

Inclusive Lenten Resource Guide

Lent is a beautiful time for families, catechists, students, and ourselves to focus on the beauty of the Incarnation and the reality that *all* are made in the likeness and image of God.

This guide is set up with suggestions per week during lent. Each week includes ideas of PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING.

Week 1 & 2: Who are God's Wildflowers?

What a diverse and unique bunch of plants, trees, flowers and even wildflowers God creates. We see the wildflowers as those who have disabilities. There are saints who had a disability and this disability becomes a path for empathy with others.

PRAYER Read about a blessed person who suffered because of the attitudes of others to their disability, not the disability itself, while they find joy caring for others. **Blessed Margaret of Castello** (1287-1320). Margaret was born in Metola, Italy, into a noble family. When she was born, Margaret's parents were so horrified that at first they spread the rumor that the baby had died. Margaret was born deformed, blind, crippled with one leg considerably shorter than the other, she had spinal curvature and dwarfism. They gave the baby to a maidservant in the castle; Margaret had freedom of the castle until when she accidentally came across a visitor and told him who her parents were. Determined to keep her out of the public eye, Margaret's father had her removed from the castle and walled up into a room built onto the side of the parish church. Food and other necessities were passed to her through a window and through another window she heard Mass and received communion. The parish priest educated her and found her a willing student. Margaret lived like this for years until her parents decided to ask God for a cure since they had heard miracles had begun to happen at the nearby tomb of Fra Giacomo in Citta di Castello. They travelled to the shrine and when no miracle occurred they abandoned her. Margaret had to resort to begging. She managed to stay at the homes of some of the townspeople who recognized she had qualities of virtue and kindness, and at the age of fifteen she was able to enter a lay order of Dominicans. She spent the next eighteen years cheerfully caring for the sick and the visiting prisoners as far as she was able, as well as living a prayerful life.

Parents and Teachers: All of us, whatever the situation, need God's grace to grow in holiness. In this spirit of Pope Francis' recent letter:

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-disabled-must-have-access-to-the-sacraments-parish-life-52850>

FASTING/ALMSGIVING Refrain from stating negative opinions of people with disabilities or even your brothers and sisters! Doing so takes dignity away from people who live important but sometimes invisible lives. *Fast* from using unkind words and provide *almsgiving* to instead focus on using encouraging words this week or taking time to look directly at a person and share your smile.

Saint Joseph of Cupertino, pray for us!

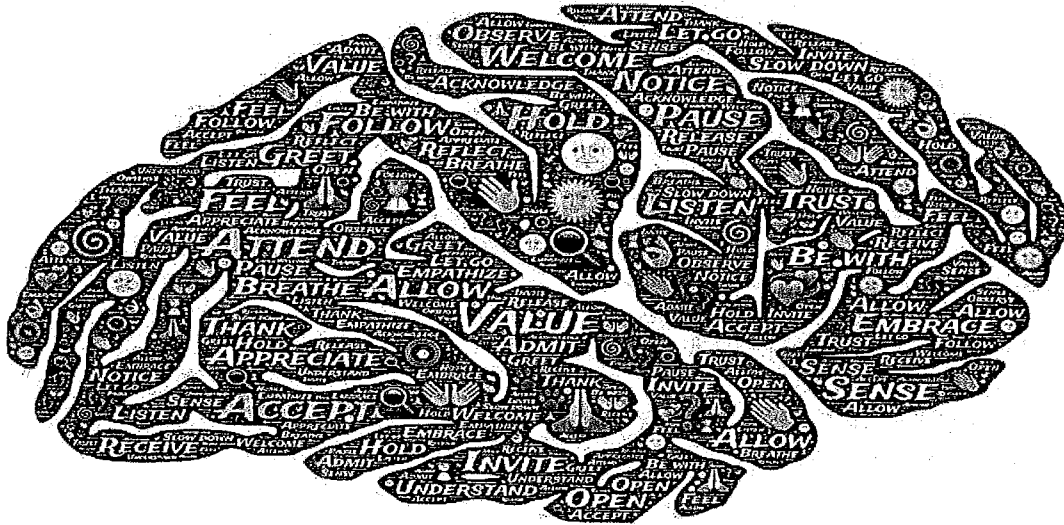
Week 5 & 6: Workers in the Vineyard: Including All

PRAYER Read about a saint who had diabetes, scoliosis and a heart condition while widening his mission for whom he served. **Saint Filippo Smaldone** (1848-1923) especially helped the deaf community and others on the margins. Filippo was born on 27 July 1848 in Naples, Italy into a poor Christian family at a time of great political unrest and persecution of the Church. Initially Filippo was determined to become a missionary. However he changed his mind and decided to study for the priesthood after a chance meeting with a deaf child in church. Filippo recognized that the deaf and mute community were particularly vulnerable since they were marginalized in society, deaf children were often abandoned, and opportunities for their education and catechesis were virtually non-existent. Filippo was ordained in 1871 and threw himself into pastoral ministry. He formed evening catechesis classes and worked with the sick, including those suffering from the plague. Although he still felt called to be a missionary he carried on his work in Naples to the deaf community. In 1885 he founded an institute for deaf and trained sisters to work with them which became the Congregation for the Salesian Sisters of the Sacred Heart. He founded other institutes for the blind, the abandoned and the orphans.

Parents/Teachers: Often we wonder, how do we talk about people who have disabilities or have a significant medical illness with our children. Some wisdom from St. John Paul II in his message for the First Annual World Day of the Sick: "To a world that values independence and autonomy, people who are sick or who have disabilities are the main actors because they witness to the full dignity of every human being no matter what their situations or conditions, a dignity that can never be lost and a dignity that does not depend of levels of rationality or ability. Through their physical or mental dependence they can demonstrate in daily living the dependence that all human beings have on God." St John Paul II was a "main actor" at the end of his life with Parkinson's disease.

FASTING Some persons with disabilities or specific illnesses cannot eat certain foods. These may be foods that include gluten, dairy, sugar, caffeine, or a number of other substances. As a family, try fasting from such foods for a day. What do you notice?

Thank you to: Sensory Stations of the Cross: Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church 2020



Introduction:

Show pictures of a bus stop, train stop, gas station, etc. Say: What do you think of when you hear the word station? A bus station? A gas station? A weigh station? A train station? A fire station? A police station? There are many kinds of stations! A station is a place where you can stop and rest and is generally of a specialized service. Today we're going to learn about a different kind of station. It's called the stations of the cross. Just like the stations we've discussed, we still stop and rest at each station of the cross and reflect on Jesus' crucifixion and death. Every church shows the Stations in a different way. Our Stations of the cross are at the back of the church on the walls behind the pews. Today we are going to experience the stations of the cross with our senses.

First Station-Jesus is Condemned to Death

Say: The First Station. Jesus is Condemned. What does it mean to be condemned? Jesus was accused of many crimes he did not commit. Have you ever been blamed for something you did not do? Just like Jesus, our feelings can be hurt. Take this rough twine and place it on your wrist. Try to stay silent and not make any noises because Jesus remained quiet when others shouted for him to be put to death.

Second Station-Jesus Carries His Cross

Say: The Second Station. Jesus takes up the cross. The cross was big and heavy and difficult to carry. We too are asked to face things we cannot handle in this life, however, we do not carry our crosses alone. Jesus carries us. Pick up the weights and think of how hard it must have been for Jesus to carry such a heavy cross.

The Eighth Station-Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Say: The Eighth Station. Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem. Jesus could see some of the women and children were sad for Him. Jesus, in his pain and suffering, stopped and comforted these women and children. Take one of these heart cookies and taste goodness the love Jesus has for others. The cookies are delicious, but Jesus' love is sweeter.

The Ninth Station-Jesus falls the third time

Say: The Ninth Station. Jesus falls the third time. Jesus, our perfect and most Holy God fell three times while carrying the cross. Yet, during the time of His death, He prayed for us. At this time please kneel in body or spirit and say an Our Father, praying to the God who prayed for us.

The Tenth Station-Jesus is stripped of his garments.

Say: The Tenth Station. Jesus is stripped of his garments. Have you ever lost or had something taken from you? It may have left you feeling sad or hurt. Imagine how embarrassed Jesus must have felt when the guards took his clothing and cast lots for it. At this time, please take the pretty wrapping off the cross.

The Eleventh Station-Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Say: The eleventh station. Jesus is nailed to the cross. Soldiers drove nails into Jesus' hands and feet as they nailed him to the cross. Jesus was innocent. We too often are guilty of driving insults into others that we cannot take back. The pain of those words still leave a mark. Feel the sharpness of the nail as you take it out of the board. Notice the hole that was left behind. Think of holes in our hearts and Jesus' body that sins cause.

The Twelfth Station-Jesus dies on the cross

Say: The Twelfth Station. Jesus dies on the cross. Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is to love your God with all your heart and the second, to love others as yourself. Jesus died for us. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for a friend. Can you imagine a world without God? When Jesus died the sky turned black and earthquakes shook the land. Even on our worst days we still have Jesus with us. Thank you Jesus for giving your life for us. Please touch or kiss the cross and thank Jesus for his love for you.