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LIVE LENT *at Home*

Daily Prayers and Activities
FOR FAMILIES

Paige Byrne Shortal



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First edition

Puzzle Solutions

Page 12—Map Locations: 1. 40 days; 2. Moses and Elijah; 3. A woman—we don't know her name; 4. Jerusalem; 5. Lazarus; 6. "Hosanna!"—a shout of acclamation or praise, from the Hebrew meaning "pray, save us!" 7. His disciples; 8. Calvary or Golgotha, outside the walls of Jerusalem; 9. Tomb—a place, usually carved into rock, where the dead were buried. Jesus' tomb was found empty because he was raised by God the Father to new life. • Page 27—Cryptogram: Words to Live By: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." • Page 37—Hidden Message: Are You Listening? "This is my Son, the beloved; listen to Him!" • Page 47—Crossword: Thirsty for God: 1. Jacob; 2. bucket; 3. well; 4. (Across) testimony; (Down) thirsty; 5. Jerusalem; 6. Messiah; 7. disciples; 8. Joseph; 9. worship; 10. prophet; 11. Christ; 12. salvation; 13. journey; 14. ancestors; 15. Samaria; 16. water • Page 67—Word Hook-Up: Test Your Lent Knowledge: 1. D, 2. F, 3. J, 4. E, 5. H 6. C, 7. K, 8. B, 9. G, 10. L, 11. A, 12. I • Page 77—Scrambled Words or Scrambled Eggs: 1. Easter; 2. egg; 3. chocolate; 4. jellybeans; 5. bunny; 6. basket; 7. bonnet; 8. Jesus; 9. hunt; 10. Alleluia; 11. lily; 12. risen.

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Lent Begins

ASH WEDNESDAY GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:1–6, 16–18

“**B**eware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the syna-

gogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

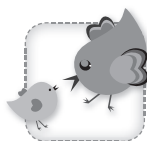
Ash Wednesday



To think about...

Funny thing about today—even though Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, the church is always crowded. One pastor used to joke that it's because the church is giving away something for free (ashes), but surely that can't be it. Yet even "casual Catholics" connect with this sign of ashes. We walk through the day with dirty faces, admitting to the world that we are not perfect, that there is room for change, that we long for a deeper relationship with God.

Catholics are obliged to fast today. This means that we don't eat meat and we eat sparingly—two small meals that are enough to sustain us but don't fill us up, one regular meal, and nothing in between meals. Note: These rules don't apply to children, the elderly, and pregnant or nursing women, but it's a good idea to instill this habit in children without endangering their health.



To do and to talk about...

Go to Mass today and receive the sign of ashes. Notice that the altar cloth is purple—the color the Church uses during penitential seasons. Carefully read the Gospel for today and identify the three elements of observing Lent: giving to the poor (alms), fasting, and prayer. The Lenten season actually begins this Sunday. Today is the beginning of the Lenten fast, so we are given a kind of warm-up period—several days to figure out how we want to observe Lent. Talk today about what you want to give up or add to your family's daily routine.



Let us pray...

*Lord Jesus, bless us as we begin this
journey of Lent with you so that on Easter
we may feel you rising within us.
We pray, Lord, let us be like you.
Amen.*

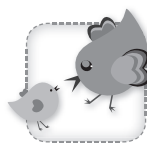
Thursday after Ash Wednesday



To think about...

Almsgiving, fasting and prayer—these are the three elements of Lent. Isn't it interesting that most religions encourage these three practices during their penitential seasons? Christians of many denominations, Jews and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists—all observe a period of sacrifice and attention to the spiritual.

Why does Lent include charity to the poor? Perhaps it's because our relationship with God is never just two-way, but always includes others, especially those most in need. Jesus was adamant about this. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46), Jesus tells us that what we do for others we do for him, and that when we neglect others, we are neglecting him. This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus tells us what we need to do to get into heaven. Hmm...maybe we'd better listen.



To do and to talk about...

Create an alms vessel today. It may be a little box or a jar or a tin can that your children can decorate, with liberal use of their purple crayon! Put it in a place where you will see it and be reminded to put something in it every day. Ask God's blessing on your alms vessel.



Let us pray...

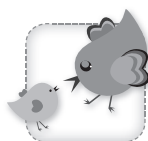
*Lord Jesus,
bless our alms vessel today.
Let it be a sign of your love
and your desire for us to love each other as you love us.
And, Jesus, please bless the poor,
especially those who have no one to pray for them.
We pray, Lord, let us be like you.
Amen.*

Friday after Ash Wednesday



To think about...

"What are you giving up for Lent?" I love to listen to children talk about what they're giving up. One of my sons would present a long list of his intended sacrifices—which would maybe last until Ash Wednesday afternoon. His younger brother was less demanding of himself. He would announce that he was giving up mayonnaise, which he hated, or steak, which we never ate. One year I gave up rushing. I was in full-time ministry, a graduate student, and the mother of three young kids. I was always rushing, even when there was no place I had to be. It had become a habit. I gave up rushing, and it was liberating, not only for that Lent, but even now—twenty years later. Some folks fast from television or electronic games or chatting online—whatever threatens to take you away from your immediate duties and attention to those you love. And, of course, many choose to give up a favorite food. Sometimes it's the seemingly trivial sacrifice that is the hardest for the long haul. There is that voice within us saying, "Oh, come on, what harm can one piece of chocolate do?"



To do and to talk about...

Decide today how you will fast, pray, and give alms during Lent. Talk about it with your family and let each member write down their intentions on a slip of paper. Then place your paper in the alms vessel with a prayer.



Let us pray...

*Lord Jesus,
today we promise to share our blessings with the poor,
to fast so that we might remember your sacrifice,
and to talk to you—to pray. Give us the grace to keep
our Lenten promises. We pray, Lord, let us be like you.
Amen.*

Prayer

Sign of the Cross

The third element of Lent, in addition to almsgiving and fasting, is prayer. We can pray alone and with our families and, of course, with our church community. Lent is a good time to begin a habit of prayer.

The Sign of the Cross is the most basic Christian prayer. It is a prayer of blessing, a prayer of dedication of ourselves to God, and a prayer of faith in the power and love of Jesus for us. Teach your children how to make the Sign of the Cross and encourage them to do so whenever you pray.

Typically we use the right hand, although if there is need, the left may be used. First touch the forehead and say, "In the name of the Father"; then touch the breast above the heart and say, "and of the Son"; then the left shoulder and say, "and of the Holy"; and finally the right shoulder while saying, "Spirit. Amen."

The sign of the cross may also be made with the thumb or forefinger on your child's forehead before they go to sleep at night or when you greet them in the morning or before they leave the house for school. It is the parents' privilege to bless their children, asking God to keep them safe and well and on the right path.

Many homes have a small font or container of holy water inside the door just as we do in church. When we dip our fingers into the holy water and sign ourselves with the cross, this reminds us that we are baptized Christians and committed disciples of Jesus.



Fun Page



Map to a Happy Easter!

Lent is a kind of journey with stops along the way. When you start out on a journey, it's a good idea to have a map. Follow Jesus on this journey through Lent to Easter.

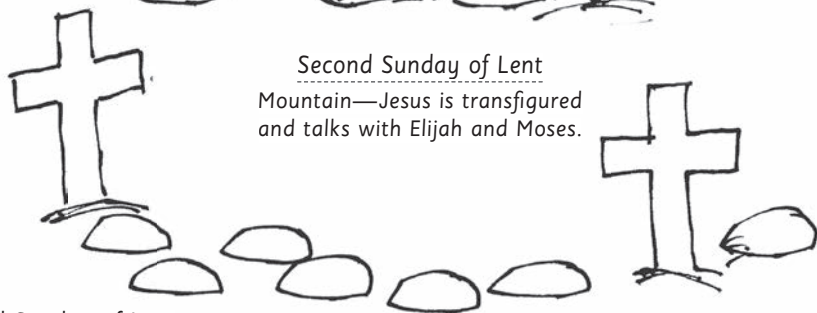
First Sunday of Lent

Desert—Jesus retreats to the desert for forty days to prepare for his journey.



Second Sunday of Lent

Mountain—Jesus is transfigured and talks with Elijah and Moses.



Third Sunday of Lent

Samaria—Jesus accepts a drink from a woman at a well and offers her new life.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

On a road in Jerusalem—Jesus heals the young man born blind.

Easter Sunday

Empty tomb—Jesus is Risen!
Alleluia!



Good Friday

Calvary or Golgotha,
outside the walls of
Jerusalem—Jesus dies on
the cross for us.

Holy Thursday

Upper Room in Jerusalem—
Jesus celebrates his Last
Supper with his disciples and
washes their feet.



Palm Sunday

Streets of Jerusalem—
Jesus rides through the
streets on a donkey to the
shouts of “Hosanna!”



Fifth Sunday of Lent

Martha and Mary’s house in Bethany—
Jesus raises Martha and Mary’s brother,
Lazarus, from the dead.

Test your
Map Knowledge

1. How long did Jesus stay in the desert?
2. Who did Jesus talk with on the mountain while he was transfigured?
3. Who gave Jesus a drink in Samaria?
4. In what town did Jesus heal the man who was born blind?
5. Who was Mary’s and Martha’s brother?
6. What did the people shout as Jesus rode a donkey?
7. Whose feet did Jesus wash?
8. Where did Jesus die on the cross?
9. What is a tomb? Why is it important that Jesus’ tomb was found empty?

Stations of the Cross

Introduction

This is an ancient devotion, yet it always seems new because it is about our personal journey with Jesus. You can pray this devotion in church while walking from station to station or at home. Maybe the children will want to make their own booklet of pictures, one for each station.

Pray after the announcement of each Station ✨

Leader We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

All Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death. ✨

Leader Let us pray. Lord Jesus, your suffering and death seem so unfair. It always seems unfair when good people get hurt or lose their jobs or get sick. Please bless those who feel that life is unfair and help them to know that you understand.

All Hear our prayer, Lord Jesus. Amen.



Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross. ✨

Leader Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we pray for those whose crosses are too heavy to carry: for those who are very sick, for those who miss someone who has died, for those who are afraid or sad or lonely. Comfort them and help them carry their crosses.

All Hear our prayer, Lord Jesus. Amen.

