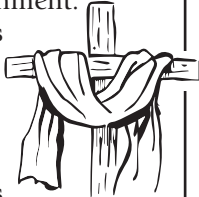




## Thoughtful Moments

### Penance vs. punishment

Penance isn't punishment. Real penance helps us undergo a change of heart that helps us become better people who positively affect others. Our sin affects others, and our penance and reparation can, too.



### Foster loving kindness

In a time that seems to be full of bad news, selfless acts can result in an emotional uplift for the giver and the recipient. Practice acts of kindness each day. Use a gentle voice in every circumstance. Smile at someone who looks like they need it. Allow others to go get ahead of you in line. Sit with someone who looks as if they need a friend. Pray for those who are unkind to you.

### As God loves

"Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things. Love makes us similar, it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us."  
Pope Francis



## Raising good decision makers

At the root of every sin is a bad decision. Children's inexperience and lack of perspective often leads to bad choices that get them into trouble. A well-formed Catholic conscience, and accountability, and experience are powerful ways to raise happy, healthy and holy decision makers.

**Faith as foundation.** Solid ways to form a Catholic conscience include taking families to weekly Mass, regular Confession to a priest, making religious education classes a priority, and expecting and modeling Gospel-centered behavior at home.

**Modeling good choices.** Parents have the biggest impact on forming children's consciences. The process begins when children start developing attachments. Children start to imitate

the mannerisms, speech, and habits of trusted adults. It is important that they see our faith in our actions.

**Experience is a powerful teacher.** If parents are attentive, respectful, and nurturing to a child, she learns to internalize these characteristics as the way to relate to others. For example, attending to a child's emotion pain will teach remorse when she causes others pain. Invest active time in children, foster a sense of belonging, and communicate love.

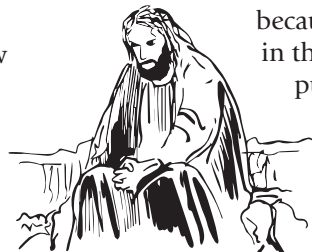
**Accountability is** loving parents holding children responsible for their own decisions. When confronted by their bad behavior, youngsters may try to shift blame, refuse to acknowledge or follow rules, or attempt to avoid consequences. Set standards, give consequences, and follow through.



## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

## Why do we fast?

Fasting is a traditional form of penance to show sorrow for our sins. By creating hunger and a desire for that which is denied, we are reminded of the reason why we are fasting. During Lent, we fast



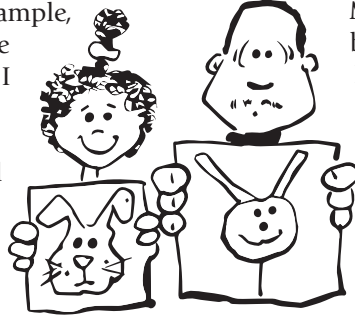
because Jesus fasted during his time in the desert before he began his public ministry.

We also fast to sympathize with those who are hungry or poor and don't have the blessings we enjoy. Fasting helps us to be more loving and compassionate.

## Find renewal during Lent

When choosing Lenten observances, children are inclined to give too much or too little. For example, "I'll give up playing video games for the entire season!" or "I'll give up green vegetables that I don't like." Yet, Lent isn't just about sacrifice. This is also a time to make changes that will bring us closer to God and give Him a central place in our family life.

**Practice gratitude.** Gratitude helps to keep everything in perspective. Encourage children to share what they count as



blessings and guide them to recognize the source as God.

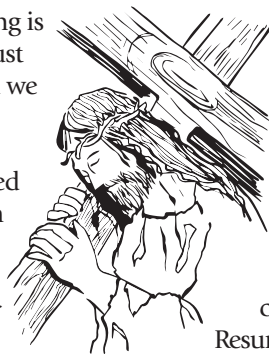
**Make Sunday about God.** If you have to choose between sports and Sunday Mass, choose Mass. Resolve to make sure the Eucharist and Mass come before anything else.

**Spend time with your family.** In a pandemic, alone time may be what keeps us sane. Yet, family time is critical to forming healthy families. Try to find ways to spend more time together. Read books, tell stories, draw pictures. Make the good times overwhelm the bad.

### Scripture LESSON

**Mark 14:1-15:47, Join our pain with Jesus'**

This Gospel reading tells of Jesus' suffering and death on the Cross. Remembering Jesus' suffering is not just something we do just once a year. The more often we remember, the more it will help us recall that Jesus was human, too, and experienced what we feel – and so much more. If we offer him our suffering and remember his, it makes our pain easier to bear.



Every day our frustrations, our fears, our loneliness and temptations can become ways in which we share in the suffering and death of Christ. Likewise, our

joys, our good health, our family and friends are all important ways to share in the joy of his Resurrection. The point is to offer everything to Christ.

*What can a parent do?*

Suffering is part of life. Yet, disciples of Jesus can have the same attitude toward suffering as he did, and we can also share in his joy of the Resurrection. When children are hurt, sad, or scared, help them remember to turn to Jesus because he wants to comfort them with his great love.

### Parent TALK

As Lent approached this year, I realized that children were pretty stressed between online learning and missing usual activities curtailed and eliminated by the pandemic. So this year, we took a different Lenten path.



Every time the children asked us to buy something – a new game, takeout for dinner, a new toy – we asked if it was something they could live without. If they said, "yes" (often with guidance), we looked up the price of the item and put that amount into our family Lent jar. Once the jar was full, we dumped the contents into the Poor Box at church.

Next, we tackled excess. Every day during Lent, we go through our closets and drawers and put one item in the give-away pile.

The daily activities keep us focused on Lent and we are working to simplify our lives. When Easter comes, we will be lighter and more grateful for what we have.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**March 2 – St. Agnes of Bohemia (1282).** Born in Prague to King Ottocar I of Bohemia, St. Agnes renounced court life to become a Poor Clare instead. She was known for serving the poor and working miracles.

**March 17 – St. Patrick of Ireland (493).** Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped by Irish pirates and brought to Ireland as a slave when he was about sixteen. He escaped several years later and became a priest. He was ordained the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established

the Church there.

**March 19 - St. Joseph (1st century).** Husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

**March 28 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion.** The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. It recalls Jesus' entry into Jerusalem when he was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering. It marks the beginning of Holy Week. We use palms to commemorate this special day.



### Our Mission

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