

Date:

# With PARENTS

## FRIDAYS IN LENT

### FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Talk to your children about fasting and abstinence, especially on Fridays during Lent. Jesus was crucified on a Friday. Tell them you are not going to eat meat that day. Ask them for help in coming up with some menu ideas: macaroni and cheese, pasta with meatless tomato sauce, scrambled eggs and toast, soup and grilled cheese, rice and beans, potato pancakes, vegetarian tacos, pierogi, tuna and noodle casserole

Explain how fasting means limited eating and no snacking. This applies to all healthy Catholics over 14 years. Pregnant or nursing women are exempt. Fasting means only a minimum of foods between meals, this food should be essential type food and not junk food. Young people can become quite vigilant with each other, and with parents, once they understand what fasting is all about.

### FASTING, SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

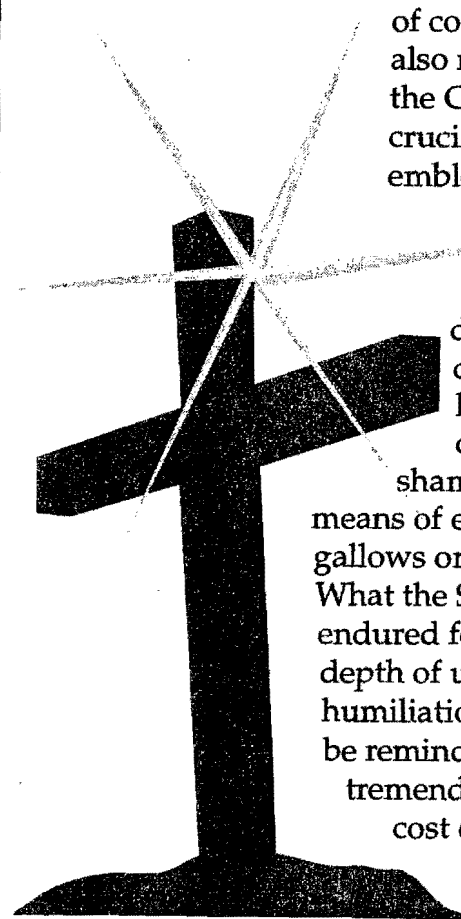
The value of self-denial must be learned early in a person's life. Lent provides an excellent opportunity to teach children the necessity of self-denial in our permissive society. Learning about the spirit of fasting can include restriction of luxuries such as having dinner in a restaurant, watching television, playing computer games, shopping or going out with friends.

A good spring cleaning can help children evaluate the excesses in their lives. They can be encouraged to give away clothing, toys, games or other possessions to those in need. They can also be encouraged to give time to the Lord by volunteering their services.

## THE CROSS

In the symbol of the Cross we can see the magnitude of the human tragedy, the ravages of original sin, and the infinite love of God. Lent is a particularly appropriate time to attempt to understand the true meaning of this sacred image through prayerful meditation. Lent is a perfect opportunity to study the traditions surrounding the Christian symbol of the Cross. Looking at the Cross in prayer helps us truly to see it. Most Christians have crosses in their homes. If your home lacks a displayed crucifix, Lent is a good time to acquire and exhibit this Christian symbol of faith.

It is fitting that Christians glorify the Cross as a sign of Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death, of course. We should also remember that the Cross of Jesus' crucifixion was an emblem of physical anguish and personal defilement, of debasement and humiliation, of degradation and shame. It was a means of execution, like a gallows or a gas chamber. What the Son of God endured for us was the depth of ugliness and humiliation. We need to be reminded of the tremendous personal cost of love.



KEE Keeping In Touch KEE Keeping In Touch

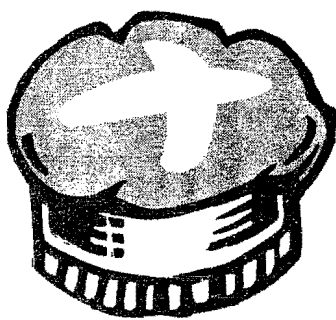
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GOOD FRIDAY IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

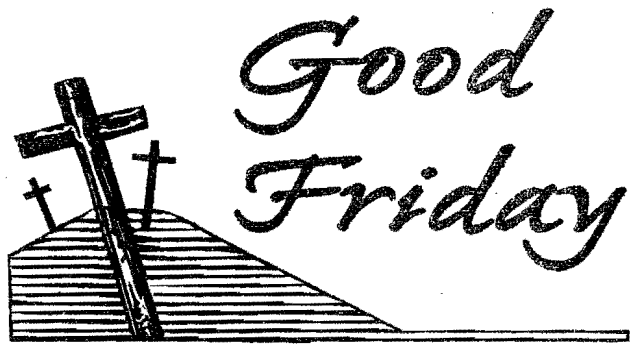
Most schools are closed on Good Friday, so children will be able to participate in family observances of this solemn day. If possible, the entire family should attend Good Friday services together, or at least make a trip to Church for the Stations of the Cross.

A few other suggestions:

Make hot cross buns. The familiar hot cross buns are sweet rolls with the sign of the cross cut into it, and they are one of several traditional European breads marked with a cross for Good Friday. According to tradition, these buns originated at St. Alban's Abbey in 1361, where the monks gave them to the poor people who came to the monastery that day.



Solemnize the hours between noon and 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Some churches hold prayer services during the three hours of Christ's suffering on the Cross. It would be appropriate to observe a period of silence at home, for devotional reading and private prayer (e.g., no radio, television, music, etc.). Each member of the family might choose a particularly unpleasant job which has been put off for a long time, like cleaning the garage or a closet, or scrubbing the bathrooms to emphasize the dreariness appropriate to the day.



A FAMILY EASTER CANDLE

If for some reason your family cannot attend the Easter Vigil Service (for example, if the children are too young to be out late at night) some of this symbolism can be brought into the home. A simple ceremony for lighting a new fire might be done after dark just before bedtime on Holy Saturday night. A new fire can be kindled in a large heat proof pan or you may want to do it outside, in the barbecue. From this fire an Easter or Paschal candle can be lit. The family Easter candle should be large enough to be lighted at meal times for the forty days of the Easter season. Most religious goods stores carry "Christ Candles" which will serve the purpose.

Literally...

A father was reading Bible stories to his son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city without looking back. Lot's wife disobeyed. She looked back and was turned to salt."

Surprised by this, the son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

KEEP Keeping In Touch KEEP Keeping In Touch

Date: 21 With P A R E N T S

**FORTY DAYS OF LENT**

Lent is a season of fasting, special prayer and almsgiving. It begins on Ash Wednesday with the signing of ashes as a reminder of this holy season.

Lent is a special forty-day preparation for Easter. The number forty is said to have evolved from its common use in scripture to represent spiritual or faith journeys.

Moses is said to have spent forty days on Mount Sinai. The prophet Elijah was in the wilderness for forty days when he fled the king's anger. Elijah journeyed for forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai to be with God.

Hebrew Scriptures tell the story of the forty years that the Jews wandered in the wilderness after Moses led them out of Egypt. In the parable of Jonah, the wicked city of Nineveh was given forty days in which to repent.

In the New Testament we are told that Jesus was tempted for forty days and nights in the wilderness. After Jesus rose from the dead Jesus was seen for forty days by His disciples. Ascension Thursday is forty days after Easter.

Families should remember these faith journeys of the Bible. They should plan how they will spend the forty days of Lent as a family and as individuals. They should chart out a spiritual journey for themselves.

**HOLY WEEK LITURGIES**

Families are encouraged to take part in the liturgies of Holy Week, which celebrate the events which took place during the final days of Jesus' life. Adults and children experience the same event and have different focal points of interest and meaning.

Listed below you will find elements of each liturgy which you might want to point out to your child. They are not necessarily the most

important components of the liturgy for adults, but might serve to arouse the interest of children in the meaning of the Holy Week Services.



**Palm Sunday: Celebration of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem**

Palms are blessed and distributed. There is a procession with palms. The story of the Passion and death of Jesus is read. The Gospel is long and parents of younger children may want to bring a Bible picture book or coloring book to church for their child.

**Holy Thursday: Celebration of the Last Supper**

Most of this liturgy is very festive in honor of the institution of the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. In many parishes the ceremony of the Washing of the Feet takes place in honor of Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper. There is a procession to transfer the Holy Eucharist to a repository for tomorrow's Holy Communion because there is no consecration of hosts on Good Friday.

**Good Friday: Celebration of the Passion and Death of Jesus**

Children will notice the difference between this liturgy and the Mass. The silence and starkness in the beginning of this celebration will be striking to them. The second part of this three part service is the Veneration of the Cross. The celebrant presents the cross, the sign of victory. Members of the congregation are invited to walk up to the cross and show some sign of reverence. People show their respect for the cross by a simple genuflection or some other suitable gesture.

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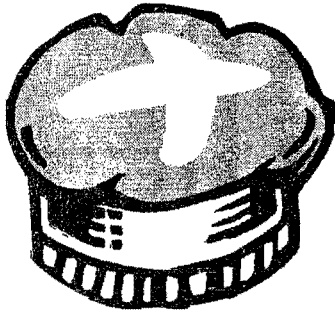
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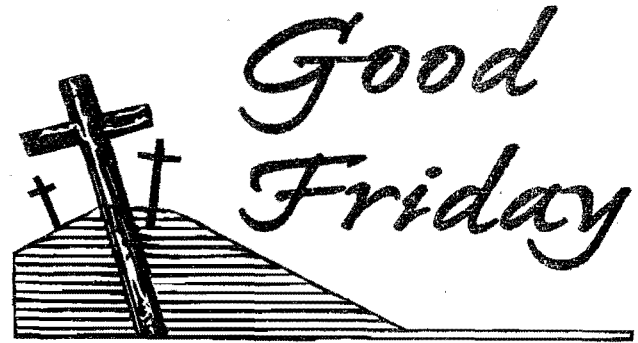
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