

Journeying through Lent as a family



Lent is the 40-day season of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. It begins on Ash Wednesday which falls on March 1st this year. Ashes are placed on our forehead in the shape of a cross as a sign of our humility and contrition. The ashes come from the palms that were blessed on Palm Sunday the year before.

Lent is a time of purification and enlightenment. During this time, we use the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to prepare ourselves. This year, try picking one thing in each of these three areas as a family and do it intentionally.

Prayer

Ask your family: What is one way we can develop our relationship with Jesus through prayer this Lent?

The aim of the Lenten practice of prayer is to get closer to Jesus. One way you can do this is by taking 15 minutes and listen to Jesus talk to you through the gospels. You can even get an audio version of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV) and listen to it together as a family.

Fasting

The Church calls us to fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, and on Good Friday, the first day of the Triduum. For these two days, fasting involves eating two small meals and one medium size meal that is no bigger than the two small meals combined. Abstinence means that we do not eat meat. Fasting throughout the 40 days of Lent is all about conforming our hearts to Jesus.

Ask your family: What kind of fast do we need to have in our life? What is something that is keeping us from being present to each other or others?

Your fast doesn't have to involve food. You might choose to fast from Netflix, Facebook, or from checking your phone constantly.

Almsgiving

Ask your family: How can we let God use us in this time to bless others?

Almsgiving can involve giving of your time, talent, or treasure. For example, you could decide to share your time by volunteering as a family. You may wish to share your musical talents by giving the gift of music to the elderly. If you decide to give money, do it consistently throughout the season of Lent. (It is called a Lenten practice because it is meant to be intentionally done throughout the 40 days.) When you are doing one of these things, you are taking time to bless someone else.

Family friendly 2017- Solidarity Calendar from Development and Peace:

<https://www.devp.org/en/lentcalendar-2017>