

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

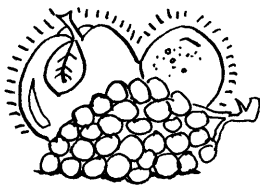
March 2007



Thoughtful Moments

Cultivate the fruits of the Holy Spirit

When we cooperate with God's grace, we produce fruits of that grace:

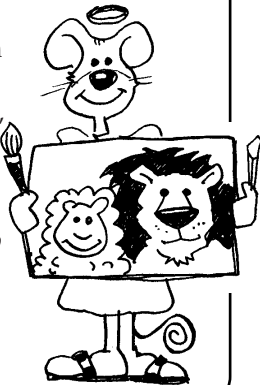


charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity (CCC, 1832). Pick a different "fruit" each month to produce as a family.

When bad things happen

It can be hard to explain to a child why a loving God lets bad things happen. In fact, sometimes adversity can draw us closer to him. Refer to the Old Testament hero Joseph. He was sold into slavery by his own brothers, falsely accused by his master's wife, and unjustly imprisoned for years. Eventually he was released and became one of the most powerful men in Egypt.

Adversity made Joseph's friendship with God strong. When his brothers asked for his forgiveness, he said, *"Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve his present end, the survival of many people."* (Genesis 50:20)



Celebrate the traditions of Lent

Lent is a gift the Church gives us so we can experience the full joy of Easter. Some of the season's traditional practices remind us that prayer, fasting and almsgiving lead to renewal.

Mardi Gras:

Translated as "Fat Tuesday," Mardi Gras is a final celebration before Lent. It began as an attempt to use up rich foods forbidden during Lent and people feasted on such items as pancakes, sausages, and sweets. Have a Mardi Gras party and pancake supper with your family the night before Ash Wednesday.

Meatless Friday: Abstaining from meat on Fridays is a sacrifice as penance

for sin. It is also a sign of solidarity with the hungry all over the world. If your children are too young to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent (all over the age of 14 are required), suggest they abstain from something they enjoy like sweets or dessert.



Stations of the Cross: This is a way to reflect on the events of Jesus' journey to Calvary.

Many churches display images before which families can pray while performing this devotion.

Confession: Jesus created the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help us remember God's unlimited mercy. Take your family to Confession so you can all know God's forgiveness and make a new start on Easter.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe in angels?

The belief in angels is a Catholic doctrine, based on evidence from the Bible. Scripture records instances in which God sent angels to announce his will, to correct, punish, teach, rebuke, console (Psalms 102:20; Matthew 4:11; 13:49; 26:53).



The Church teaches that angels are bodiless creatures who possess an intelligence and free will beyond that of the human. The word "angel" comes from the Greek word, "angelos," or messenger because they bring God's power and message to Earth.

Easy ways to find more family time

With so many demands on our time, it can be difficult for us to get the whole family together for quality time.

Yet there is nothing more important that we can do for our children. Try these ideas for finding more family time:

Pick one event on your weekly schedule that you can do without and replace it with family time.

Pick a kids' television show or video game that you secretly like and share it regularly with your child.

Brush your teeth together at night.

Work on the family checkbook or work from your job at the same time and in the same room with your children as they do homework.

Get everyone up 15 minutes earlier and have breakfast as a family.

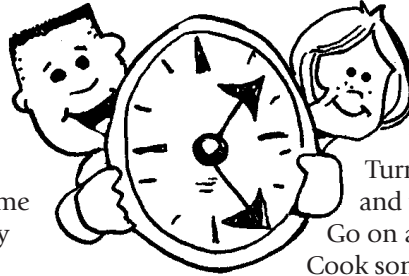
Wash dinner dishes or do another chore together.

Turn off the TV, computers, iPods, and video games, and take a walk.

Go on a school field trip with each of your children.

Cook something together. (Make salad if you can't cook.)

Go to Mass as a family.

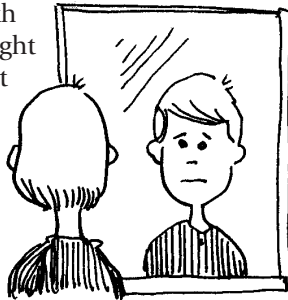


Scripture LESSON

John 8:1-11; the trap.

Jesus had defeated the Jewish leaders' attempts to entrap him and they went home to nurse their grudges. They returned with another test: a woman caught in the act of adultery. What would Jesus do?

If Jesus declared that she should be put to death, he would violate Roman law forbidding the Jews to administer capital punishment. If he freed her, he would violate Jewish law. As is often the case with God, Jesus did something unpredictable – he encouraged the accusers to judge themselves before judging her.



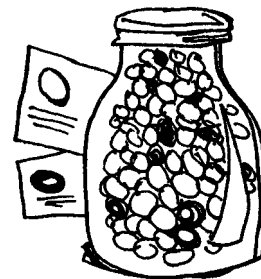
They left in shame.

What can a parent do? Children can quickly tell when a peer has done something wrong but may miss their own faults or mistakes. As Catholic parents, we can teach our children to examine their own behavior for areas that can be improved before we point out the misdeeds of others. And we can help them to experience often

the healing grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These are great opportunities to remind our children (and ourselves) of God's infinite mercy and forgiving heart.

Parent TALK

Thanks to a new tradition we started last year, my family thinks Lent is fun.



I started with jelly beans – our favorite Easter candy – and separated them by color into baggies. Then I taped a bean of each color to an

index card and wrote what it represented.

Red meant sacrifice. Green was good deeds. Yellow was acts of kindness. Blue was stewardship (doing chores, turning out lights, etc.). Purple meant asking for forgiveness and pink meant offering forgiveness. White stood for God's grace which isn't earned.

Every time we performed a "jelly bean act," we put the colored bean into a jar with our name on it.

On Easter, I added white jelly beans to fill the jars to the top to symbolize the addition of God's grace where we are lacking. The only problem was that we were so proud of our full jars, nobody wanted to eat the jelly beans.

Feasts & Celebrations

March is the month in which we honor St. Joseph, Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother.

March 4 – St. Casimir (1483). Born a prince of Poland, St. Casimir was endowed with a very strong conscience by a great teacher, John Dlugosz. When his father sent him to take over Hungary, fifteen-year-old Casimir assessed the odds against winning the war and turned back out of concern for his troops. He never went to war again.

March 17 – St. Patrick (493). Born

in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.

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



Our Mission

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