



St. Vincent de Paul Parish
Mount Vernon, Ohio



Thoughtful Moments

Love like God

God allows us to make choices. The reward for choosing to obey him is Heaven. The consequence of disobeying is punishment. Parents show God's love when they allow children to experience the consequences of their choices. *"For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives"* (Hebrews 12:6).

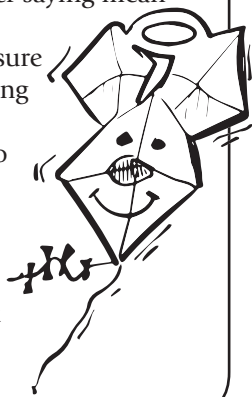
We're not alone

Although parenting can be tough, we don't have to go it alone. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths"* (Proverbs 3:5).



Gossip

Teach children the harmful nature of gossip. Gossip is talking about other people, either saying mean things, spreading stories you're not sure are true, or repeating information you have been asked to keep private. No one has a right to know someone else's business. If in doubt, don't let it out.



Enjoy the challenge of Lent

"Enjoy" isn't normally a word we associate with Lent, but its rich traditions help us connect with God's saving love and prepare us for the joy of Easter.

Helping children to experience God's love during Lent can be penitential and enjoyable when it involves activities bringing families together around penance, almsgiving, and prayer.

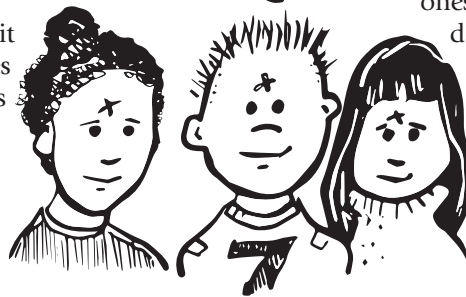
Ashes: The ashes we wear show repentance for our sins and help children understand we are all sinners dependent upon God's grace. Challenge children to keep their ashes on all day as an external witness to their hope that Christ's sacrifice will lead us to Heaven.

Almsgiving box: Set up a box and take turns putting an item from the

pantry into it each day. At the end of Lent, take the box to a needy family, a soup kitchen, or your local food pantry.

Add prayer: Pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. If this feels overwhelming with young ones, try just one decade a day. Or, consider praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet together. This is shorter than a Rosary and helps youngsters focus on God's mercy and forgiveness.

Meatless Fridays: Catholics are to avoid eating meat on Fridays - an ancient tradition going back to the early Church. Plan meatless Friday family meals and invite friends to join you to reinforce the practice of penance.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics eat fish on Fridays during Lent?

The Church requires Catholics to abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent, but permits eating fish. One explanation is that people didn't used to consider fish as meat. Another theory is fish was originally considered a "poor



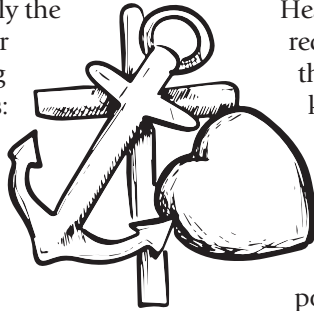
man's" meal; richer meats were for feasting. During Lent, we try to detach from earthly pleasures to prepare our hearts for eternal joys. We give up meat on a Friday because it was on a Friday that Jesus gave everything for us.

Form three essential virtues during Lent

Lent is the perfect time to grow virtues, especially the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help children grow in these three essential virtues:

Faith: Faith enables us to believe in God and connect with Him. To help children activate this virtue, teach them to pray beyond just the traditional Catholic prayers. Encourage them to talk to God like their best friend. He loves them and is always listening.

Hope: Hope is the gift of looking forward to God and



Heaven. It helps us to be joyful, even as we wait to receive the good for which we are hoping. Explain that making sacrifices during Lent reminds us to keep our eyes on the joys of Heaven that await us if we spend our lives on Earth living as God asks.

Charity: Almsgiving is love in action. Whether it's doing our chores, cleaning up after ourselves, or donating our excess possessions, almsgiving helps children grow in compassion, generosity, and patience.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32, He will always welcome us home

The scribes and the Pharisees were furious when Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners into his company. They didn't approve of Jesus befriending such people, especially when he was harsh with the scribes and Pharisees. In response, Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son.

The younger son asked his father for his share in the family estate and squandered it in a country far from home. With his money gone and his situation desperate, he returned to his father, humbled, and asked for mercy. Overjoyed by his son's return, the father



gave him a princely reception. This is the spirit in which God receives us when we come home to him.

Convinced he was the "good" son, however, the older brother resented the warm welcome his younger brother got. Like the Pharisees and scribes, he was miffed at the prospect of sinners becoming acceptable to God.

What can a parent do? Help your child to understand that no matter what we have done, we can always come home to God. He is always waiting to joyfully welcome us back.

Feasts & Celebrations

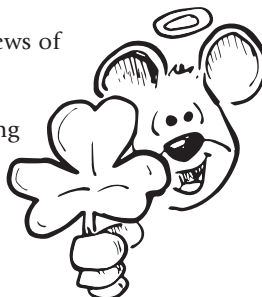
March 1 – St. David of Wales (c. 600). St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into Welsh nobility, but instead chose to become a priest. He was later consecrated a bishop. He is best known for founding an ascetic monastery and ridding the area of the Pelagian heresy.

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 24 – St. Margaret Clitherow (1586). St. Margaret Clitherow converted to Catholicism soon after she married, at a time when Catholicism was

illegal in England. St. Margaret continued to practice her faith, even hiding priests in her house so they could say Mass. Her peaceful, joyful attitude during her imprisonment, trial, and execution inspired those around her.

March 25 – The Annunciation of the Lord (1st century). The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the Mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



Parent TALK

At first we appreciated the expensive game system my parents bought the children. They thought it was fun during quarantine. Then we noticed



the change in their behavior, especially twelve year old Jude. When he wasn't playing, he was rushing to get back to playing.

I limited gaming to two hours on weekends and Jude had a fit. When I found that he snuck down at 1:00am to play, I realized we had a problem. The next day, I took the whole system to a consignment store. Jude went ballistic when he found out. He cried, threatened to run away, and locked himself in his room refusing to speak to anyone.

After a few days, he started interacting again. He looked calmer, more relaxed. At dinner, Jude told us that he was relieved not to be playing video games anymore. It was painful, but I know we did the right thing.

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