

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2010



Thoughtful Moments

Pray for friends

In his Gospel, St. Mark tells of a paralyzed man whose friends showed great determination to bring his needs before Jesus. The house in which Jesus was speaking was too crowded for their friend, so they lowered him through a hole they made in the roof (Mark 2:1-12). In response, Jesus changed the man's life. Amazing things can happen when we place our friends' needs before Jesus.



Discernment

When God offered King Solomon any gift he desired, Solomon said "Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong" (1 Kings 3:9). Pray for the gift of discernment for your children to help them make good behavior and lifestyle choices.

The gift of your child

"The child is God's gift to the family. Each child is created in the special image and likeness of God for greater things – to love and be loved" – Blessed (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta.



Find "the way, the truth, and the life" during Lent

To children, penance means punishment – something they prefer to avoid. Instead of seeing Lent as a journey leading to the joy of Easter, they focus on the discomfort along the way. To help, explain that experiencing Lent helps us to find "the way and the truth and the life" that will lead us to Heaven (John 14:6). Jesus showed us how.

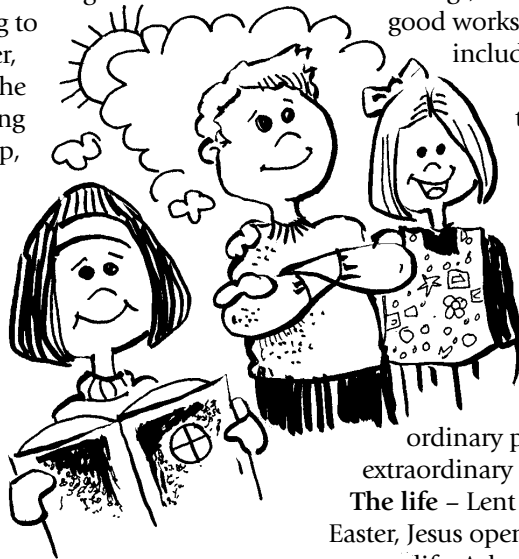
The way – Let children map out their own 40 day journey through Lent. Instead of giving up one thing for the season, choose several, short-term sacrifices. Include days of "fasting" from a favorite food or

video game, days of "abstaining" from a bad habit like biting nails or fighting with siblings, and days of performing good works. Don't forget to include extra prayer, too.

The truth – Find the true meaning of being a follower of Christ by learning from those who dedicated their lives to him. Read stories about the saints or about heroes in the Bible. Talk about how

God works through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.

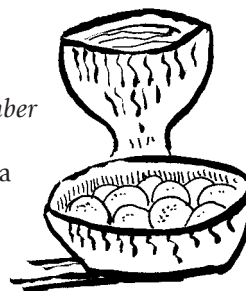
The life – Lent is all about hope. On Easter, Jesus opened up heaven to give us new life. Ask children to commit to continuing habits acquired during Lent that will lead to new life in Christ. For example, continue using only kind words, helping those in need, and praying more.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why are Catholics required to attend Mass every Sunday?

The Church considers attending Mass to be the primary way to obey the Commandment, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8). It is a grave matter of sin if we do not go (unless prevented by illness,



infirmity, or other unavoidable circumstance). At Mass we get the help we need for life. We hear God's word and are nourished by his Body and Blood in the Eucharist. We need this nourishment the way our bodies need food and water.

Fun food facts for Lent

When we think of Lent, we don't usually think of food, but the season has spawned some food traditions that we still enjoy today.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – Held on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the tradition started in the early church when people gave up all meats, cheeses and dairy products during Lent. The night before Lent began, all of these rich foods were used to create a huge pancake feast to clean out pantries.



Pretzels – The origin traces back to the Roman Empire when Christians ate it as the bread of Lent. Since they abstained from many foods, this simple bread was made of water, flour and salt. The pretzel was shaped to represent arms folded across the chest in prayer.

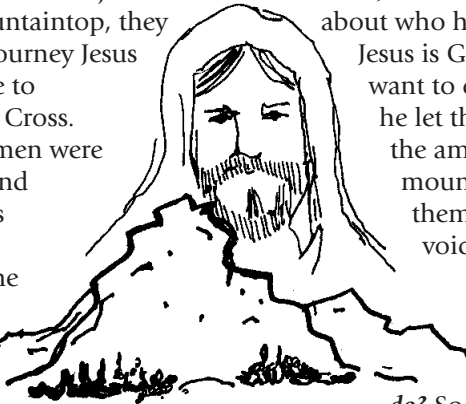
Seder Meal – The Seder is the ritual Jewish Passover meal and many Christian churches now hold them to represent the Last Supper. The meal, consisting of lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, green herbs, haroseth (chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine) and wine can also be made at home.

Scripture LESSON

**Luke 9:28-36,
"Listen to him."**

When Jesus met with Elijah and Moses on the mountaintop, they talked about the journey Jesus was going to make to Jerusalem and the Cross. Perhaps the holy men were offering support and comfort, and Jesus probably felt strengthened by the meeting. Certainly he was bolstered by hearing the voice from Heaven.

Still, he had a difficult road ahead and he realized that despite all of his efforts, some would refuse to listen and would be lost. But God knew that the desire to

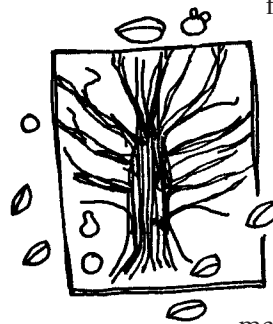


follow Jesus comes from confidence about who he is. If we believe Jesus is God's Son then we will want to do what he says. So he let the disciples witness the amazing meeting on the mountaintop, and he let them hear the heavenly voice proclaim Jesus as God's son and instruct us to "listen to him."

What can a parent do? Society may try to tell us what is "right," but Jesus' words our final authority. Help youngsters test everything they hear against Jesus' words in the Bible and they will not be led astray.

family FUN

Lenten devotions can plant seeds for great spiritual growth that continues after Easter. Try this activity with your family to help. On a large piece of paper, draw a tree with many long branches.



Write the name of a family member on each branch until everyone has at least one branch. Next, cut out enough leaves and fruit like apples, pears, and plums, to fill the tree. Post the tree somewhere prominent in your home

On Ash Wednesday read John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." Then spend your Lenten season bringing the tree to life.

Each time someone does a good deed or makes a special sacrifice, reward him with a leaf or a fruit to add to his branch. At Easter, admire your fruitful tree.

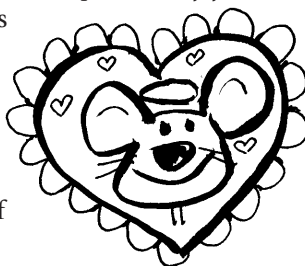
Feasts & Celebrations

February 5 – St. Agatha (251?). Agatha dedicated herself to God and kept this vow despite torture and imprisonment. God sent her a vision of St. Peter to comfort her, heal her, and fill her dungeon with a heavenly light.

February 10 - St. Scholastica (547). Twin sister to St. Benedict, St. Scholastica established a community of religious women five miles south of her brother's monastery. One day, St. Benedict saw a dove rising from his sister's convent and recognized it as her soul rising to Heaven upon her death.

February 17 – Ash Wednesday. Marking the first day of Lent, ashes from the palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance.

February 21 – St. Peter Damian (1072). St. Peter Damian was a devoted and disciplined monk called to service as a bishop for many years and served as advisor to seven popes. He retired to monastic life and died in the care of his brother monks.



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