Joseph's Day</i> St. Joseph protected the Holy Family from danger. Pray for the safety of families around the world.
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of faith.	Bring cookies to a nearby nursing home.	Pray for victims of violence and war in the world.	Apologize to someone you hurt. Forgive someone who hurt you.	At dinner, have everyone name two things they are thankful to God for.	<i>Family Fun Night</i> Instead of watching a movie, pull out a board game or make up your own.	In honor of the Holy Family, encourage everyone to do one extra chore around the house.
27	28	29	30	31	1 April	2
<i>Laetare Sunday</i> Have a special meal at home or a restaurant to celebrate the half-way point through Lent.	Take stock of how your Lenten fasts are going, and refresh your commitment to them.	Practice patience with each other. When it gets difficult, recall how patient God is with us.	Make up thank-you cards for the healthcare workers at your local hospital.	Have children draw a heart one way they experience Jesus' love, and on the back, draw how they can show love.	Encourage each family member to perform an examination of conscience.	Go to Confession or attend a Reconciliation Service. Then go out afterwards to celebrate forgiveness.
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
At church today, pray for someone who passed away or who needs special help.	In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Light a candle and pray for world peace.	Send a card to someone who might need cheering today.	Pray an extra prayer together for everyone coming into the Church at Easter.	At dinner, go around the table and share one way you experienced God's love.	Today, give up a favorite toy or game, just for Jesus.	Take 10 minutes and pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy together. You can find it here: www.usccb.org/prayers
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<i>Palm Sunday</i> Have a Palm Sunday procession around your house and place the palms around the images of Jesus.	This week, try to limit screen time. No texting at dinner, during prayer, and after 10:00 PM.	Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.	Open the jar of "Good deed" jelly beans and enjoy!	<i>Holy Thursday</i> Today, make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament in church. Pray for priests.	<i>Good Friday</i> Pray the Stations of the Cross today, and meditate on each one.	<i>Holy Saturday</i> Dress a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.