

# Lenten Intergenerational Program

## Three Practices of Lent

### “Praying, Fasting, and Almsgiving”

#### Learning Objectives

“The Three Practices of Lent” preparation program guides learners of all ages to...

- develop a deeper understanding of praying, fasting, and almsgiving and their essential connection to the Lenten season (*know-what*)
- live the practices of praying, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent and throughout the year (*know-how*)
- develop an appreciation for the significance of praying, fasting, and almsgiving for their daily lives as Catholics in Lent and throughout the year (*know-why*)

#### Catechism Connection

540, 1438

#### Background Readings

##### Catholic Updates

Annual Lent Catholic Update Issue

*Ash Wednesday: Our Shifting Understanding of Lent.* Rev. Lawrence Mick, O. Praem.

Catholic Update C0204.

*Celebrating Lent in Your Home.* Kathryn A. Schneider and Robert M. Hamma. Catholic Update C0293

*How to Find Joy in Lent.* Jack Wintz. Catholic Update C0295

*Lent: A 40-Day Retreat – Rediscovering Your Baptismal Call.* Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M.

Catholic Update C0290.

*Lent: Balancing the Old and the New.* John Bookser Feister. Catholic Update C0293.

*Lent Giving Our Hearts to God.* Joyce Rupp. Catholic Update C0297.

*Lent: Opening the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.* Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M. Catholic Update C0298.

*Lenten Customs: Baptism is the Key.* Rev. Lawrence Mick, O. Praem. Catholic Update C0302.

##### Books

Bergant, Diane, with Richard Fragomeni. *Preaching the New Lectionary.* (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999, 2000, 2001.

Birmingham, Mary. *Word and Worship Workbook.* (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C). New York: Paulist Press, 1998, 1999, 2000.

- Brown, Raymond. *Reading the Gospels with the Church – From Christmas through Easter*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996.
- Brown, Raymond. *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986.
- Brown, Raymond. *How to Read the Passion Narratives*. Catholic Update CU 0484. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Donohue, John. *Hearing the Word of God – Reflections on the Sunday Readings*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003, 2004, 2005.
- Huck, Gabe. *Introduction to Lent and Eastertime*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication. *Living Liturgy*. Collegeville: MN: Liturgical Press, annual.
- Senior, Donald. *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.
- Shea, John. *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004, 2005, 2006.
- Simcoe, Mary Ann. *Parish Path through Lent and Eastertime*. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 1985
- Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons*. Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago: LTP, annual.

## Potential Uses

- Preparation for the Season of Lent

# Session Resources

## Before the Session

### Environment

Set up a prayer table or decorate the large group meeting space with symbols of Lent:

- purple tablecloth (or one with purple in the pattern or drape a piece of purple cloth on a white tablecloth)
- the Lectionary or Bible
- Sacramentary
- thick white candle
- clear glass bowl with water
- a small clear bowl with olive oil
- loaf of bread (unsliced) on a plate
- clear glass with wine
- cross (not a crucifix)
- palms and ashes
- thorns

### Home Kit

#### **Home Activities at Generations of Faith Online**

1. Ash Wednesday Blessing of the Home Cross
2. Ash Wednesday Celebration
3. Blessing of a Home Cross
4. Lenten Daily Prayers
5. Living Lent through Service to Others
6. Prayers for Every Day of Lent
7. Preparing the Lenten Prayer Space
8. Scripture Reflections during Lent
9. Service Ideas for the Lent
10. Table Prayers for Lent
11. Lenten Family Celebration

#### **Catholic Update (St. Anthony Messenger Press)**

Annual Lent Catholic Update Issue

*Ash Wednesday: Our Shifting Understanding of Lent.* Rev. Lawrence Mick, O. Praem. Catholic Update C0204.

*Celebrating Lent in Your Home.* Kathryn A. Schneider and Robert M. Hamma. Catholic Update C0293

*How to Find Joy in Lent.* Jack Wintz. Catholic Update C0295

*Lent: A 40-Day Retreat – Rediscovering Your Baptismal Call.* Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M. Catholic Update C0290.

*Lent: Balancing the Old and the New.* John Bookser Feister. Catholic Update C0293.

*Lent Giving Our Hearts to God.* Joyce Rupp. Catholic Update C0297.

*Lent: Opening the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.* Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M. Catholic Update C0298.

*Lenten Customs: Baptism is the Key.* Rev. Lawrence Mick, O. Praem. Catholic Update C0302.

### **Creative Communications**

Creative Communications for the Parish produces inexpensive Lenten booklets for families, teens and adults, as well as prayer cards, calendars, activities, and lectionary reflections.

*Catholic Teenager's Trip through Lent*

*Lenten Calendar for Youth*

*Lenten Calendar for Children*

*Lenten Calendar for Adults*

*With the Cross of Jesus – Daily Bible Readings for Lent*

### **Diocese of Saginaw**

Lenten Books: *Little Black Book for Lent* (Teens and Adults) and *Little Purple Book for Lent* (Children) (To order go to [www.dioceseofsaginaw.org](http://www.dioceseofsaginaw.org) and look for link to Little Books on the front page of the web site.)

### **Twenty-Third Publications**

Twenty-Third Publications produces inexpensive Lenten booklets of prayers, activities, and lectionary reflections for families and individuals.

### **Liturgy Training Publications**

Liturgy Training Publications produces a variety of Lent and Holy Week resources for parish and home. See especially:

*What Am I Doing for Lent This Year?*

## Prayer Resource

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis.* (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006.

Haas, David. *A Time to Pray with the New Testament.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2005. (See the prayer celebrations: "Gospel of Mark: Take Up Your Cross" and "Lent: Turn to the Living God.")

For additional prayer services consult:

Costello, Gwen. *Junior High Prayer Services by Themes and Seasons.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2000.

Cronin, Gaynell Bordes, and Jack Rathschmidt, O.F.M. Cap. *The Blessing Candles – 58 Simple Mealtime Prayer-Celebrations.* Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.

Galipeau, Jerry. *Prayer Services for Parish Life.* Schiller Park, IL: World Library Publications, 2004.

McCann, Deborah. *Let Us Gather – Prayer Services for Catholic Schools and Assemblies.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.

Morley, Jack, editor. *Bread of Tomorrow – Prayers for the Church Year.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.

Piercy, Robert W., and Vivian E. Williams. *When Children Gather – 20 Prayer Services for the Liturgical Year*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1998.

Rupp, Joyce. *Inviting God In – Scriptural Reflections through the Year*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2001.

Rupp, Joyce. *Out of the Ordinary – Prayers, Poems, and Reflections for Every Season*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2000.

Singer, Charles. *Prayers for Feasts*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002.

Vos Wezeman, Phyllis, and Jude Dennis Fournier. *Celebrations Seasons – Prayer Lessons for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2000.

## Materials for the Session

### Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities

### All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service
- Bible

### In-Depth Learning Experience

- Lenten Books from the Diocese of Saginaw: *Little Black Book for Lent* (Teens and Adults) and *Little Purple Book for Lent* (Children) (To order go to [www.dioceseofsaginaw.org](http://www.dioceseofsaginaw.org) and look for link to Little Books on the front page of the web site.)
- Catholic Update Video: *The Church Celebrates Lent and Easter* (St. Anthony Messenger Press)
- Handouts:
  - *Fasting and Feasting During Lent*
  - *Lenten Ideas for Children*
  - *Lenten Ideas for Adults*
  - *Our Family Lenten Pledge*
  - *Lenten Scripture Readings*
  - *My Lenten Pledge*
- Glue, scissors, pens, markers, flip chart paper

### Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

### Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

# Session at a Glance

Part One: Gathering (5 minutes)

Part Two: All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

## **Introduction to Lent**

Part Three: In-Depth Learning Experience (90 minutes)

### **Choose a Learning Group Format**

- Whole Group Format
- or
- Age Group Format
- or
- Learning Activity Centers

### **Learning Plan**

1. The Practice of Praying
2. The Practice of Fasting
3. The Practice of Almsgiving/Service

### **Age Group Learning for Adolescents and Adults**

Three Practices of Lent Learning Experience

### **Alternative Activities**

1. Three Practices Lenten Calendar
2. Three Practices Lenten Catalog

Part Four: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application  
(20-25 minutes)

Part 5. Closing Prayer Service (5 minutes)

# Part 1

## Gathering (5 minutes)

### 1. Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Ask people to make a nametag.
- Distribute the Home Kit for the session, including any handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

#### Welcome

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session.

### 2. Group Formation

In the Whole Group Format, organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people OR organize table groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults. If you organize into intergenerational groups, participants will remain with their group for the entire program. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational – children, teens, parents, and grandparents – keep them together in one group.

### 3. Opening Prayer Service

Lead the participants in an opening prayer service on the theme: “Three Practices of Lent.” Use Matthew 6:1-18 as your focusing Scripture reading. Use the Prayers from the Sacramentary for Ash Wednesday and the Sundays of Lent, and the music that will be used during the Lenten season.

## Part 2

### All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

The All Ages Opening Experience introduces the participants to the theme of the program. There are a variety of ways to conduct the opening experience. For a presentation to the large group you can use drama, media, storytelling, or other interactive approach that works well with a large group.

#### Introduction to Lent

[spoken text] Begin by introducing everyone to the season of Lent:

*Lent is the season of the Church year from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of growing closer to God, turning away from sin into the living arms of our loving God. The Lenten season challenges us to...*

- *to hear and follow God's call*
- *to take time to pray and seek God's guidance in our lives.*
- *to turning more fully to God which includes treating our neighbors with love through acts of justice, compassion and service*
- *take time to consider our choices and to look at our relationships for ways to be more loving, more fair, more forgiving and more compassionate.*
- *take time to share God's love through acts of service and justice.*
- *renew our belief in the Easter promise that we share in Jesus' resurrection*
- *prepare for renewing our baptismal promises during the Easter liturgies*

*The season of Lent gives us the opportunity to grow closer to God. There are three ways we can grow closer to God during Lent – by praying, by serving (traditionally called almsgiving) and by fasting. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, like the legs of a tripod, make up the traditional practices of Lent. Praying nourishes our spirits. Fasting teaches us about sacrifice. And works of Service/Almsgiving enlarge our hearts as we serve the needs of others.*

#### All Ages Activity Options

- Prepare an extended prayer service that introduces praying, fasting, and almsgiving through Scripture, symbol, music, and prayer.
- Create or find a drama to present praying, fasting, and almsgiving (Matthew 6:1-18) or, for younger groups, use an echo pantomime, e.g., "Ashes, Ashes" in *Echo Stories for Children* (Twenty-Third Publications).
- Invite a "Lenten Witness Panel" of parishioners of different ages to tell a story of Lent, e.g., a story of "conversion" or change, a story of personal or family Lenten traditions of fasting, service, or prayer.

# Part 3

## In-Depth Learning Experiences (90 minutes)

### Whole Group Format

This format guides the entire assembly through each of the learning experiences.

You might choose this format if you have:

- a large physical space with good acoustics/sound system and furniture to comfortably accommodate the learners
- a competent large group facilitator/master of ceremonies able to provide clear directions and to manage the dynamics and energy of a large group
- a group of catechists who feel comfortable moving through the assembly offering assistance, or a large enough team of table leader catechists to have one catechist work with each table group
- a learning topic that lends itself to everyone learning the same thing at the same time, but in different ways, in the same space

### Facilitation Tips for This Format

Guide small groups through each of the activities at the same time.

- Organize people into table groups based on age groupings: families with children (grades 1-5), middle school adolescents, high school adolescents, young adults, and adults.
- The lead facilitator guides the entire group through each of the learning experiences. All presentations and activity instructions are given to the whole group.
- The age-appropriate learning activities within each learning experience are conducted in table groups.
- Where needed, catechists and small group leaders facilitate the work of the table groups.

### Whole Group Format Outline

#### Learning Plan Outline

1. The Practice of Praying
2. The Practice of Fasting
3. The Practice of Almsgiving/Service

#### Alternative Activities

1. Three Practices Lenten Calendar
2. Three Practices Lenten Catalog

## Age Group Format

This format provides for three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic.

You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators and catechists to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

## Facilitation Tips for This Format

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there are a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences.
- A facilitator must guide all of the families through each learning experience, while catechist move from table to table assisting.

## Age Group Format Outline

### Families with Children

#### Learning Plan Outline

1. The Practice of Praying
2. The Practice of Fasting
3. The Practice of Almsgiving/Service

### Adolescents, Young Adults and Adults

#### Learning Plan Outline

Three Practices of Lent Learning Experience

### Alternative Activities

1. Three Practices Lenten Calendar
2. Three Practices Lenten Catalog

## Learning Activity Centers

The Learning Activity Center Format provides structured learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area. Learning activity centers are self-contained learning experiences, focusing on a specific topic or theme. They include brief presentations by the facilitators, interactive and experiential activities, group discussion and sharing. Each center can utilize a different learning method, such as drama or role play, creative arts, prayer, ritual, film, games, demonstrations, exhibits, and music.

One of the best ways to envision a Learning Activity Center Format is to imagine visiting a children's museum or one of the Epcot pavilions at Walt Disney World in Orlando. You will find a variety of interactive, experiential exhibits, media presentations, and staff-facilitated learning activities.

Learning Activity Centers can be used with all age groups. They can be developed for an intergenerational audience or for particular age groups, such as families with children or adolescents or adults. Learning Activity Centers can also be utilized in the families with children learning program within the Age Group Format.

## Activity Centers

These three learning activity centers can be used with the whole group or just with families with children. You can also develop age-specific learning centers by using the content from the adolescent and adult learning plan to create activity centers focused on adolescents and adults.

1. The Practice of Praying
2. The Practice of Fasting
3. The Practice of Almsgiving/Service

### Alternative/Additional Activities

1. Three Practices Lenten Calendar
2. Three Practices Lenten Catalog

## Scheduling

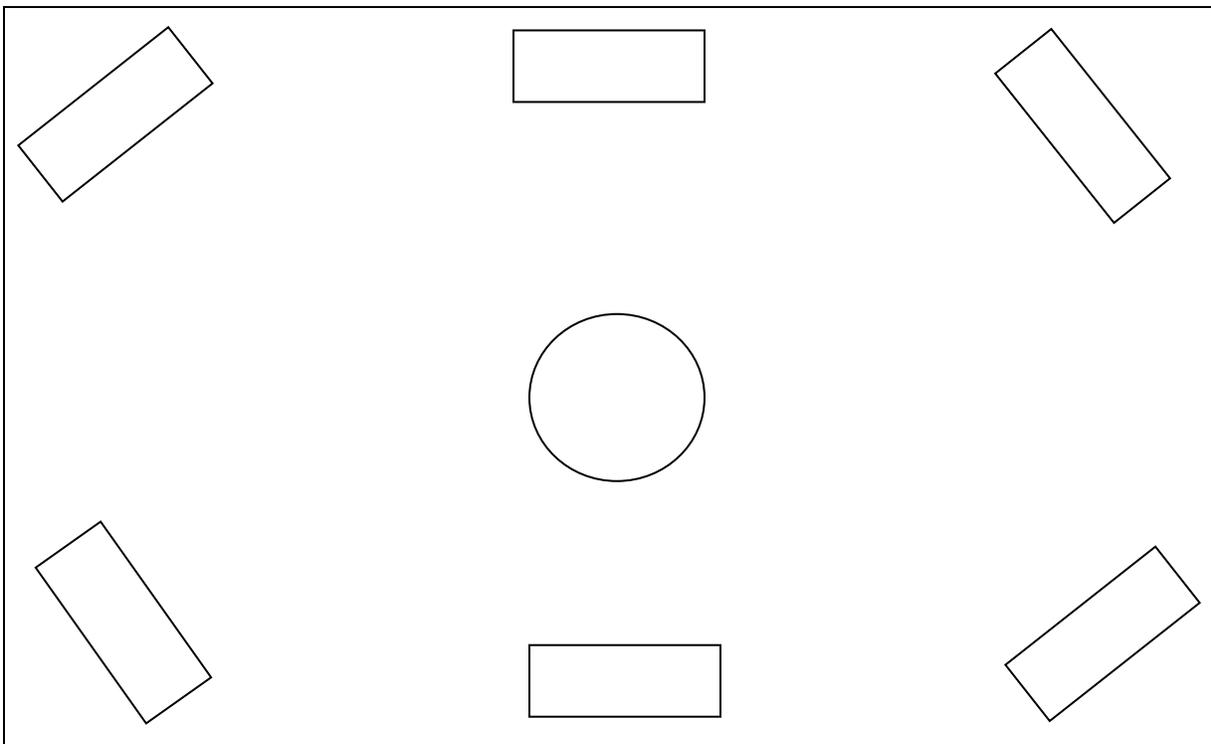
Learning Activity Centers are designed to be conducted within a 20-25 minute timeframe. Here is a sample schedule with three rounds of learning centers:

- 6:00 Hospitality and Dinner
- 6:30 Part 1. Gathering and Prayer
- Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience
- 7:00 Round 1: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:25 Break (move to next center)
- 7:30 Round 2: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:55 Break (move to next center)
- 8:00 Round 3: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:25 Break (gather in intergenerational groups)

## Organizing the Activity Centers

There are two ways to set up activity centers: one large room, or multiple break-out rooms.

If you arrange all of the learning centers in one large meeting gym or parish hall, set-up the centers around the outside of the room (see example). The center space can become a storytelling center with a carpet or chairs for children to sit. The example below shows six different learning centers plus the storytelling center. You may still need separate rooms if you have a learning center that focuses on prayer (worship space) or shows a film (meeting room).



Keep in mind the following when organizing in one room:

- Make sure there is adequate space between learning centers so that people are not interrupted by the activity at other centers.
- Set-up each learning activity center with tables and chairs (or carpeted floor space) for participants to listen, discuss, and create. Children and teens can use the floor, but adults will need chairs.
- Assign each learning center a number and post the number on the wall and floor at each center.

If you arrange learning centers in multiple rooms such as meeting rooms, classrooms, parish hall, gym, worship space, assign one learning center to each space. This format resembles a

conference where people move from room to room for each session. Place the learning center name outside each room and develop a list of centers with locations, and a map if necessary, so that people can easily find the correct room.

## Organizing Groups

Once you have determined how many learning centers you will offer, you can organize participants accordingly. If you offer four learning centers, you can organize the participants into four groups of equal size and assign each group a specific sequence that they will move through the learning centers. Assign a number to each learning center and an alphabet letter to each group, then describe how they will move through the centers: Group A: 1-2-3-4; Group B: 2-3-4-1, Group C: 3-4-1-2, and Group D: 4-1-2-3. If you offer three learning centers, there would be three groups rotating among the three learning centers. Keep families together in one group.

If you offer more than three or four learning centers, allow people to choose the learning centers they are going to experience. Remind them that if a particular center is crowded, they can move to another center and then return to their first choice in another round. Families with children should stay together because the activities require parents to work with their children.

## Staffing

Each center is facilitated by a team of facilitators/catechists who guide the participants through the activity plan. The teaching team facilitates the overall learning plan for the center: making presentations, guiding learning activities, organizing discussions, and so on. The number of team members needed depends on the complexity of the activities and the number of participants at a learning center. Teams should have at least two or three people, but some centers will require five or six people. Older adolescents can also serve as members of the teaching team, and are especially valuable in facilitating creative activities and dramatic presentations.

To present the focus of each learning activity center, ask the teaching teams to present a very brief overview of what they will be doing in each center. Give each participant the list of learning activity centers with short descriptions, a schedule and the locations of the centers.

# The Practice of Praying

Whole Group: All Ages

Age Group: Families with Children

## Preparation

Choose which prayer experience you will offer participants or if you will set up prayer centers for learners to experience different ways to pray during Lent.

Note: Instead of the pledge activity you may choose to create a Lenten chain with the learners instead. See the handout, *Lenten Chain Activity*.

## Activity Plan

### 1. Introduce the Practice.

[spoken text] Use the *Catholic Update: Celebrating Lent in Your Home* and the background information below to describe the practice in the words provided or in your own words:

*All of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) tell us that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. As disciples, we seek to follow St. Paul's call to "pray always." Lent is a time when we concentrate our prayer on the double meaning of the season: conversion from our sinful ways and renewal of our baptismal promises.*

*Participating in the Eucharist and praying over the Scripture readings, on a weekly or even daily basis, are helpful ways of prayerfully entering into the season. Private prayer, family prayer and communal prayer all work together to deepen our prayer life, not only during this season, but also all year long.*

(Excerpts from: *Celebrating Lent in Your Home* by Kathryn Schneider and Robert Hamma, Catholic Update 0293. St. Anthony Messenger Press.)

### 2. Experience/Explore the Practice.

#### Reflection on Prayer

Invite participants to talk about prayer at home using questions such as:

- When do you pray? Is prayer part of your everyday life?
- What do you pray *for* or pray *about*?
- Why do you think prayer is an important part of the Lenten season?
- Why should prayer be an important part of life?

#### Prayer Activities

Give participants an experience of prayer. You may choose to set up prayer centers where learners can choose a prayer experience or you may facilitate a prayer experience at the table groups. Use a prayer activity from the handouts—Scripture Meditation, Intercessory Prayer, Prayer of Forgiveness, Prayers of Praise, Praying with the Psalms, Praying through Music.

### **Step 3. Share Ideas for Living the Practice.**

Review the prayer ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas* (Children and Adult versions), with the participants. Ask participants to review the ideas for praying.

### **Step 4. Develop a Lenten Pledge.**

Ask learners to write, cut and paste, or draw the ideas they have selected onto the Lenten Pledge – either as an individual or as a family. Explain that children and parents should pick out several prayer activities to do – alone or together with their family.

Ask the participants to share one or two ideas they have selected with their group.

### **Prayer Resources**

- Ausperk, Michael D. *Teenagers Come and Pray! – Celebrating Milestones, Memorials, and Holy Days*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995.
- Catucci, Thomas. *Time with Jesus – 20 Guided Meditations for Youth*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications.
- Bretherton, Barbara Ann. *Ways to Pray with Children*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995.
- Costello, Gwen. *Prayers Services for Young Adolescents*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994.
- Costello, Gwen. *Praying with Children – 28 Prayer Services for Various Occasions*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990.
- Cronin, Gaynell Bordes. *Friend Jesus – Prayers for Children*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999.
- Dexter, Pat Egan. *25 Guided Prayer Services for Middle Graders*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996.
- Glavich, Mary Kathleen. *Leading Students into Prayer*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993.
- Griggs, Donald. *Praying and Teaching the Psalms*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- Hakowski, Maryann. *Pathways to Praying with Teens*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1993.
- Halverson, Delia. *Teaching Prayer in the Classroom*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Wezeman, Phyllis Vos, and Jude Dennis Fournier. *20 Prayer Lessons for Children*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996.

# The Practice of Fasting

Whole Group: All Ages

Age Group: Families with Children

## Preparation

This activity uses the annual Operation Rice Bowl project with children. Operation Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program of prayer, fasting, education, and almsgiving. It includes: prayer, fasting, education, and almsgiving. Obtain a set of materials for each child (and family) by contacting CRS at 209 West Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-3443 (800-736-3467) or your diocesan CRS representative (Social Justice Office, Missions Office).

## Activity Plan

### Step 1: Introduce the Practice

[spoken text] Use the *Catholic Update: Celebrating Lent in Your Home* and the background information below to describe the practice using the words provided or in your own words:

*Fasting is an integral part of Lent. Traditionally it has included reducing the amount of food we eat and abstaining from meat.*

*But why do we fast? Not because our bodies and appetites are something evil that need to be punished, but to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger, our need for God. Our Lenten fasting is modeled on Jesus' 40-day fast in the desert, just as he fasted in preparation for his baptism in the Jordan and his public ministry, we fast to remind ourselves of our baptismal commitment and need for renewal.*

*Fasting can take many forms. While we usually fast by eating less, we can also fast from other things, whether they be enjoyable activities or bad habits.*

*The purpose of fasting is to turn our attention to both God and others. Fasting reminds us not only of our dependence on God, but also of the needs of the hungry and poor. By fasting, we place ourselves in solidarity with suffering people everywhere.*

*While we usually fast by eating less, fasting can take many forms. Fasting can be holding back from unnecessary buying, accumulating, and wasting, from excessive TV viewing, etc. It can be an ecological fasting that fosters respect for natural resources and for all of creation. Any form of fasting can be a breaking from destructive patterns of life, freeing us to grow healthier in our thoughts and actions as Catholics.*

(Excerpts from: *Celebrating Lent in Your Home* by Kathryn Schneider and Robert Hamma, Catholic Update 0293. St. Anthony Messenger Press.)

## **Step 2. Experience/Explore the Practice**

### **Reflection on Fasting**

Invite participants to share what they think fasting is and why we fast with questions such as:

- What does fasting mean to you?
- Do you ever fast? Give examples.
- Why do you think fasting is an important part of the Lenten season?

### **Fasting Activities**

Give participants examples of how they can fast during Lent. You can find resources in the following sources:

Review the fasting ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas* (Children and Adult versions), with the participants. Ask participants to review the ideas for praying.

Another strategy to introduce the concept of fasting is to use the handout, *Fasting and Feasting during Lent*. Help participants to decide on what they want to fast from and what they want to feast on.

## **Step 3. Share Ideas for Living the Practice**

Ask participants to review the fasting ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas* (Children and Adult versions).

## **Step 4. Develop a “Lenten Pledge”**

Ask participants to write, cut and paste, or draw the ideas they have selected onto the Lenten Pledge. Explain that children and parents should pick out several fasting activities to do – alone or together with their family.

Ask participants to share one or two ideas they have selected with the group.

# The Practice of Almsgiving

Whole Group: All Ages

Age Group: Families with Children

## Activity Plan

### Step 1: Introduce the Practice

[spoken text] Use the *Catholic Update: Celebrating Lent in Your Home* and the background information below to describe the practice of almsgiving, in your own words or in the words provided:

*The prophet Isaiah tells us that God wants a fast which involves “releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own” (Isaiah 58:6-7, NAB). Almsgiving or service is an essential Lenten practice.*

*The Catholic Bishops of the United States emphasize that “our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church.” (A Century of Social Teaching. A Pastoral Message of Catholic Bishops of the United States. November 1990)*

*Lent is a time for repentance and action. We are called to serve those in need and use our wealth, gifts, time, and talents to create a world that mirrors the vision that Jesus proclaimed. Lent is a good time to cultivate a spirit of gratitude for what we have. Our most precious commodities – health, friendship, love, the beauty of creation – are pure gifts from God. Without these our material possessions are worthless. Gratitude for what we have prompts us to do something for those in need, not out of guilt, but out of compassion. Compassion and generosity towards others involve giving not only from our surplus, but also from our substance.*

*(Excerpts from: Celebrating Lent in Your Home by Kathryn Schneider and Robert Hama, Catholic Update 0293. St. Anthony Messenger Press.)*

### Step 2. Experience/Explore the Practice

#### Reflection on Almsgiving/Service:

Invite participants to talk about almsgiving/service using questions such as:

- How are you or your family involved in serving others? Share a story or examples.
- Why do you think service is an important part of the Lenten season?
- Why should service be an important part of your life?

### **Almsgiving/Service Activities**

Give participants examples of how they can serve others during Lent.

First, introduce the Operation Rice Bowl Kit and explain how they can use the Rice Bowl during Lent. Distribute the Operation Rice Bowl materials from Catholic Relief Services to the children and parents. Operation Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program of prayer, fasting, education, and almsgiving. CRS describes these components in the following way:

- **Prayer** – When we pray for others, we grow closer to them. Pray for the poor throughout Lent.
- **Fasting** – Fasting has been a symbolic act of prayer since early Christianity. By fasting, we share the suffering and hunger of the poor, gaining a clearer understanding of them and growing in solidarity.
- **Education** – To understand and empathize with the poor, it is necessary to learn about their condition. Through Operation Rice Bowl, we learn about their reality with stories, facts, food, and sharing.
- **Almsgiving** – Alms are money given out of religious motivation for the needs of the poor. Alms are a special way of building solidarity. Operation Rice Bowl alms help the poor grow their own food, increase their income, and escape abject poverty.

Second, present additional ideas for almsgiving/service. Review the almsgiving/service ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas* (Children and Adult versions), with the families. Ask families to review the ideas for praying.

**Note:** Be sure to add local service projects to the list of the handout. This will provide people with specific things they can do during Lent in your parish and community.

### **Step 3. Share Ideas for Living the Practice**

Ask families to review the almsgiving/service ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas* (Children and Adult versions).

### **Step 4. Develop a “Lenten Pledge”**

Ask them to write, cut and paste, or draw the ideas they have selected onto the Lenten Pledge. Explain that participants should pick out several service activities to do – alone or together with others.

Ask the participants to share one or two ideas they have selected with the group.

# Three Practices of Lent Learning Experience

Age Group: Adolescents and Adults

## Preparation

- Obtain a copy of the video *Lent and Easter – The Church Celebrates* (Catholic Update Video) from St. Anthony Messenger Press or your diocesan lending library.
- Make copies of the handouts, *Lenten Ideas* and *Lenten Pledge*.

## Part 1. Exploring the Meaning of Lent

### 1. Introduction to Lent

- a) In the large group (or small groups of four or five participants), invite participants to share their responses to the following questions. Write the questions on newsprint for all to see. Then record the group's response on newsprint. If you use small groups, ask all of the group members to share their responses to the first question before moving on to the second, etc. Then ask for reports from each small group and post the responses on newsprint.

- What comes to mind when you hear the word, "Lent?" What are some of the things you remember about Lent?
- What are some of the things the Church asks us to do during Lent?
- What do you think is the importance or significance of Lent?

- b) [spoken text] Open the session with an brief introduction to Lent, using the text below or your own words:

*The rich, liturgical color of royal purple cloaks the season of Lent in its penitential vesture. Simplicity and austerity quietly whisper images of the barren desert. Flowers are absent, music is sparse and the church quietly, but firmly, heralds its reflective "time out." Things have noticeably changed. As people and as church, we enter the time of serious penitential and baptismal reflection. We take stock and assess our growth in the Christian life. We ask ourselves, "Where is there need for healing and reconciliation in our lives?"*

*The Church teaches that "Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. For the Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery: catechumens, through several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful, through reminders of their own baptism and through penitential practices" (GNLY #27).*

*Lent is a time of conversion, of metanoia, a complete turning away from sin into the living arms of our loving God. The Lenten season challenges us to...*

- to hear and follow God's call
- to take time to pray and seek God's guidance in our lives.

- *to turning more fully to God which includes turning in love toward our neighbors through acts of justice, compassion and service*
- *take time to consider our choices and to look at our relationships for ways to be more loving, more fair, more forgiving and more compassionate.*
- *take time to share God's love through acts of service and justice.*
- *renew our belief in the Easter promise that we share in Jesus' resurrection*
- *prepare for renewing our baptismal promises during the Easter liturgies.*

*Lent is a serious season, since the opportunity to reflect on how we are living as disciples is important to our lives as Christians. However, Lent is not only serious and somber, there are also moments which are more light and joyous as we anticipate the resurrection of Jesus. As we observe Lent, we can be part of the serious reflection of the season and remember our joy! We keep our eyes and hearts fixed on the hope of Easter – we know how the story comes out!*

- c) Present an overview of Lent and Easter by showing Catholic Update Video: *The Church Celebrates Lent and Easter* (St. Anthony Messenger Press). Be sure to show the Teaching Segment (8 minutes). If time allows, you may want to use other segments as well:
- *In the story segment, we meet a man whose personal story of spiritual death and resurrection illustrates the Paschal Mystery and the dying to self we all must undertake as true followers of Christ. (8 minutes)*
  - *In the witness segment, Catholics talk about the meaning of Lent and Easter in their own lives. (3 minutes)*
  - *In the teaching segment, Franciscan Father Tom Richstatter presents an overview of the Easter Season – from Lent to Pentecost. He emphasizes a seasonal spirituality that reflects the centrality of Baptism in the lives and identities of all Christian disciples. (8 minutes)*
  - *The reflection segment is a music video featuring the song, Shelter Your Name, by Danielle Rose – a song of reconciliation and renewal for those preparing for Baptism and those already baptized. (3 minutes)*

## Part 2. The Three Practices of Lent

### The Practice of Prayer

1. [spoken text] Introduce the practice of prayer using the words below or your own words:

*All of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) tell us that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. As disciples, we seek to follow St. Paul's call to "pray always." Lent is a time when we concentrate our prayer on the double meaning of the season: conversion from our sinful ways and renewal of our baptismal promises.*

*Participating in the Eucharist and praying over the Scripture readings, on a weekly or even daily basis, are helpful ways of prayerfully entering into the season. Private prayer, family prayer and communal prayer all work together to deepen our prayer life, not only during this season, but also all year long.*

2. Use the following questions to help the participants to reflect on their prayer life and then share their insights in small groups. Select as many questions as time allows.

- When do you pray? Is prayer part of your everyday life?
- What do you pray *for* or pray *about*?
- Why do you think prayer is an important part of the Lenten season?
- Why should prayer be an important part of your life?
- What kind of prayer life do you want to develop?

3. Review the prayer ideas on the Lenten Ideas handout with the group. Be sure to add a calendar of prayer and liturgical services that your parish will be conducting during Lent, such as Stations of the Cross.

Review prayer resources that participants can use during Lent, such as:

- The *Black Book – Lent* (Diocese of Saginaw). Encourage the participants to use the book every day.
- *What Am I Doing for Lent this Year?* (Liturgy Training Publications)
- Lenten calendars for adults and teens from Creative Communications for the Parish.
- Lenten reflection booklets from Twenty-Third Publications.

Invite the participants to add new prayer ideas to the Lenten Ideas on the handout. Write these ideas on newsprint.

4. Ask the participants to review all of the Lenten prayer ideas and to select ideas they will live this Lent. Play some instrumental or Lenten music in the background while participants review the handout and write their commitments on the Lenten Pledge.

Invite the participants to share one prayer idea from their pledge. If have been working in small groups throughout the activity, ask participants to share one idea from their pledge with their group.

## The Practice of Fasting

1. [spoken text] Introduce the practice of fasting in your own words or using the text below:

*Fasting is an integral part of Lent. Traditionally it has included reducing the amount of food we eat and abstaining from meat.*

*But why do we fast? Not because our bodies and appetites are something evil that need to be punished, but to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger, our need for God. Our Lenten fasting is modeled on Jesus' 40-day fast in the desert, Just as he fasted in preparation for his baptism in the Jordan and his public ministry, we fast to remind ourselves of our baptismal commitment and need for renewal.*

*Fasting can take many forms. While we usually fast by eating less, we can also fast from other things, whether they be enjoyable activities or bad habits.*

*The purpose of fasting is to turn our attention to both God and others. Fasting reminds us not only of our dependence on God, but also of the needs of the hungry and poor. By fasting, we place ourselves in solidarity with suffering people everywhere.*

*While we usually fast by eating less, fasting can take many forms. Fasting can be holding back from unnecessary buying, accumulating, and wasting, from excessive TV viewing, etc. It can be an ecological fasting that fosters respect for natural resources and for all of creation. Any form of fasting can be a breaking from destructive patterns of life, freeing us to grow healthier in our thoughts and actions as Catholics.*

Joyce Rupp writes that fasting can...

- *free us so that we are not stuck in our weaknesses, addictions, prejudices and illusions*
- *liberate us from the bondage of materialism and busyness*
- *loosen our unhealthy grasp on our need to always be right or be the best or the most successful*
- *clear away the inner clutter*
- *increase our self-control*
- *help us rearrange our priorities*
- *alert us to what needs to be changed in our lives*
- *unite us with the suffering of the world*
- *enhance our gratitude*

*(Lent – Giving Our Hearts to God. Joyce Rupp. Catholic Update C0297. St. Anthony Messenger Press)*

2. Use the following questions to help the participants to reflect on the place of fasting in the Christian life and then share their insights in small groups. Select as many questions as time allows.

- What does fasting mean to you?
- Have you ever fasted? Why?
- What do you need to fast from?
- Why do you think fasting is such an important part of Lent?
- How can fasting during Lent deepen your faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

**Note:** Another strategy to introduce the concept of fasting is to use the handout, *Fasting and Feasting during Lent*. Help participants decide on what they want to fast from and what they want to feast on.

3. Review the fasting ideas on the Lenten Ideas handout with the group. Be sure to add parish activities that promoting fasting or simple meals during Lent, such as a Lenten soup supper.

Review resources that participants can use during Lent, such as:

- *The Black Book – Lent* (Diocese of Saginaw). Encourage the participants to use the book every day.
- *What Am I Doing for Lent this Year?* (Liturgy Training Publications)
- Lenten calendars for adults and teens from Creative Communications for the Parish.
- Lenten reflection booklets from Twenty-Third Publications.

Invite the participants to add new ideas to the Lenten Ideas on the handout. Write these ideas on newsprint.

4. Ask the participants to review all of the Lenten fasting ideas and to select ideas they will live this Lent. Play some instrumental or Lenten music in the background while participants review the handout and write their commitments on the Lenten Pledge.

Invite the participants to share one fasting idea from their pledge. If have been working in small groups throughout the activity, ask participants to share one idea from their pledge with their group.

## The Practice of Almsgiving/Service

1. [spoken text] Introduce the practice of almsgiving/service in your own words or using the text provided:

*The prophet Isaiah tells us that God wants a fast which involves “releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own” (Isaiah 58:6-7, NAB). Almsgiving or service is an essential Lenten practice.*

*The Catholic Bishops of the United States emphasize that “our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church.” (A Century of Social Teaching. A Pastoral Message of Catholic Bishops of the United States. November 1990)*

*Lent is a time for repentance and action. We are called to serve those in need and use our wealth, gifts, time, and talents to create a world that mirrors the vision that Jesus proclaimed. Lent is a good time to cultivate a spirit of gratitude for what we have. Our most precious commodities – health, friendship, love, the beauty of creation – are pure gifts from God. Without these our material possessions are worthless. Gratitude for what we have prompts us to do something for those in need, not out of guilt, but out of compassion. Compassion and generosity towards others involve giving not only from our surplus, but also from our substance.*

*(Excerpts from: Celebrating Lent in Your Home by Kathryn Schneider and Robert Hamma, Catholic Update 0293. St. Anthony Messenger Press.)*

2. Use the following questions to help the participants to reflect on their to others and then share their insights in small groups. Select as many questions as time allows.

- How are you currently involved in service to others?
- Why are you (or should you) involved in service? Why should service be an important part of your life?
- What is your “wealth” that you can share with those in need today?
- Why do you think service is an important part of the Lenten season?
- How can you grow in your service to others? During Lent how can you move to action through works of justice and service to those in need?

3. Review the almsgiving/service ideas on the Lenten Ideas handout with the group. Be sure to add local service projects to the list of the handout. This will provide people with specific things they can do during Lent in your parish and community.

Review resources that participants can use during Lent, such as:

- The *Black Book – Lent* (Diocese of Saginaw). Encourage the participants to use the book every day.
- *What Am I Doing for Lent this Year?* (Liturgy Training Publications)
- Lenten calendars for adults and teens from Creative Communications for the Parish.
- Lenten reflection booklets from Twenty-Third Publications.

Invite the participants to add new ideas to the Lenten Ideas on the handout. Write these ideas on newsprint.

4. Ask the participants to review all of the Lenten service ideas and to select ideas they will live this Lent. Play some instrumental or Lenten music in the background while participants review the handout and write their commitments on the Lenten Pledge.

Invite the participants to share one service idea from their pledge. If have been working in small groups throughout the activity, ask participants to share one idea from their pledge with their group.

### **Conclusion**

Conclude the activity plan by inviting the participants to take a moment and choose one word that reflects their personal hope for this Lent. Allow one or two minutes for quiet reflection, and then invite everyone to share the word or phrase to complete the sentence, "This Lent, I hope...."

# Alternative Activity #1

## Three Practices Lenten Calendar

Consider using this activity for all grade school children and adolescent programming. This is a wonderful way to help individuals experience Lent and prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### Activity Plan

1. Gather all the supplies you need for the Lenten Calendar activity.
  - Copies of the handouts: *Lenten Ideas for Children* or *Lenten Ideas* from the Three Lenten Practices Activity (select the appropriate one for the group: children or adolescents or adults)
  - Bible (children's Bible)
  - Pens / pencils for participants
  - Easel and newsprint for presentations, masking tape, markers
  - Christmas music and cassette or CD player
  - Supplies to make Calendar covers (Depends upon option selected. See Calendar-Making Options)
2. A Lenten calendar is similar to an Advent calendar, except that it tells the events leading up to the passion and death of Jesus, rather than his birth.
3. To simplify the activity and save time, you will want to prepare for the calendar making in advance. Using the *Calendar Options*, select the best option based for you. If you select the construction paper calendars, be sure to arrange for volunteers to help prepare this option in advance.
4. Guide the children and/adolescents in making a personal Advent calendar.

#### **For younger children:**

Guide them in making a weekly calendar with several ideas for each week.

- Using *Lenten Ideas for Children* help the children select a variety of possible things that they can do. (You will find the *Lenten Ideas* handouts after the "Three Practices of Lent" activity.) You may want to write these ideas on poster board or newsprint or a transparency, or simply distribute copies of the handout. Ask the children to help you find ways that they can walk with Jesus through Lent to his death on the cross and his resurrection.
- In each of the four boxes on the handout, *My Lenten Calendar*, ask the children to write down at least one thing they will do that week to prepare for Jesus' coming. Help them to answer the question, *This week I will...*
- They can illustrate their calendar with Lenten symbols (cross, thorns, ashes, palms, light and fire, water, bread, wine, oil). Suggest the symbols for each week's Lenten liturgy.

(Refer to the “Lent in Word and Symbol” activity earlier in this section for this information.)

- Give them stickers of crosses that they can place next to each idea that they actually do during Lent.

**For older children and adolescents:**

Guide them in making a Lenten calendar.

- Distribute the *Lenten Ideas for Children* or *Lenten Ideas* (older children or adolescents) and *My Lenten Calendar*. (You will find the *Lenten Ideas* handouts after the “Three Practices of Lent” activity.)
- Ask the participants to read the variety of ideas on the handout, *Lenten Ideas*. Invite the participants to brainstorm other ways that they can experience Lent and prepare for Jesus’ death and resurrection.
- Tell the participants to place each idea chosen into a box on the handout, *My Lenten Calendar*. (Several boxes are already provided on the calendar.)
- Explain how to complete the Calendar based on the option you have selected from *Calendar Options*.

While participants are making calendars play instrumental or Lenten music in the background.

5. Suggest that participants take their calendar home and post it on their bedroom door or mirror so they can view it each day in a private way, or on the refrigerator if they want some help from family members to live their Advent ideas.

## Variation for Children

You can use a map of the Holy Land for creating a children’s calendar. The following references tell the story of the public ministry of Jesus in the order given by the Synoptic Gospels. Cut out 40 windows in the Holy Land map that correspond, roughly, to the site named in the Scripture reference. (These are rough suggestions; don’t be afraid to place the window in some other spot, particularly if the Scripture reference does not name the place.)

Once the windows are cut, paste the picture to a plain white backing (poster board). Behind each window, on the backing, put a Scripture reference. On the door write the number of the Scripture reference so that they can be read in order. The references tell the story of the public life of Jesus, ending with the passion, death, and resurrection. The calendar will be completed at the beginning of Holy Week. The remainder of the passion, found in Matthew 26:14 – 27:66, Mark 14:1 – 15:23, or Luke 22:14 – 23:56, can be read during Holy Week.

Explain to the children that they or a family member should open the window and read the Scripture passage from the Bible each night during Lent.

1. Mark 1:9-11 (put on a window by the Jordan River, near the Dead Sea)
2. Luke 4:1-13 (in the desert beyond the Jordan)
3. Luke 4:16-19 (Nazareth)
4. Mark 1:16-20 (Sea of Galilee)
5. John 1:43-51 (Sea of Galilee)
6. John 2:1-12 (Cana)
7. Mark 1:21-28 (Capernaum)
8. Mark 1:29-31 (Capernaum)
9. Luke 4:42-44 (just outside Capernaum)
10. Mark 1:40-45 (north of Capernaum in Galilee)
11. Mark 2:1-12 (general area of Capernaum)
12. Mark 3:7-12 (hill country northwest of the Sea of Galilee)
13. Mark 4:1-9 (on Sea of Galilee, near east shore)
14. Mark 4:35-41 (middle of Sea of Galilee)
15. Mark 5:1-20 (east side of the Sea of Galilee)
16. Mark 6:1-6 (Nazareth)
17. Mark 6:7-13 (outside Nazareth)
18. Mark 6:17-29 (Tiberias)
19. Mark 6:30-44 (southwest of Sea of Galilee)
20. Matthew 5:1-12 (northwest of Sea of Galilee)
21. Mark 7:24-30 (Tyre)
22. Mark 7:31-37 (northern Decapolis region)
23. Mark 8:22-26 (Bethsaida)
24. Mark 9:2-8 (Mount Tabor)
25. Luke 9:51-56 (Samaria)
26. John 4:1-30 (Samaria)
27. Luke 10:38-42 (Bethany)
28. Luke 11:1-4 (northeastern Judea)
29. Luke 15:1-7 (outside Jerusalem)
30. Luke 19:1-10 (Jericho)
31. Luke 19:28-38 (Jerusalem)
32. Luke 19:41-44 (Jerusalem)
33. Luke 19:45-48 (Jerusalem)
34. Luke 21:1-4 (Jerusalem)
35. John 2:14-16 (Jerusalem)
36. Luke 22:1-6 (Jerusalem)
37. Luke 22:14-20 (Jerusalem)
38. Luke 22:39-46 (Mount of Olives)
39. Luke 22:47-53 (Mount of Olives)
40. Luke 22:54-62 (Jerusalem)

# Alternative Activity #2

## Lenten Catalog

### Organizing Tips

The Lenten Catalog is designed as a way to involve the whole parish in creating a “catalog” of the best ways to experience Lent for individuals of all ages and as families. The involvement of a wide variety of people in creating the Lenten Catalog builds an investment in Lent for them and for the whole parish community. This is a wonderful way to involve all ages in learning about Lent and in preparing everyone for the death and resurrection of the Lord.

This activity is designed so that every age and generation can be involved in making a contribution to the catalog. These contributions can take many different forms, e.g., Lenten calendar suggestions, prayers, artwork, illustrations, comic strip, poems, quotes from Scripture, interviews with the parish staff and parishioners of all ages, suggestions for fasting, service projects, activities, stories, etc. Include the parish Lenten calendar of liturgies, programs, and events in the catalog. Think of the Lenten Catalog as the parish’s version of a Lands’ End or L.L. Bean catalog.

You can organize the work on the catalog so that each age group (or grade level) can focus on particular types of contributions to the catalog or you can engage every age group in creating a variety of activities for the list of possible contributions.

The Lenten Catalog can be modified for use with only one age group (or children and adolescents). The catalog can be targeted to a particular age group or group of people, focusing the content and examples for this age group.

After each age group has prepared their contributions, you will need to work with a team of people who can complete the design and layout for the Lenten Catalog. Look for people among your program leaders, parents, and young people of the parish who have an interest and experience in designing publications. For example, adults who produce newsletters for their company or civic group, young people who work on the school newspaper or yearbook, etc.

### Activity Plan

1. Gather all the supplies and resources you will need for creating the catalog.
  - Individual groups will need an assortment of supplies for making their contribution. Select resources based on the type of activity(s) the group will be working on. These supplies can include: paper, pens, colored markers and pencils, drawing materials, watercolor paints, photographs, scissors, magazines and newspapers, glue, etc.
  - Individual groups will need: Bibles (or children’s Bibles) for everyone, a list of the Lenten Lectionary readings, The Lectionary, The Lectionary for Children, or copies of the Lenten missalette, The Sacramentary, and Lenten prayer resources (an assortment).

- You will need clipart and photos for illustrating the catalog. Check out clip art collections in books, magazines for photos, computer clipart and photo CD collections (look for free clipart and photos on-line), etc.
  - Find people who have a computer, laser or inkjet printer, and a publishing software program, such as Microsoft Publisher, at home or work. Invite them to help design and assemble the catalog.
  - Locate printing services. Find out if there are any parishioners who own or work at print or copy shops. Find out if any parishioners work at companies with copiers that you could use to print your work.
2. Determine the content, format, and specifications of the Lenten Catalog. You will need to decide if each age group will focus on certain types of contributions or if each age group will create a variety of activities from the list you develop. Use the following questions to guide your decision-making.
- a) **What do you want to include in the Lenten Catalog?** Determine the content and activities you want to include prior to assigning projects to age groups. Check out the Table of Contents in the Lent Home section for an example of the variety of Lenten activities that could be included in a catalog.

#### Potential Types of Contributions

- a Lenten calendar
- prayers (for individual or home use)
- artwork, illustrations, and comic strips
- poems
- quotes from the Lenten Scripture readings
- interviews with the parish staff and parishioners of all ages
- suggestions for fasting
- suggestions for service projects
- instructions for making Lenten activities, e.g., making a cross, holy cards, Easter candle (see the activities in this section for ideas)
- original “short” stories for different age groups, similar to the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books
- media recommendations: reviews of books, videos, and music appropriate for Lent

#### Sample Table of Contents

- Parish Lenten calendar
- Lenten calendar of ideas and reflections
- Prayers for Lent (table prayers, daily prayers, morning and evening prayer)
- Scripture reflections
- Ideas for fasting
- Ideas for almsgiving and serving
- Lenten stories

- b) **What is the size and length of the catalog** – number of pages, 8.5 X 11 or 4.25 X 5.5, etc.? Determine the format prior to assigning projects to age groups, so that everyone knows the specifications of the finished product and how much they need to contribute.
  - c) **What will each age group contribute to the catalog?** You can target several age-appropriate activities for each group or you can engage each age group in creating a variety of activities. Make sure that each age group knows what is expected from them.
3. There are many ways for the individual age groups to create their projects. Here is a suggested overall process that can be adapted for different age groups.
- a) Organize the participants into work groups organized around projects. Older children, adolescents, and adults can select which projects they want to create. For younger children, you may want to assign projects or work on one project as a group.
  - b) Explain the task for each work group.
  - c) Provide the supplies and handouts that each work group will need. Provide books and other samples of completed projects so that the groups know what is expected of them.
  - d) Guide the teams in creating their projects. Provide guidance and examples to help the groups complete their work.
  - e) If time allows, ask each group to present their project to the rest of the group.

Use the specific ideas on the handout, *Creating Your Lenten Catalog*, to structure your project work.

4. After all of the groups have prepared their contributions, gather a team of people who can assist you in producing the catalog. You can use a computer and a publishing program, such as Microsoft Publisher, or your own word processing program, to create your Lenten Catalog. You can compose and illustrate the publication on a computer. You can create original artwork or select clipart or existing artwork to illustrate the publication. You can also scan photos and printed material into your catalog.
5. Determine how you will print and distribute the catalog. Consider the following questions in publishing your catalog:
- What resources do you have for publishing your project?
  - How much will it cost?
  - How will you find money to print it? Will you take out ads to cover the cost of printing? (You may want to consider including advertisements in the Lenten Catalog to offset the cost of printing.)
  - How will you distribute your project to people? Will you personally distribute it or use the mail? (You can insert the publication into the Sunday bulletin, mail it home to parishioners, personally distribute it to each individual or family after Sunday Mass or at religious education classes and gathered programs, etc.)

# Creating a Lenten Catalog

*Here are examples of how to structure individual projects. Feel free to create your own task for each project.*

## Scripture Reflections

1. Explain the task: re-write several Lenten Scripture readings in contemporary language, using contemporary images, symbols, and examples.
2. Select Scripture readings that the group will use. (See the list of the Lectionary readings for Lent at the beginning of this section).
3. Provide Bibles, pens, paper, etc. for individuals to use.
4. Give the participants an illustration of contemporary re-writing of a Scripture story.
5. Guide the work groups in creating their projects.

## Prayers and Poems

1. Explain the task: create Lenten prayers to help people experience Lent and deepen their relationship with Jesus.
2. Review the variety of types of prayers that participants can create, e.g., prayers of contrition, prayers of petition, prayers of praise, Scripture-inspired prayer, prayers of thanksgiving, etc. Review the different formats for their prayers, e.g., morning and nighttime prayer, Ash Wednesday prayer, table prayers for Lent, Lenten prayer petitions, litany prayer for Lent, prayers for every day of Lent, etc.
3. Provide the list of Lectionary readings for Lent that the participants can use for inspiration in creating their prayers. You may also want to select particular Psalms that participants can use for inspiration.
4. Provide Bibles, pens, paper, etc. for individuals to use. Provide prayer resources for participants to use as they create their own prayers.
5. Give the participants an illustration of a prayer.
6. Guide the work groups in creating their projects.

## Artwork

1. Explain the task: create artwork to illustrate the major themes of Lent or the major themes in the Lectionary readings for Lent.
2. Provide the list of Lectionary readings for Lent that the participants can use for inspiration.
3. Review the major symbols of Lent: the color purple, light, water, oil, bread, wine, cross, palms, ashes, etc. Remind them of the importance of the desert imagery in Lent.
4. Provide Bibles, pens, paper, art supplies, etc. for individuals and teams to use. If teams are going to take photos, provide “disposable” cameras for the group to use in taking Lenten pictures.
5. Give the participants illustrations of different types of artwork. Make a variety of art books available for the participants to review. (You can borrow art books from the local library.)

6. Guide the work groups in creating their projects.

## Interviews

1. Explain the task: conduct interviews with parishioners of all ages, families, parish staff, the pastor, et al. Ask each person about the meaning of Lent for them, their favorite Lenten practices, their favorite memory of Lent, etc.
2. Develop a list of people to be interviewed.
3. Call each person. Explain the purpose of your interview. Be sure to tell the interviewee that you have prepared a set of questions for the interview. (You can send these in advance). Ask if you can schedule an interview. Keep a list of all the confirmed people with interview times, addresses, and phone numbers. You can use this list to schedule each interview team with an interviewee.
4. Coordinate the logistics of the visit carefully. Since you are working with interview teams, you will may need to involve adults to transport teams to the various locations. Be sure the driver is clear about where you are going and how to get there. Arrange for the interviewee to meet the group at church, if possible. Provide name tags for the participants.
5. Be considerate of the time you are taking.
6. Prepare the recording equipment needed, testing it to assure all equipment is in good operating order. When possible use AC power cords rather than batteries. If you are using batteries, check to be sure they are fully charged and bring a backup battery if possible. Gather any extension cords or adapters that might be helpful. Have the participants practice with the equipment so that they know the best volume and distance to be used.
7. Prepare the participants for the interviews before they begin. Use the following guidelines:
  - Be honest about your purpose in contacting the potential interviewee. Agree to a good time for him or her and discuss the interviewee's own "ground rules."
  - Become a good reporter when conducting the interview.
  - Keep the interview brief; concentrate on asking a handful of good questions and on recording good answers received.
  - Be willing to "play it by ear" because the interviewee may suggest ideas or questions beyond your original ideas for the interview. Explore new avenues of interest which surface during the interview.

## Ideas for Fasting and Ideas for Almsgiving (Service)

1. Explain the task: create a variety of age-appropriate ideas for fasting and/or giving alms/serving the needs of others that people will be able to use during Lent. Develop practical examples for ideas that people can use to put the idea into practice.
2. Use the *Lenten Ideas* handouts (children, adolescents, and adults) and the information in the activity, *Three Lenten Practices*, to assist groups in developing their ideas. Distribute copies of the *Lenten Ideas* handouts to the participants.
3. For adolescents and adults: Provide the Catholic Updates, *How to Find Joy in Lent* by Jack Wintz (CU 0295) and *Lent – Giving Our Hearts to God* by Joyce Rupp (CU0297) to help them understand the three practices of Lent: fasting, praying, and almsgiving.
4. Provide pens, paper, etc. for individuals and teams to use.
5. Guide the work groups in creating their projects.

# Part 4. Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (20-25 minutes)

## Advanced Preparation

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group or to their small group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

**Suggestion:** Invite the participants to gather in intergenerational groups to share their ideas for fasting, praying, and almsgiving from their Lenten Pledge; and to share what they learned about Lent and the three Lenten practices.

## Home Kit

Develop a Lent Home Kit that *extends* and *expands* the learning that has taken place through the intergenerational learning program. It should *engage* families and individuals in living their faith at home through traditions and celebrations, rituals, symbols, prayers, service projects, learning activities, and enrichment activities. Include specific activities on the event that you have selected as a focus for the session. These additional activities can include learning activities about the event, Scripture readings, table rituals, prayers, and so on.

Use a variety of design formats for your activities, such as a prayer card, stand-up card, poster, placemat, newsletter, booklet, magnet, bookmark, and artwork.

Included with this session are the following home activities:

1. Ash Wednesday Blessing of the Home Cross
2. Ash Wednesday Celebration
3. Blessing of a Home Cross
4. Lenten Daily Prayers
5. Living Lent through Service to Others
6. Prayers for Every Day of Lent
7. Preparing the Lenten Prayer Space
8. Scripture Reflections during Lent
9. Service Ideas for Lent
10. Table Prayers for Lent
11. Lenten Family Celebration

## 1. Whole Group Sharing and Reflection

The whole group sharing experience provides an opportunity for each age group to share something they have learned with the entire group. Ask people to rejoin intergenerational groups from the All Ages Learning Experience OR ask family members to rejoin their own

family and individual adolescent and adult participants to stay with their age groups from the In-Depth Learning Experience.

First, ask the participants to share what they learned in a small group setting or by inviting participants or groups, representing families, teens, and adults, to share projects or reflections with the entire.

[spoken text] Second, present the following information using the words below or your own words:

Think of everything we have done in this session to learn about Lent and the three practices of Lent. Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this session:

- What is one thing you learned about Lent and the three practices that you did not know before?
- What will you look for when you participate in the Lenten Season in the parish community?
- How will you live the three practices in your life?
- Why does Lent mean to you now?

Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities. Guide everyone in developing an individual or family action plan for living at home using the Home Kit, and planning for participation in the sacrament.

## 2. Reflection—Application Strategies

Prepare strategies and activities to guide individuals and families in *reflecting* on the meaning of their learning and their participation in the Church event and in *applying* their learning to daily living as a Catholic. The goal is to help people apply the beliefs and practices to their daily life, and report or “publish” their learning with others in the parish community.

Reflection and application activities and strategies can be included with the Home Kit. You can also include a time for feedback in your next intergenerational learning program

There are a variety of formats for reflection—application activities. Reflection tools include unfinished sentences, reflection questions, learning journals, and a structured reflection activities. Application tools include action plans, practice plans, “to do” lists, and resolutions.

Art and media strategies can also be used to express reflection and application. Consider activities such as a bumper stickers, picture collages, “recipe for living” cards, posters, photos, and projects that create and bring back to Sunday Mass or the next intergenerational learning program.

## Reflection Strategy Suggestions

- **Lenten Journal.** Adolescents through adults, as well as families, can use journals to record their experience of Lent – their thoughts, feelings, questions, hopes, dreams, faith practices, etc. Journals or poster-journals can record the actual Lenten practices of individuals and families. Consider a poster-journal designed for the refrigerator so that all family members can record their actions and thoughts, feelings, and learning. Include the journal in the Lenten Home Kit.
- **Lenten Photo Collage.** Give each family a disposal camera in their Lenten Home Kit. Ask individuals and families to take photos of their “in-home” experience of Lent, especially the three practices of Lent (e.g., a photo of the family at prayer, a photo of the family serving others, etc). Ask them to prepare a photo collage that presents their experience of Lent with descriptions or captions that explain their actions and commentary on their feelings and/or thoughts about living Lent.

Ask them to bring their photos to Sunday Mass on a designated weekend or to a gathered program during the week. Be sure they put their name on the back of the photo. Develop a gallery or bulletin board of photos (in the church gathering space) as a way to publish people’s learning. *Be sure to take photos of the display for the parish scrapbook.* After the display at church, encourage people to display their photos at home (on the refrigerator).

- **Lenten “Recipe for Living” Cards.** During Lent ask individuals and families to create practical strategies for living Lent that they have actually practiced. Distribute 3x5 file cards and ask people to write down one practical strategy on each recipe card. Ask them to return the cards on a particular Sunday during the offertory collection or during the week at gathered programs. Consider creating a Lenten or annual parish “cook book” of recipes for living the Catholic faith. Publish the book and distribute it to individuals and families. Include pre-printed file cards in the Home Lenten Kit.
- **Lenten Scrapbook.** Give individuals and families a small scrapbook in their Lenten Home Kit. Ask everyone to document their 40-day journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. The scrapbook can be filled with photos, artwork, prayers, reflections, etc. documenting the “in-home” experience of Lent (e.g., photos of their times of prayer or involvement in serving others, copies of prayers used during the year such as Lenten daily prayers, copies of completed reflection strategies, etc). Incorporate storytelling in the next gathered program so that individuals and families can share their scrapbooks and their learning and growth.

### Example: Reflection on Lent

What did I see at the Masses during the Lenten Season?

- Think of the colors, decorations, and artwork used at Mass during Lent. Think of all the actions at Mass this week.
- What did you see at Mass during Lent?

What did I hear at the Masses during Lent?

- Think of the songs you sang during Lent. Think of the Scripture readings each week of Lent, especially the Gospel. Think of the message of the homily.
- What is Lent teaching you? What are the Lectionary readings teaching you about Lent?

How did I pray during Lent?

- Think of the prayers and the petitions at Mass during Lent.
- What do the Lenten prayers teach us about Lent. How can you keep the spirit of these prayers in your life during the Lenten season?
- Think of the ways you and your family prayed during Lent. What was the focus of your prayer during Lent?

How did I serve others during Lent – with the parish community, as an individual, with my family?

How did you live Lent – at home and in the parish? How did you prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

- What parish celebrations and programs did you participate in?
- How did you live Lent at home – prayer, rituals, service to others, etc.?
- What is one thing you learned about Lent this year? How did you grow closer to Jesus Christ during Lent?

## Part 5

### Closing Prayer Service (5-10 minutes)

#### Preparation

To prepare the closing prayer service use the suggested resources from the opening prayer service. Consider using Isaiah 58:6-11, one of the Lenten Scripture readings from the Lectionary, or a prayer from the Ash Wednesday liturgy in the Sacramentary.

#### Closing Prayer

Dear Lord...

The Lenten season begins. It is a time to be with you in a special way, a time to pray, to fast, and thus to follow you on your way to Jerusalem, to Golgotha, and to the final victory over death.

I am still so divided. I truly want to follow you, but I also want to follow my own desires and lend an ear to the voices that speak about prestige, success, human respect, pleasure, power, and influence. Help me to become deaf to these voices and more attentive to your voice, which calls me to choose the narrow road to life.

I know that Lent is going to be a very hard time for me. The choice for your way has to be made every moment of my life. I have to choose thoughts that are your thoughts, words that are your words, and actions that are your actions. There are no times or places without choices. And I know how deeply I resist choosing you.

Please, Lord, be with me at every moment and in every place. Give me the strength and the courage to live this season faithfully, so that, when Easter comes, I will be able to taste with joy the new life which you have prepared for me. Amen.

*(Show Me the Way – Readings for Each Day of Lent. Henri Nouwen. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, page 13.)*