

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2007



Thoughtful Moments

Lent begins this month

Ash Wednesday is on February 21st and marks the first day of Lent. A favorite Catholic practice is to give up something we enjoy. Be sure to help children pick age-appropriate Lenten observances. That way they're more likely to stick with them through the entire season.

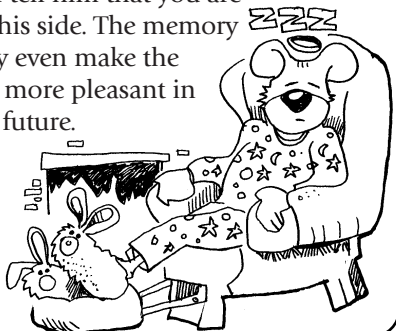


A new view

To break up the routine, spend time together in a different room than you are used to. Have dinner on the floor in one of the bedrooms. Read books together in the kitchen. Crowd into the bathroom for family prayer. A change of environment can bring a smile and give everyone a new perspective.

Take sides

Surprise your child by helping with one of his chores without being asked. Not only do you get to spend time together, the gesture will tell him that you are on his side. The memory may even make the job more pleasant in the future.



Make it cool to be kind

Jesus told us to be kind to each other, but he didn't say it would be easy especially when dealing with people we don't know or who aren't kind in return. Try these ideas for teaching children it's cool to be kind.

Reward kindness. All children love positive attention. When you notice your child being kind to someone, put a star on the refrigerator with his name on it or put a note on her pillow at night.

Read about it. Share a real-life story you read about in a newspaper or magazine that illustrates kind behavior. Read a book together such as "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein

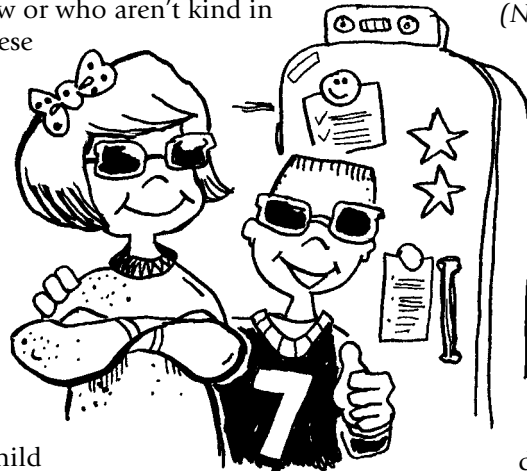
for younger children or "Story of a Soul" by St. Therese of Lisieux for older ones.

(Note: *The Daughters of St. Paul* have great books for kids at www.pauline.org or (800)836-9723.)

Spell it out. Together make a list of kind acts each of you can perform daily. Tack it up where you can all see it and check off the ones you each did during the day. Place

special emphasis on kindness to people who are lonely, left-out or not already friends.

Model it. The best way to teach kindness is to model it. Treat others (including your children) with kindness and chances are good that your children will, too.



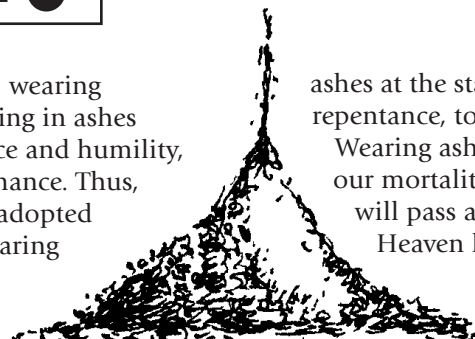
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do we wear ashes on Ash Wednesday?

To ancient Jews, wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes showed repentance and humility, and acted as a penance. Thus, the early Church adopted the practice of wearing

ashes at the start of Lent to show repentance, too.

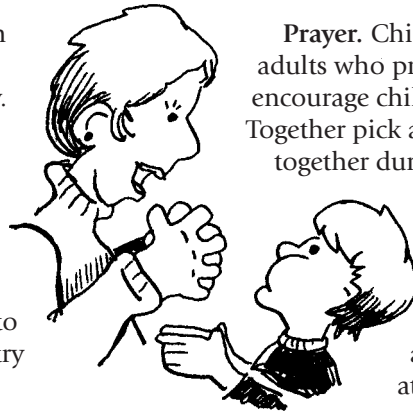
Wearing ashes also reminds us of our mortality. Our time on earth will pass away but our life in Heaven lasts forever.



Help children have a fruitful Lent

Like eating green vegetables, good Lenten practices aren't always pleasant to children but they always help us to grow up healthy. Try these ideas to help children have a fruitful Lent:

Penance. Even young children understand that if we make a mess, we need to clean it up and try not to do it again. That's the basic idea behind Lenten penance. When we disobey God, we need to apologize to him, fix things if we can and try not to do it again.



Prayer. Children with good prayer habits often become adults who pray. Refresh your family prayer habits and encourage children to start and end their day in prayer. Together pick a morning and evening offering and say it together during Lent.

Acts of kindness. Our sins affect others, so offering kindness to others is a good way to compensate. Some good Lenten acts for children include shoveling a neighbor's walk, doing an extra chore without being asked, or showing kindness to another child at school.

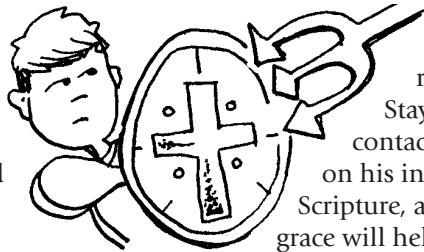
Scripture LESSON

Luke 4:1-14, strength against evil.

Before beginning his public ministry, Jesus spent 40 days in the desert fasting and praying. Knowing that Jesus intended to loosen his evil grip on the world, Satan visited him when he hoped Jesus would be weakest. Satan wanted to turn Jesus away from God, but spending time with God strengthened Jesus and his connection to God.

The combination of prayer, Scripture, and grace helped Jesus resist evil and temptation. For example, in response to each of Satan's temptations, Jesus referred to Scripture – God's word – for

his instructions and acted upon them. When Satan quoted Psalm 91 for his own evil purpose, Jesus knew,



understood, and acted on God's real message. Staying in prayerful contact with God, acting on his instructions in Scripture, and seeking his grace will help us resist evil, too.

What can a parent do? Help your child to identify a couple of temptations that continuously turn her away from God. Brainstorm ways she can resist them. Arming ourselves ahead of time makes us stronger in the face of temptation.

Feasts & Celebrations

February 2 – Presentation of the Lord. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to make the required offering forty days after his birth. They were devout and faithful Jews.

February 3 – St. Blaise (316). Reportedly a physician, he was martyred for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. Priests bless throats on this day because St. Blaise healed many ailments of the throat.

February 5 – St. Agatha (251). St. Agatha kept her vow of chastity, even under torture. To strengthen her in prison, God sent a vision of St. Peter

who comforted her and healed her wounds.

February 21 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance.

February 22 – St. Peter's Chair. We celebrate St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church.



Parent TALK

Since turning eleven, Carol has become rather dramatic and somewhat disrespectful. Her teacher told me that



while her behavior isn't acceptable, it is normal for her age. She suggested following "The Four Cs" for

calm, consistency, consequences, and cuddling.

No matter what Carol says or does, I need to stay calm.

I have to be consistent in enforcing the rules. I explained to Carol that rudeness will not be tolerated and gave examples. (Eye rolling and glowering were at the top of the list.) There are consequences when she "forgets."

Finally, Carol's teacher said that adolescents still need affection, even if they say they don't. So I tell her I love her often and hug her when she lets me.

It's only been a few weeks, but "The Four Cs" has helped cut down on arguments. I hope it continues because I will have another adolescent in about two years.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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