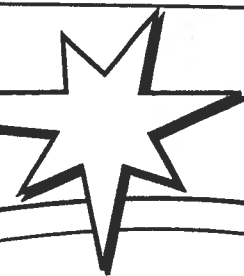


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2014

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

Theresa S. Bowen, DRE



Thoughtful Moments

St. Patrick

St. Patrick was just a teen when he was seized by marauders from his home in Scotland and enslaved in Ireland. He worked as a shepherd for six years before escaping. Back in Scotland, he became a priest but asked to return to the land of his captivity as a missionary. While many legends are told about him, we do know for certain that St. Patrick eventually became bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.



Penance vs. punishment

Don't let children confuse penance with punishment. Punishment is something forced on us when we commit wrongdoing. Penance is an act we offer to God of our own free will out of sorrow when we turn from him.

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights ..."
(Matthew 4:1-2).



Lent is about love

Children know that Lent is when we "give something up." But Lent is also the Church's gift to us to help us grow in love for God by the time Easter morning dawns.

Clear the path for love. During Lent we check to see if we are still on the path Jesus laid out for us. Can others tell by our actions that we are followers

of Christ? Are we honest, caring and giving? Are we spreading God's love? This is the time to clear out whatever is in the way so that we can answer, "yes!"

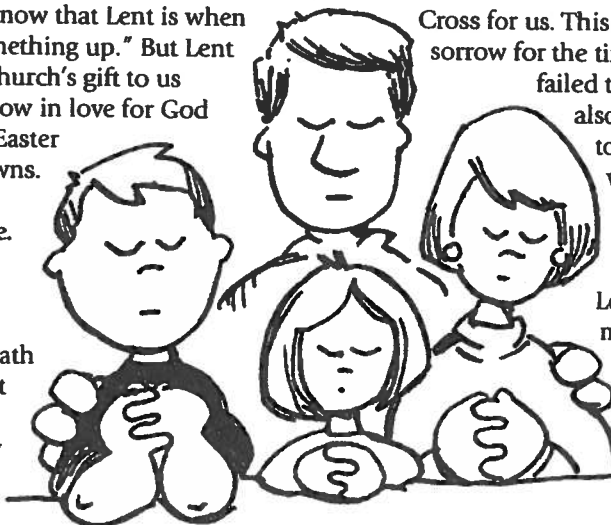
Sacrifice for love. Giving up favorite foods, television shows, and special toys during Lent is a way to join our sacrifice to Jesus' loving sacrifice on the

Cross for us. This shows our sorrow for the times we have failed to love him but also reminds us to give him our whole hearts from now on.

Listen for love. During Lent we can do more prayerful listening. Sharing Scripture with children helps them

to hear God's voice. For example, reading the gospels and meditating on Jesus' words is a sure way to teach children the words of love.

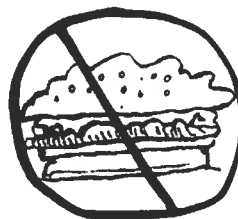
Show love. Next to loving and worshipping God, Jesus really wants us to love each other. Performing acts of kindness during Lent shows our love as well as expresses penance.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics avoid meat on Fridays during Lent?

Catholics who are at least fourteen years old are required to abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent. This practice is meant as a reverential sacrifice in honor of Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday. It is also an outward, penitential



sign of our faith. The Church still recommends abstinence on all Fridays of the year, not just during Lent. In fact, if we don't abstain from meat on non-Lenten Fridays, we're asked to substitute some other form of penance.

Positive products of praise

Scolding doesn't always produce good behavior. Add earned praise to your parenting toolbox during Lent and you may even find your children have better behavior when Easter comes around.

Notice **small improvements**. Pick two or three behaviors you would like your child to improve, set goals, and praise even slight progress. "I only had to call you once to set the table today. Thanks for starting to take responsibility for your chore." Your



child will look at himself in a new way – as someone who is responsible instead of forgetful – and may repeat this behavior hoping for more praise.

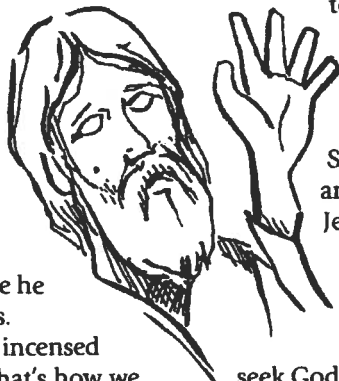
Focus on the **positive**. Instead of "You call this a clean room? What about all stuff on the floor?" try to focus on what was done well. "You made your bed and hung up all your clothes. Now all you have to do is put your books on the shelves and your room will look great." She will feel good about the job already done and be motivated to finish.

Scripture LESSON

John 9:1-41, A blind man saw clearly

Seeing Jesus for who he was, a blind man came to him for healing. Jesus spread a paste made of clay and saliva on the man's eyes. Then he told the man to wash the dirt from his eyes so he could see. Sometimes God allows us to become uncomfortable before he reveals his truth to us.

The Pharisees were incensed by this miracle and that's how we know that they were false shepherds. Seekers of the truth ask questions

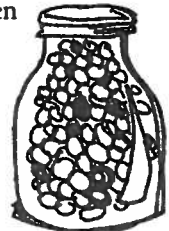


sincerely with a willingness to find God. The Pharisees were so anxious to hold on to their positions that they proclaimed silly conclusions such as, "if this man were from God he wouldn't heal on the Sabbath." In fact, all they did and said led people away from Jesus – a very serious error.

What can a parent do? Encourage children to ask questions so that they can know God better. When we seek God sincerely with a willingness to obey him, he will always lead us to the truth.

Parent TALK

Each year my children give up chocolate, arguing, eating desserts, watching television for Lent - all good choices but things they shouldn't do much of anyway. I thought we would take a different approach to Lent this year.



I put out two large jars, an empty one and one full of jelly beans. Whenever we perform an anonymous good deed or sacrifice during Lent, we can move a jelly bean into the empty jar to fill it up. On Easter we will share the candy as a symbol of the sweet reward of Heaven when we do what Jesus asked.

Then we made tissue paper flowers and put them in a box. Each time we pray a decade of the Rosary during Lent we can put a flower in the vase on the kitchen table. We get to see our spirits "blossom" during the season as we prepare for Easter.

Feasts & Celebrations

March is the month in which we honor St. Joseph (March 19), Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother. He is a model of fatherhood and protector of families.

March 7 - Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (203). Perpetua was a young mother and beautiful noblewoman of Carthage who refused to renounce her faith. Felicity was a slave and expectant mother who also refused to deny her Christianity. Felicity gave birth and then both women were executed three days later.

March 23 - St. Toribio de Mogrovejo (1606). A brilliant scholar, he was a professor of law when chosen to lead the archdiocese of Lima in Peru. He was ordained priest and bishop and worked with intense fervor to strengthen his diocese.


March 25 - The Annunciation (first 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.











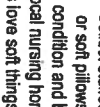

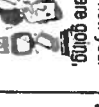
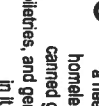
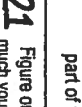


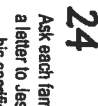





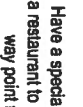
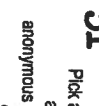


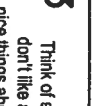
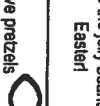




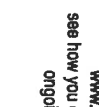

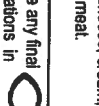
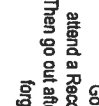


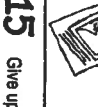



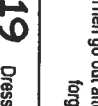
Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
Success Publishing & Media, LLC
Publishers of *Growing in Faith* and *Partners in Faith*
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(Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and New American Bible.)

2014 Family Lent Calendar

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

"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" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>9 After Mass today, explain the Gospel and the homily in terms your children can understand.</p>  | <p>10 Forgive someone who hurt you today.</p>  | <p>11 Invent a new family prayer you can say together each day.</p>  | <p>12 Plan how each of you can show kindness or compassion to someone else tomorrow.</p>  | <p>13 Before eating your family meal together, ask each person to say a spontaneous prayer.</p>  | <p>14 Pray for the people in the world who can't afford to have meat as a regular part of their diets.</p>  | <p>15 Turn off the television, unplug the computers, and take the phone off the hook for a half hour to pray a family Rosary.</p>  |
| <p>16 Before Mass today, pick a saint represented in one of the statues in your church and find out more about him or her during Lent.</p>  | <p>17 Collect stuffed animals or soft pillows in good condition and bring them to a local nursing home. Older folks love soft things to hug.</p>  | <p>18 Ask each person to share a game, toy, or treat with someone else in your home.</p>  | <p>19 Take stock of how your Lenten fasts are going, and refresh your commitment to them.</p>  | <p>20 Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Put canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys in it.</p>  | <p>21 Figure out how much your family saved by not eating meat today, and put that money in the poor box at church.</p>  | <p>22 At bedtime say, "Let's turn our hearts to God and think of him." Sit in silence together for a few minutes.</p>  |
| <p>23 Light a candle in church today for someone who passed away or who needs special help.</p>  | <p>24 Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</p>  | <p>25 Make cookies and bring them to a nearby nursing home.</p>  | <p>26 Encourage each family member to perform an examination of conscience.</p>  | <p>27 Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</p>  | <p>28 Whenever someone does a good deed, put a jelly bean in a jar. Share the jelly beans at Easter!</p>  | <p>29 Ask each person to make a sacrificial offering, such as doing an extra chore without being asked.</p>  |
| <p>30 <i>Laetare Sunday</i> Have a special meal at home or a restaurant to celebrate the halfway point through Lent.</p>  | <p>31 Pick a friend or neighbor and perform an anonymous good deed for him or her.</p>  | <p>1 Encourage all family members to refrain from bickering today.</p>  | <p>2 Say a short prayer before each cross or crucifix in your home.</p>  | <p>3 Think of someone you don't like and say three nice things about him or her.</p>  | <p>4 Serve pretzels as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.</p>  | <p>5 Make simple crosses out of construction paper. Write on them, "He died for me," and post them around your home.</p>  |
| <p>6 After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of faith.</p>  | <p>7 Pray for victims of violence and war in the world.</p>  | <p>8 Send a card to someone who might need cheering today.</p>  | <p>9 Contact Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS, www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help any of their ongoing projects.</p>  | <p>10 Visit someone who is sick and can't leave home.</p>  | <p>11 Place any final donations in the box you set up. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</p>  | <p>12 Go to Confession or attend a Reconciliation Service. Then go out afterwards to celebrate forgiveness.</p>  |
| <p>13 Have a Palm Sunday procession around the house and take turns playing Jesus.</p>  | <p>14 Take a walk outside and look for signs of new life.</p>  | <p>15 Give up a favorite toy or treat just for today.</p>  | <p>16 Get up 15 minutes earlier than usual today and pray as a family.</p>  | <p>17 Wash and dry each other's feet in commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles.</p>  | <p>18 Pray the Stations of the Cross today, and meditate on each one.</p>  | <p>19 Dress a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.</p>  |