

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2008



Thoughtful Moments



Ancient ashes

To ancient Jews, wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes showed repentance and humility, and acted as a penance. The early Church adopted the practice of wearing ashes at the start of Lent to show repentance, too.

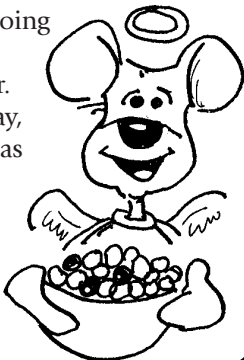
Welcome home

The scribes and the Pharisees were indignant when Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners into his company. They didn't approve of Jesus befriending such people. In response, Jesus told the famous story of the prodigal son.

Remind children that no matter what we have done to damage our friendship with God, he is always ready to joyfully welcome us back.

Sweet sacrifice

Whenever someone in your family does a good deed or avoids doing a bad one, put a jellybean in a jar. On Easter Sunday, share the candy as a celebration of Jesus' saving sacrifice – and your own sacrifices, too.



Children can spread the Gospel, too.

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus wants all Christians – even children – to live good lives, love others, and tell others about him and his love. Children can spread the Gospel in ways such as these:

Do good things. The most effective way to spread the Gospel is to live its messages. That means choosing to be kind, honest, hardworking, and a good sport no matter how everyone else around us behaves. This isn't easy for children or grown-ups, but it's where we all must start.

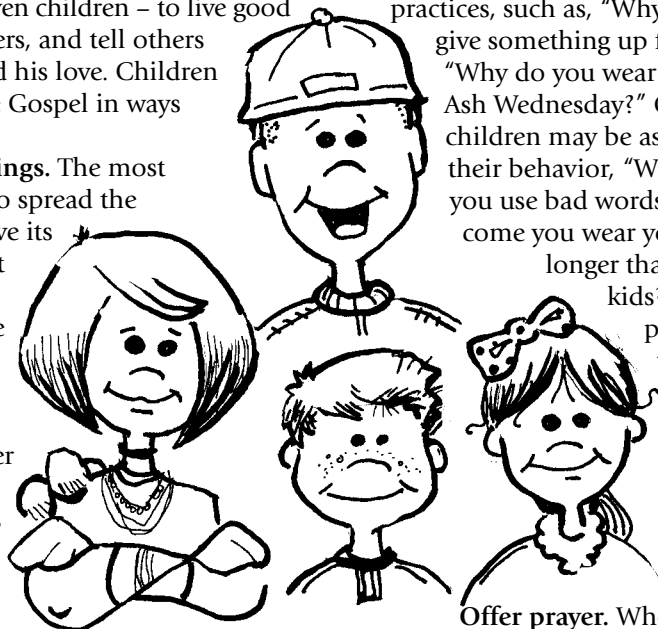
Answer questions. It's not always easy to start conversations about faith, but even children can be ready to

answer questions when someone asks. Younger children may be asked about practices, such as, "Why do you

give something up for Lent?" "Why do you wear ashes on Ash Wednesday?" Older children may be asked about their behavior, "Why don't you use bad words" or "How come you wear your skirts

longer than other kids?" Being prepared with answers may make children more confident to share.

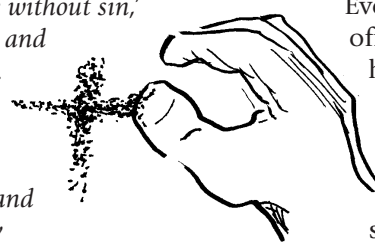
Offer prayer. When a friend's grandparent or relative dies, your child can offer to pray for the family. Or, talking about what Jesus said about Heaven and how wonderful it is could be very comforting.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics observe Lent?

"If we say, 'We are without sin,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (1 John 1:8-9).



Even Catholics sin. The Church offers us the season of Lent to help us perform community penance and personal acts of self-denial. The Church's hope for us is to overcome the tendency to sin and be "cleansed from every wrongdoing."

Help children unwrap the gift of Lent

The Catholic practice of giving something up for Lent – abstaining from a favorite food or activity – develops self-control, serves as penance for sin, and can lead to a greater appreciation of our blessings. Even young children can benefit from a Lenten sacrifice. Choosing one that's too hard, however, turns Lent from a gift into a chore. Try these ideas to help choose a rewarding sacrifice:

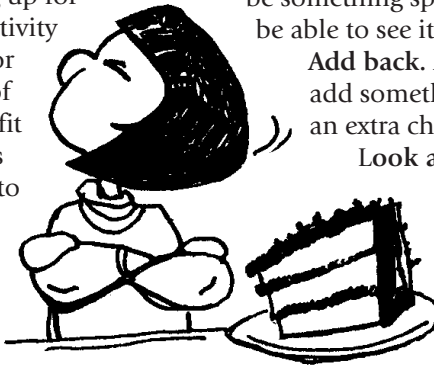
Give up something valuable. This can be a favorite dessert, game, or activity.

Make it reasonable. The sacrifice should

be something specific and age appropriate so that she will be able to see it through.

Add back. An alternative to giving something up is to add something in. Try adding more prayer time or do an extra chore.

Look at luxuries. Try encouraging your youngster to pick something that may not be good for her anyway. For example, sweets, soft drinks, or television watching during the week, make healthy choices for Lenten abstinence. She may even decide to do without it when Lent is over.



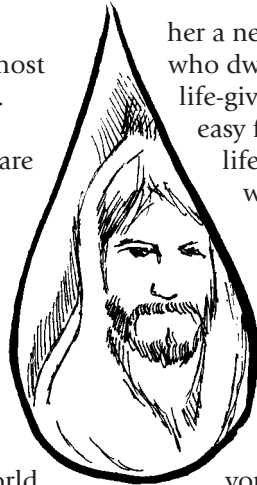
Scripture LESSON

John 4:5-42, Life-giving water

Hatred between Jews and Samaritans was so fierce that most Jews avoided travel in Samaria. They certainly didn't speak to Samaritans and tried not to share resources, like water wells, if possible. So Jesus' friendly request for a drink from a Samaritan woman shocked her.

When he had her attention, he revealed his inspired knowledge of who she was. She suspected he was the Messiah, and Jesus confirmed his identity as Savior of the world.

Jesus used something from the woman's every day experience to show



her a new way of life. To people who dwell in the desert, water is a life-giving substance. Thus it was easy for her to understand the life-giving nature of the living water Jesus offered her.

What can a parent do?

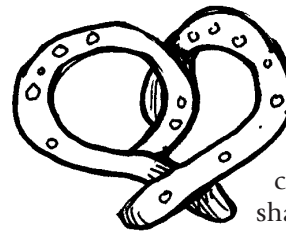
Fill a pitcher of water and place it on your family's dinner table. As you fill each person's glass, talk about the outpouring of God's love in your life and how it is as vital to

your spiritual life as the water in your glass is to your physical life.

family FUN

Lenten Pretzels

Early Christians observed a very strict fast during Lent.



They couldn't have butter, cheese, eggs, meat, milk, or cream. So they created a bread shaped like a

person's arms crossed in prayer (a popular prayer posture at the time) to remind them to pray and sacrifice during Lent. This bread eventually became known as the pretzel.

Recipe: Dissolve a package of dry yeast into 1 1/2 cups of warm water. Add one teaspoon of salt, and one teaspoon of sugar. Blend in two cups of whole wheat flour and two cups of enriched flour.

Knead the dough until smooth and cut into small pieces. Roll the pieces into ropes and twist into a pretzel shape. Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet, brush with a beaten egg and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake at 425° for 12-15 minutes.

Feasts & Celebrations

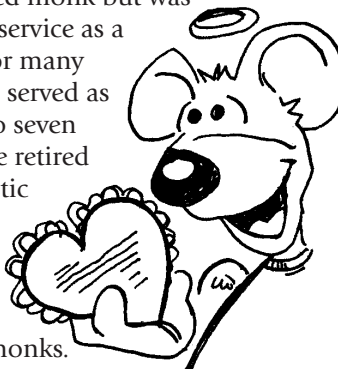
Lent begins this month (Feb. 6th is Ash Wednesday). One observance is to pray before the Stations of the Cross in church and meditate on Jesus' walk to Calvary.

Feb. 2 – The Presentation of the Lord. In accordance with the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to make the required offering forty days after his birth. They were faithful observers of the law of the Lord.

Feb. 3 – St. Blaise (316). He was martyred for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. Priests usually bless

throats on this day because St. Blaise, reportedly a physician, healed many ailments of the throat.

Feb. 21 – St. Peter Damian (1072). Childhood deprivation may have created a desire for an austere life. St. Peter Damian became a devoted and disciplined monk but was 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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