

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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Bits and Pieces from Here and There

The deep purple color that fills the Church during Lent symbolizes Christ's suffering and death, but because purple is also the color of royalty it also foreshadows Christ's kingship and resurrection. The color of the Easter season is white symbolizing Jesus' victory over death, not purity as many believe.

"Holy Week is the best week of the year!! I call it that because it is just FILLED with God's grace. Recall that grace means God's free gift. Grace doesn't come from our efforts however noble; grace is not "merited" by the good deeds we do. Grace simply flows out of His love for you!"

*Archbishop Emeritus
James Patrick Keleher*



How to "Deepen Your Holy Week"

Holy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus gave us the gift of himself in the Eucharist. **Good Friday** recalls the crucifixion and death of Jesus. **Holy Saturday** is a day of waiting as we prepare our hearts and homes for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Easter Sunday** celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus.

It is not always easy for children to understand the profound mysteries of faith, but it is possible to lay spiritual foundation so that they will grow in understanding throughout the years. Here are some practical ways to help make Holy Week meaningful for the whole family.

Celebrate Palm Sunday by making crosses out of palms.

Before coloring Easter eggs, let

children write messages on the eggs in crayon that celebrate the true meaning of Easter. For example, "Christ is risen," "Alleluia," "Jesus loves us."

Emphasize the importance of service on Holy Thursday by helping someone in need.

Acknowledge the sadness of Good Friday by encouraging kids to write letters or draw pictures for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

If your parish is having a blessing of Easter foods on Holy Saturday, let your children pack the basket with butter, eggs, sweet breads and other items your family will enjoy on Easter Sunday.

Bring your children to church on Holy Saturday to help decorate for the Easter liturgies. *Adapted from OSV "Take Out"*

Recommended Reading: *Saints for Communities Collection* by Barb Yoffie
Liguori Publications

Saints are real-life heroes of faith who inspire us by their virtues to become more like Christ. In the *Saints and Me!* series, these beautifully illustrated early-reader books tell the real stories of saints that come to life and connect with today's children aged 3 to 8. The everyday lives of the saints and their holy ways are engagingly introduced for curious young children. The saint's story is filled with details to which young children can relate.

Lively, full-color illustrations on every page match the text, aiding emerging readers with the text and story sequence. Each book is biographical, but also includes a virtue, the saint's feast day, and other details about the saint.

The *Saints for Communities Collection* includes a book for each of the 6 saints: Joan of Arc, John Baptist de la Salle, Matthew the Apostle, Cecilia, Thomas the Apostle, and Michael the Archangel.

Families—show appreciation (for each other)

**Show
appreciation
(for each other)
clearly
and
regularly.**

Appreciation Basket

Fill a basket full of notes of appreciation. These might also include scripture quotes. Put the basket in a central place in your house. Each day designate a different member of the family to pull one note out and read it aloud. Carry that note of appreciation with you that day. Put into practice the quote's mission of appreciation! You can re-read it at mealtime or maybe just before bed.

Notes

Write a brief "Thank You" note once a week to someone for a kind word or deed they did. Try to leave it for them so that they find it as a surprise. Or, leave surprise sticky notes of appreciation on the TV or bathroom mirror.



Points to Ponder

A grateful person is simply one who does not take anything for granted.

Affection

Welcome family members into the house with a warm "Hello!" and a hug. Give hugs before going to bed.

One-A-Day

Commit to affirming one person each day with a note or a hug. Does it make you feel better, too?

Appreciation Non-Verbals

Smiles. Sparkle in your eye. A family hug. Pat on the back.

Random Acts of Kindness

Do someone's chore for them as a surprise.

Family: Church of the Home

CHUNKY MONKEY PANCAKES

Some of us love banana pancakes and others love chocolate chip pancakes. Here is a yummy recipe to make us all happy! Prepare your favorite pancake batter and pancakes. Serve with extra bananas, chocolate chips, and favorite syrup or topping.



Helping Your Small Children with Lent

Ash Wednesday is March 1. As parents of young children know, Lent can seem so “heavy” in comparison to the anticipation and excitement of preparing for Christmas. What can this season of conversion and preparation “to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed” mean for little children?

For many of us growing up, Lent meant “giving up candy.” That wasn’t a bad way to introduce us to the notion of self-discipline, but simply giving up something for Lent, without a whole spirituality that children can enter into, can leave kids dreading Lent more than looking forward to it.

If Lent makes its way into our home and into our conversations and practices that children can see, they will naturally grow up in a culture that embraces Lent as a season of grace.

Symbols are very important. Children need a context. They need to explore and understand what we just take for granted, and sometimes forget. When we put something in a central place in our home, and call attention to it, it naturally leads children to ask “why” it is there and what it means. In their curiosity, they want to know what’s changed and what difference it makes for them.

Telling stories helps it all “fit together” for children, and for us. Lent is a time in which we want to be renewed in our baptism. That’s why it is nice to find

the children’s baptismal candles or baptismal garments. Perhaps we have photos of their baptism or even a video of it.

The most important part of Lent can be how children are helped to make this a time to practice being more loving. Children are naturally loving, but they can get into really bad habits of fighting with brothers and sisters or being disobedient or even talking back. Lent is a great time to build in some family practices, which can also be an outstanding renewal for parents and adults in the family. Children will notice, if part of my Lenten journey is to choose to fast from my crabby-ness or busy-ness and to spend more time with them. They will notice, if we set the example of choosing to compliment others in the family more, highlighting the good things I notice in them. If our family Lenten practice is to focus on being nicer, kinder and more generous in helping each other, the children will take part in it. And, if we fail on a given day, we can quickly apologize and ask forgiveness and model penitential and reconciling behavior that is central to Lent.

In this spirit, every family can do something to make Lent special for the youngest of children.

Adapted from onlineministries.creighton.edu

“You, mother, father!
Teach your children how
to pray, how to make
the sign of
the cross!”
—Pope Francis



Praise your Child Often...

Mark Twain once said, “I can live two months on one good compliment!” Make sure that the positive things you say to your child outnumber the negative things by three to one. Always look for ways to praise your child’s skills, talents, and abilities. When you compliment your child, try to be very specific and concrete. For instance, “You did a great job of cleaning your room. I especially like the way you made your bed and arranged your clothes and your toys.”

Finally, always praise your child for being who he is, not just for what he can do.

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**Catholic Parent
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Place your parish logo,
and/or contact person
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Parents' Prayer

Most loving Father, the example of parenthood,
You have entrusted our children to us to bring them up for You
and prepare them for everlasting life.

Assist us with Your grace, that we may fulfill this sacred duty
with competence and love.

Teach what to give and what to withhold. Show us when to reprove,
when to praise and when to be silent.

Make us gentle and considerate, yet firm and watchful.

Keep us from the weakness of indulgence and the excess of severity.

Give us the courage to be disliked sometimes by our children,
when we must do necessary things which are displeasing in their eyes.

Give us the imagination to enter their world
in order to understand and guide them.

Grant us all the virtues we need to lead them by word and example
in the ways of wisdom and piety.

One day, with them, may we enter in the joys of our true and lasting home
with You in heaven. Amen.