



Academy of Our Lady of Grace

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Sharing Lent with children



Thoughtful Moments

St. Scholastica

St. Scholastica was the sister of St. Benedict, the founder of the Benedictines. Born in Italy around 480, she founded an order of Benedictine nuns. Once a year, she and her brother visited together. One year, sensing death was near, Scholastica begged her brother to stay, but he refused. She prayed and a terrible thunderstorm resulted, preventing Benedict from leaving. "I asked a favor of you and you refused," she explained. "I asked it of God and he granted it."



Love of God and others

Christian parents, by example, can help their children live the greatest commandments – love of God and neighbor. By creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, and humility flourish, the family places the spiritual above the material aspects of society. Children learn to love as God loves – freely, confidently, and without limits.

"Discipline your children, and they will bring you comfort, and give delight to your soul" (Proverbs 29:17).



Lent can be an opportunity to share the rich traditions of penance and piety we learned as children with our own families. For example:

Meatless Fridays. "Fridays in Lent meant dried-out fish sticks," said Lisa. "We all hated them, which Mom said was the point. She said to offer our suffering to Jesus. I serve spaghetti on Fridays to my own family. It's also a simple meal but it's not fish sticks."

Fasting. "Rather than give up one thing for Lent, we gave up something new each day," Nora said. "At bedtime we would write on a sticky note what we gave up that day and tape it to the refrigerator. It was great fun to try to cover the fridge with sticky notes by Easter."

Family Prayer. Paul remembered, "Lent usually came during basketball season so I would race home from practice to join my family for prayer. We took turns choosing how we prayed that night – the Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Novenas.

Sometimes it was the only time each day we gathered as a family."

Favorite Devotions. "My favorite Lenten devotion is the Stations of the Cross," said Jane. "Our parish hosts a meatless meal every

Friday and we pray the Stations of the Cross right afterwards. I love sharing my favorite devotion with my own family."



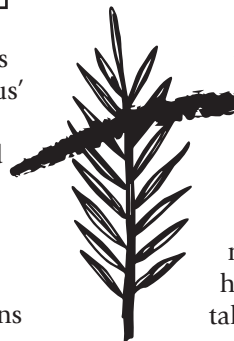
Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics make sacrifices during Lent?

Catholics make sacrifices during Lent to imitate Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert. This was his period of purification and enlightenment before beginning his public ministry. Our sacrifices help us to avoid distractions

that take our attention away from God.

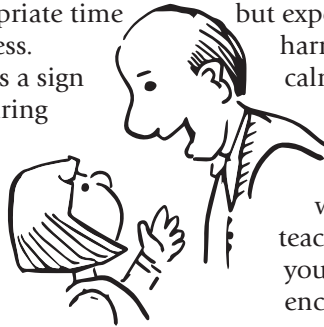
As we fast from favorite foods, luxuries, or activities, the simplicity left in their absence encourages us to focus on God more deeply and identify how we have strayed from the path that will take us to him.



Refresh kindness during Lent

Our youngsters need us to help them become caring, respectful children of God. Lent is an appropriate time to refresh our family commitment to kindness.

Emphasize manners. Common courtesy is a sign of kindness both at home and in public. During Lent, look for opportunities to model and encourage the liberal use of "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "excuse me." Open doors, pull out chairs, wish others a "nice day," and be patient even under trying circumstances.



Stay calm. The stress of daily life can try anyone's temper but experts agree that yelling regularly can create a harmful environment in a home. Instead, speak calmly, lovingly, and ask others to do the same.

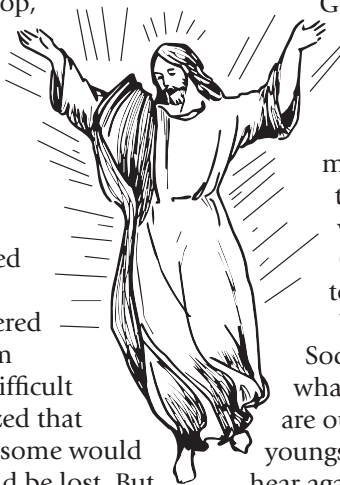
Model gentleness. Next time your child does something wrong – breaks a rule, gets a bad grade, fights with a sibling – don't respond with anger or sarcasm. React gently. Turn it into a teaching opportunity, but do it with gentleness. Treat yourself gently, too. **Bonus:** If you have a pet, encourage and model gentle and respectful care.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 9:2-10, The test of the Transformation

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 are our final authority. Help youngsters test everything they hear against Jesus' words in the Bible and they will not be led astray.

Parent TALK

Two years ago, Tessa declined to make a specific Lenten sacrifice. She didn't have a good reason; she just dug in her heels. I was flummoxed so I asked my pastor what to do.



Fr. Krempa said the more I tried to force her, the more

likely Tessa will develop negative feelings about religion later on. Instead, he suggested I create an environment of penance in the home and let her express her faith in her own way.

That's what we did. Meals were simple, and we avoided luxuries. We served at the local soup kitchen and homeless shelter. Kenny and I put extra change into the poor box and the girls soon caught on.

Tessa liked being able to choose what she did, and was serious about service and self-denial. She got more out of Lent that year than if I had forced her to "give something up."

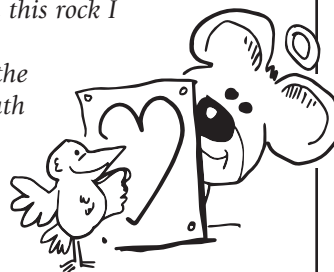
Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 1 – St. Brigid of Ireland (525). Born to an Irish chieftain and an enslaved mother near Dundalk, Ireland, St. Brigid is one of the patron saints of Ireland, and is known as "the Mary of the Gaels." St. Brigid resolved to enter the convent, despite her father's attempts to marry her off. In 470, St. Brigid founded a double-monastery for monks and nuns at Kildare and served as its abbess until her death.

Feb. 14 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt

palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the foreheads as a sign of penance.

Feb. 22 – The Chair of St. Peter. Today, we celebrate St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church. Jesus named St. Peter the first pope, saying, "I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).



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