

Create Your Family Lenten Journey of Faith from Ash Wednesday, February 17 to Easter on April 4

February Family Faith Activity #2



This month's second family faith activity is a way for your family to purposefully try to grow closer to God and to each other during Lent – and beyond. This journey of Lent that leads us to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter is meant to help us to be more open to God's love and bring it to others. Jesus gave his life for us so we may have eternal life in heaven with God. He made the ultimate sacrifice. And during Lent, we should make sacrifices to join our hearts with God.

When we hear the word Lent, we often think of a somber time in the Church year and start to think about what we are going to give up for Lent. It should be a time of spiritual renewal and growth for us. From Ash Wednesday and for 40 days leading up to Easter we should go on a "journey" of prayer, fasting and almsgiving (acts of service).

What should we do during Lent? - Catholic Lenten Practices

Praying more and finding different ways to pray together as a family can bring you peace and strength as you turn to God more often. It can bring you closer as a family. Take your family to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. Confessions are heard every Saturday at St. Albert the Great Church from Noon to 1:00 PM.

Fasting during Lent means that on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, we should only eat 2 small meals and one regular meal with no snacking in between meals. **We also abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent.** You might think how is giving up regular meals, or giving up snacks going to draw me closer to God? Well one way it can bring you closer to God is when you feel a little hungry that day notice that feeling in your stomach and think about why am I doing this today? And when you do, think about the sacrifice that Jesus made. Thank God for his blessings.

Almsgiving, or acts of service, can be many different things. You can give of your time (you may have extra time if you give up social media, or your favorite Netflix series, for example). You could donate food to our area food pantries. Share your time, talents and treasure how ever you are able.

Why is giving something up a traditional Catholic practice during Lent? We give up something we really like so that we feel and know that we are making a sacrifice for God. And we can also "take on" something in place of giving something up. On the second page are many suggestions that you can do as a family on your Lenten journey. It's important to remember that Lent is not about ourselves and the hard things we can do. It's about forgetting ourselves and serving the other. It is for our spiritual health – growing closer to God.

ACTIVITY: As a family, talk about how you would like to create a Lenten journey of faith for your family. Discuss how putting the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and acts of service can help your family grow closer to God - AND each other. To "see" your Lenten Journey of Faith, you might make a little booklet out of paper, or draw a path on a large piece of paper and make sections and write in it some way your family will try to come closer to God and each other every day - or a few times a week. You can get many other ideas on Pinterest or Google. *Make it something that will work for your family* - and keep it somewhere that everyone can see it each day. You could put it on your prayer space, or on your kitchen table or the coffee table. Seeing it will remind you to take a bit of time each day or most days during Lent to do something for your family's spiritual health - turning more to God for your family's peace, comfort and strength.

Email a picture or write to us about how you are doing on your family journey during Lent. Send it to: ceisenbarth@blessedtrinityppgh.net or egarfold@blessedtrinityppgh.net

Some ideas for your “Family Lenten Journey” - Growing closer to God and each other

- Go to Ash Wednesday Mass or prayer service today. See the Feb. 14th Blessed Trinity Parish bulletin for times and locations. www.blessedtrinitypgh.org/bulletins
- No sweets or candy today. When you crave a sweet today– say a prayer for someone you know who needs it.
- Tell your teachers THANK YOU for all they do! Or make them a “Thank You” card!
- Pray with your family at dinner and share what each of you is grateful for.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross. They remind us how much Jesus loves us. See the Stations of the Cross video on this page www.blessedtrinitypgh.org/student-faith-formation
- Take a walk with your family. Ask each other how they are doing.
- Take a drive to the adoration window at the front of St. Albert the Great Church and take a few minutes to pray in front of the Tabernacle.
- Choose a Scripture passage from the Gospel and picture yourself in that scene. Imagine your reaction and response. Talk about it together as a family.
- Clean up a common area at work or at home. Do it as a gift for the good of all.
- Fast from worrying. Trust God instead.
- When you see or hear an ambulance siren, say a prayer for the person who might be sick.
- Fast from light. Sit by the light of one candle in a room or just the light from a small flashlight. Remember that Jesus has called you to be a light for the world. Talk as a family of how you might do that.
- Fast from hitting the snooze alarm. Get up and use the extra time for prayer.
- At the grocery store, pray for the famers and all those who help make available the food that you will bring home.
- Fast from complaining. Notice how often you are tempted to complain and offer a prayer of gratitude instead.
- Take over a chore for a family member that they don't like to do.
- Fast from criticizing others aloud or silently in your mind. Seek to understand instead.
- Make a list of 5 things you are grateful for in your life. Say a prayer thanking God for your blessings.
- Put down your phone, speak less and give more. Give others the gift of your *undivided* attention.
- Make some Easter cards to send to people in local Senior care homes. Pray for them and let them know you prayed for them.
- Find a flat rock and paint a cross on it. Keep in near you to remind you to pray often during these Lenten days.
- Do something to help make someone’s day a little easier. Don’t ask them if they want help – just do it!
- Fast from overscheduling your time. Leave some time to just be.
- Easter reminds us that Jesus brought us new life. Go to one of our parish Churches and take a walk around (St. Wendelin, St. Basil, St. Sylvester, Holy Angels or St. Albert the Great) and look for signs of new life.
- Go to Church on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter either in person or online as a family. Talk together about what you experienced. Celebrate your journey and God's love for you! Check our parish website for days and times of Holy Week liturgies click on this link: www.blessedtrinitypgh.org/bulletins