



# *Lent @Home*

## *Welcome to @Home*

We are happy to provide you with ***Lent @Home*** to read, share, discuss, and pray in your household beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through Holy Week. We hope this resource helps you to celebrate the Lenten season at home.

We encourage you to use this kit with the members of your household or friends! Enjoy!

## *Parish Lenten Schedule*

(Insert your parish's Lenten schedule of liturgies, events, and programs.)

## *A Time for Fasting, Praying, Almsgiving*

*(Matthew 6:1-8)*

*When you do good deeds, don't try to show off. If you do, you won't get a reward from your Father in heaven.*

*When you give to the poor, don't blow a loud horn. That's what show-offs do in the meeting places and on the street corners, because they are always looking for praise. I can assure you that they already have their reward.*

*When you give to the poor, don't let anyone know about it. Then your gift will be given in secret. Your Father knows what is done in secret, and he will reward you.*

*When you pray, don't be like those show-offs who love to stand up and pray in the meeting places and on the street corners. They do this just to look good. I can assure you that they already have their reward.*

*When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private, and he will reward you.*

*When you pray, don't talk on and on as people do who don't know God. They think God likes to hear long prayers. Don't be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask.*

*You should pray like this:*

*Our Father in heaven, help us to honor your name.*

*Come and set up your kingdom,  
so that everyone on earth will obey you,  
as you are obeyed in heaven.*

*Give us our food for today.*

*Forgive us for doing wrong,  
as we forgive others.*

*Keep us from being tempted  
and protect us from evil.*

*If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

*When you go without eating, don't try to look gloomy as those show-offs do when they go without eating. I can assure you that they already have their reward. Instead, comb your hair and wash your face. Then others won't know that you are going without eating. But your Father sees what is done in private, and he will reward you.*

# *Lent @Home—Learning Activity*

## *A Season of Sacrifice*

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n. 1. the act of offering something to God; 2. the act of giving up something highly valued for the sake of something or someone else of high value. "She sacrificed her free time to help him with his work. He gave his lunch to the man on the street corner."

Sacrifice needs to be alive and well in family life. Everyday acts of sacrifice—parent to child, husband to wife, sibling to sibling—show how much we love and care for each other. Sacrifice focused on our relationship with God needs to be a priority too.

Talk about sacrifice in your household.

- ▶ What are the ways members of our family make sacrifices for each other? Why do we make these sacrifices?
- ▶ What sacrifices can we make to grow closer to God?
- ▶ What sort of sacrifice does God want us to make for others—here at home, in our neighborhood, in our world?

Create a list of ways your family wants to practice sacrifice, such as...

- ▶ Think of each other before ourselves.
- ▶ Sometimes be last instead of first.
- ▶ Find ways to use some family time to help others.
- ▶ Live with less "stuff" so that others may have the essentials.

Using the list of ways your family wants to practice sacrifice, create goals for your family, such as...

- ▶ We will think of each others' feelings and needs, and sometimes be willing to give up what we want freely and happily.
- ▶ We will not always have to be first—to choose the seat in the car, to use the computer, to have that piece of homemade pie. Sometimes we will be last.
- ▶ We will investigate service projects in our community and choose one to do together in the next several months.
- ▶ We will forego buying the latest computer game, (or clothes fashion, or car) so that some of our resources (i.e., money) can go towards those who need life's basic necessities.

Talk about Jesus and sacrifice.

- ▶ How was he a model of what it means to sacrifice?
- ▶ For whom did he sacrifice?

Read about Jesus' sacrifice in Scripture.

- ▶ Jesus gives freely without hope of reward and gives freely without holding back. He is willing to sacrifice fully. Read Matthew 27:45-49.

### *Family Prayer for Sacrifice*

Lord of Life, you gave your life so that we might live. Help us to experience the joy of sacrifice – of giving. May we look for every opportunity to give of our time, our talents, our money, our possessions, our thanks, compliments, healing words, hugs, smiles, a helping hand, or a listening ear. Help us to give out of full hearts, and even nearly empty hearts if the need be. Bless us, that our sacrifices day to day may bring us and others closer to you. We pray this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

# *Lent @Home—Activity*

## *Fasting and Feasting—Preparing for Easter*

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Make more room for God this Lent by choosing **not** to do some things (fasting) and by choosing to **do** other things (feasting).

### *Fasting*

Fasting is an integral part of Lent. Traditionally it has included reducing the amount of food we eat and abstaining from meat. We fast to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger, our need for God. The purpose of fasting is to turn our attention to both God and others. Things to fast from...

- ◆ watching television
- ◆ cussing or using foul language
- ◆ buying new things: clothes, music, magazines, jewelry
- ◆ snack or junk foods
- ◆ spending money on entertainment
- ◆ being angry at other people
- ◆ holding resentments
- ◆ gossiping
- ◆ being dishonest

### *Feasting*

The dictionary defines a feast as “something that gives unusual or abundant pleasure.” Jesus tells us what gives us the most real and lasting joy: it is sharing ourselves in love for others, for our friends, our family, and also for our neighbors in need. During Lent, we pay attention to feasting on joy, compassion, service, and hope so that we might grow in faith all year long. Things to feast on...

- ◆ prayer
- ◆ acts of kindness to others
- ◆ forgiveness
- ◆ participating at Church
- ◆ participating in liturgy and Eucharist
- ◆ giving our time in service
- ◆ participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- ◆ acts of service and charity
- ◆ giving money or food/clothing to people who are hungry or in need

### *Family Lenten Resolutions*

Give concrete expression to Lenten resolutions by making a “Lenten Chain.” Pass out strips of white paper, approximately one by six inches in size, two to each person. Discuss what the family can do *as a family* to renew itself (see ideas below). Decide on five items for the first week and staple them into a Lenten chain. Each family member decides on a *personal* pledge of renewal and adds that to the chain, which is then draped around the centerpiece. Repeat this ritual each week, adding links to the chain so that by Good Friday the chain has grown to 40+ links. (Instead of the chain, some families make a large cross and tape pledges to it. Others fashion a Lenten calendar). Here is a sampling of the kind of pledges for family and personal renewal that might appear on a Lenten chain:

- ❖ Examine and adjust eating patterns, e.g., giving up a certain food or drink one day a week, fasting.
- ❖ Dedicate time to service involvement during Lent, e.g., working at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, helping people in your neighborhood such as the elderly.
- ❖ Increase sacramental involvement, e.g., go to Mass as a family once during the week, participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation through individual confession or a parish Reconciliation Service.
- ❖ Participate as a family in the Stations of the Cross in the parish.
- ❖ Find time to read the Bible together as a family for fifteen minutes daily; read one spiritual book privately during Lent; meditate fifteen minutes a day.
- ❖ Choose one night of the week to “fast” from watching TV – spend that time saying a special prayer, helping a family member or reading a verse from the Bible.
- ❖ Choose a snack food that you usually purchase that you could give-up during Lent – set aside the money you would have spent to donate to a special charity.

# *Lent @Home—Prayer*

## *Lenten Table Prayers*

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*Family members gather around the family table. Place your Home Cross or other Lenten symbol in the center of the table.*

### *Blessing for the Family Meal*

Bless us, Lord, and the food we are about to eat. May our love for one another, and the food we share, strengthen us to share your love with others. Amen.

#### **Week One – Lord of Life**

Blessed are you, Lord of Life.  
You take on our humanity and call us to be all  
we can.  
Give us the courage we need to change our lives.  
To live, like Jesus for others.  
Help us grow daily in our commitment and  
caring.  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.

#### **Week Two – Lord of Growth**

Blessed are you, Lord of Growth  
You grew up, like us, in a family  
Where love and support where daily needs.  
Help us to share the best of ourselves with our  
family,  
To affirm each other's growth and cherish each  
other's gifts.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother,  
Amen!  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.

#### **Week Three – Lord of Hospitality**

Blessed are you, Lord of Hospitality.  
You welcome all with open arms.  
No one is a stranger to your love and concern.  
Remove the fear and hesitation that keep us  
From moving beyond the known and  
comfortable.  
Help us rejoice in the personal and cultural  
differences  
That proclaim your multi-hued love.  
Draw all people together in praise of the God  
who is One.  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.

#### **Week Four – Lord of Compassion**

Blessed are you, Lord of Compassion.  
You feel the pain of those in need  
And take their suffering upon yourself.  
Help us to identify more with those in need,  
In our neighborhoods and throughout the world,  
And to do our part to ease the burdens they bear.  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.

#### **Week Five – Lord of Healing**

Blessed are you, Lord of Healing.  
You remove the pain of separation and want,  
And heal us of all our hurts.  
Help us to be for others,  
In our family and world,  
The healing and hopeful presence  
That Jesus is for us. Amen.  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.

#### **Holy Week – Lord of Faithfulness**

Blessed are you, Lord of Faithfulness.  
Through your relationship to the Father you  
show  
Us what it means to be faithful to our  
commitments  
And our relationships.  
Help us to be faithful to our values and beliefs,  
And to reach out to you in the forgotten and  
downtrodden.  
*All:* Lord, hear us and keep us in your love.