

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2018

St. Nicholas Academy
Aideen Briggs, Principal



Thoughtful Moments

St. Scholastica

St. Scholastica was the sister of St. Benedict, the founder of the Benedictines. Born in Italy around 480, she founded an order of Benedictine nuns. Once a year, she and her brother visited together. One year, sensing death was near, Scholastica begged her brother to stay, but he refused. She prayed and a terrible thunderstorm resulted, preventing Benedict from leaving. "I asked a favor of you and you refused," she explained. "I asked it of God and he granted it."



Love of God and others

Christian parents, by example, can help their children live the greatest commandments – love of God and neighbor. By creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, and humility flourish, the family places the spiritual above the material aspects of society. Children learn to love as God loves – freely, confidently, and without limits.

"Discipline your children, and they will bring you comfort, and give delight to your soul" (Proverbs 29:17).



Sharing Lent with children

Lent can be an opportunity to share the rich traditions of penance and piety we learned as children with our own families. For example:

Meatless Fridays. "Fridays in Lent meant dried-out fish sticks," said Lisa. "We all hated them, which Mom said was the point. She said to offer our suffering to Jesus. I serve spaghetti on Fridays to my own family. It's also a simple meal but it's not fish sticks."

Fasting. "Rather than give up one thing for Lent, we gave up something new each day," Nora said. "At bedtime we would write on a sticky note what we gave up that day and tape it to the refrigerator. It was great fun to try to cover the fridge with sticky notes by Easter."



Family Prayer. Paul remembered, "Lent usually came during basketball season so I would race home from practice to join my family for prayer. We took turns choosing how we prayed that night – the Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Novenas.

Sometimes it was the only time each day we gathered as a family."

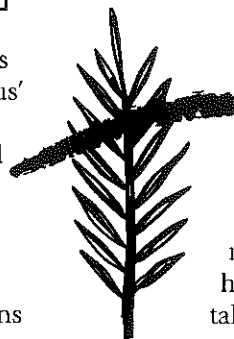
Favorite Devotions. "My favorite Lenten devotion is the Stations of the Cross," said Jane. "Our parish hosts a meatless meal every

Friday and we pray the Stations of the Cross right afterwards. I love sharing my favorite devotion with my own family."

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics make sacrifices during Lent?

Catholics make sacrifices during Lent to imitate Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert. This was his period of purification and enlightenment before beginning his public ministry. Our sacrifices help us to avoid distractions



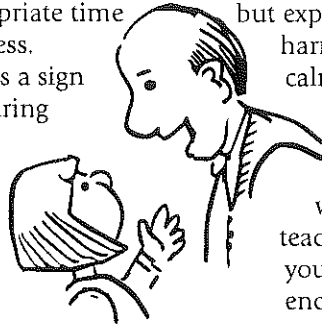
that take our attention away from God.

As we fast from favorite foods, luxuries, or activities, the simplicity left in their absence encourages us to focus on God more deeply and identify how we have strayed from the path that will take us to him.

Refresh kindness during Lent

Our youngsters need us to help them become caring, respectful children of God. Lent is an appropriate time to refresh our family commitment to kindness.

Emphasize manners. Common courtesy is a sign of kindness both at home and in public. During Lent, look for opportunities to model and encourage the liberal use of "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "excuse me." Open doors, pull out chairs, wish others a "nice day," and be patient even under trying circumstances.



Stay calm. The stress of daily life can try anyone's temper but experts agree that yelling regularly can create a harmful environment in a home. Instead, speak calmly, lovingly, and ask others to do the same.

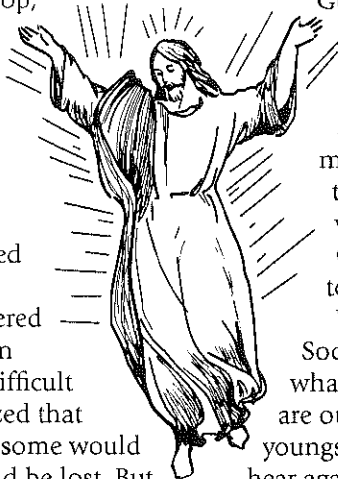
Model gentleness. Next time your child does something wrong – breaks a rule, gets a bad grade, fights with a sibling – don't respond with anger or sarcasm. React gently. Turn it into a teaching opportunity, but do it with gentleness. Treat yourself gently, too. **Bonus:** If you have a pet, encourage and model gentle and respectful care.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 9:2-10, The test of the Transformation

When Jesus met with Elijah and Moses on the mountaintop, they talked about the journey Jesus was going to make to Jerusalem and the Cross. Perhaps the holy men were offering support and comfort, and Jesus probably felt strengthened by the meeting.

Certainly he was bolstered by hearing the voice from Heaven. Still, he had a difficult road ahead and he realized that despite all of his efforts, some would refuse to listen and would be lost. But God knew that the desire to follow Jesus comes from confidence about



who he is. If we believe Jesus is

God's Son then we will want to do what he says. So he let the disciples witness the amazing meeting on the mountaintop, and he let them hear the heavenly voice proclaim Jesus as God's son and instruct us to "listen to him."

What can a parent do?

Society may try to tell us what is right, but Jesus' words are our final authority. Help youngsters test everything they hear against Jesus' words in the Bible and they will not be led astray.

Parent TALK

Two years ago, Tessa declined to make a specific Lenten sacrifice. She didn't have a good reason; she just dug in her heels. I was flummoxed so I asked my pastor what to do.



Fr. Krempa said the more I tried to force her, the more

likely Tessa will develop negative feelings about religion later on. Instead, he suggested I create an environment of penance in the home and let her express her faith in her own way.

That's what we did. Meals were simple, and we avoided luxuries. We served at the local soup kitchen and homeless shelter. Kenny and I put extra change into the poor box and the girls soon caught on.

Tessa liked being able to choose what she did, and was serious about service and self-denial. She got more out of Lent that year than if I had forced her to "give something up."

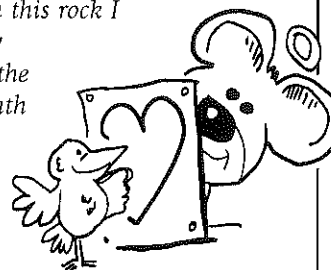
Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 1 – St. Brigid of Ireland (525). Born to an Irish chieftain and an enslaved mother near Dundalk, Ireland, St. Brigid is one of the patron saints of Ireland, and is known as "the Mary of the Gaels." St. Brigid resolved to enter the convent, despite her father's attempts to marry her off. In 470, St. Brigid founded a double-monastery for monks and nuns at Kildare and served as its abbess until her death.

Feb. 14 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes from the burnt

palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the foreheads as a sign of penance.

Feb. 22 – The Chair of St. Peter. Today, we celebrate St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church. Jesus named St. Peter the first pope, saying, "I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

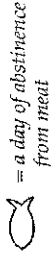


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Family Lent Calendar 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p>	<p>February</p>	<p>14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Take your family to an Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear the cross of ashes all day.</p>	<p>15 Decide on a family Lenten offering. Examples include: no desserts, attend daily Mass, pray a family Rosary each day, etc.</p>	<p>16 Share a meatless meal and review each child's Lenten offering to be sure they are reasonable and sacrificial.</p>	<p>17 Hot Cross buns are a traditional Lenten treat. Defrost frozen bread dough and shape into rolls. After baking, put icing crosses on buns and enjoy!</p>	
<p>18 Pick a saint depicted in one of the statues in your church and learn about him or her. Ask the saint to pray for your family during Lent.</p>	<p>19 Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</p>	<p>20 Contact Catholic Relief Services (877-HELPS-CRS, catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help any of their ongoing projects.</p>	<p>21 Today, practice being peacemakers. Instead of bickering, choose not to be offended and move on to something else.</p>	<p>22 Give up procrastinating today! Join together to do one task you have been putting off.</p>	<p>23 Adopt a priest or member of a religious order in your diocese and pray for them every day of Lent.</p>	<p>24 Turn off the television, unplug the computers, and take the phone off the hook for a half hour to pray a family Rosary</p>
<p>25 After Mass today, explain the Gospel and homily in terms your children can understand.</p>	<p>26 Choose a someone featured in the news today and pray for him or her at dinner tonight and for the rest of the week.</p>	<p>27 Participate in Operation Rice Bowl, or fill a jar with Lenten loose change during Mass.</p>	<p>28 Forgive someone who hurt you today. Ask forgiveness of anyone you may have offended.</p>	<p>1 March Put a jellybean in a jar every time someone performs a good deed. Share the candy at Easter!</p>	<p>2 Serve pretzels as a reminder of when Catholics used to give up milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat for Lent.</p>	<p>3 Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Fill it with canned goods, warm clothes in good condition, toiletries, and toys.</p>
<p>4 Light a candle in church today for someone who has passed away or who needs special help.</p>	<p>5 Pray for the victims of natural disasters all over the world.</p>	<p>6 Lent is a stressful time for priests. Make cards to express your gratitude for their work and mail them to your priests.</p>	<p>7 Review your Lenten offerings and refresh your commitment to them.</p>	<p>8 Give up a favorite toy or treat just for today.</p>	<p>9 Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. It can be said on regular rosary beads. Find it here: http://ow.ly/XC69k.</p>	<p>10 Go to Confession as a family. Go out afterwards for a treat to celebrate God's forgiveness.</p>
<p>11 <i>Lactare Sunday</i> Today, have a special meal to celebrate the halfway point of Lent.</p>	<p>12 Plan how each of you can show kindness or compassion to someone else tomorrow.</p>	<p>13 Sing a Lenten hymn together as a family. Have a singing contest, if you want.</p>	<p>14 Today, only say kind, encouraging things to each other.</p>	<p>15 Make cookies and bring them to a nursing home nearby.</p>	<p>16 Go on a screen fast (from recreational use) from noon to 3, in memory of the three hours Jesus hung on the cross.</p>	<p>17 St. Patrick was influential in spreading the faith in Ireland. In his honor, pray for Catholic missions in other countries at dinner tonight.</p>
<p>18 After Mass, have everyone talk about two things they learned about or found interesting from the Gospel or homily.</p>	<p>19 St. Joseph is the patron of families, fathers, and travelers. Ask for his intercession for all who will be traveling on Easter.</p>	<p>20 Think of someone you don't like and say three nice things about him or her.</p>	<p>21 Using colored markers, decorate tracing paper with Easter symbols. Hang them in front of windows to let the light shine through.</p>	<p>22 Prepare anyone who is eligible for Confession to make an examination of Conscience, using the Ten Commandments and eight Beatitudes as guides.</p>	<p>23 Figure out how much you saved by avoiding meat today, and put that money in the poor box at church.</p>	<p>24 Place any final donations in the box you set up on March 3rd. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</p>
<p>25 Use your Pain Sunday palms to make crosses to place in the rooms in the house you use the most.</p>	<p>26 Tonight and every night this week, pray for the catechumens coming into the Church at the Easter Vigil.</p>	<p>27 Make an Easter basket for a neighbor. Fill it with your favorite treats and include a prayer card and a rosary, if appropriate. Beware of any food allergies.</p>	<p>28 Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</p>	<p>29 <i>Holy Thursday</i> Read the story of the Last Supper at dinner—either from Scripture or a children's version and discuss.</p>	<p>30 <i>Good Friday</i> Pray the Stations of the Cross as a family today, and meditate on each one.</p>	<p>31 <i>Holy Saturday</i> Color Easter eggs as a symbol of the new life we receive in Christ.</p>