

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2021

Saint Francis of Assisi School



Thoughtful Moments

Pray for friends

In his Gospel, St. Mark tells a story of a paralyzed man whose friends showed great determination to bring his needs before Jesus. The house in which Jesus was speaking was too crowded for their friend, so they lowered him through a hole they made in the roof (Mark 2:1-12). In response, Jesus changed the man's life. Amazing things can happen when we place our friends' needs before Jesus.

Just ask

Jesus tells us to ask God for what we need and to be persistent until we hear from Him. Don't worry about pestering God. Think of how eager we parents are to help our children—especially if they are struggling. It's the same with God – our perfect Father – who never tires of helping us.

"If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him"
(Matthew 7:11).



Observe a fruitful pandemic Lent

Once again, Lent will look different for many families. One goal of the season is to eliminate distractions and turn our hearts back to God. A few adjustments to your Lenten observance may help you transform your family's hearts, even in the midst of a pandemic.

Offer it up. So much of what we are experiencing in the pandemic is sacrificial. Use visual aids to help children offer deprivation or sacrifices to God's purposes. For example, place a jar on your kitchen counter and encourage everyone to place a jelly bean in it each time they suffer a deprivation – a canceled sport season, a missed gathering, a scaled-down birthday celebration. Celebrate by

eating the candy at Easter.

Practice gratitude. Gratitude helps to keep everything in perspective. Stay aware of the pleasant moments you

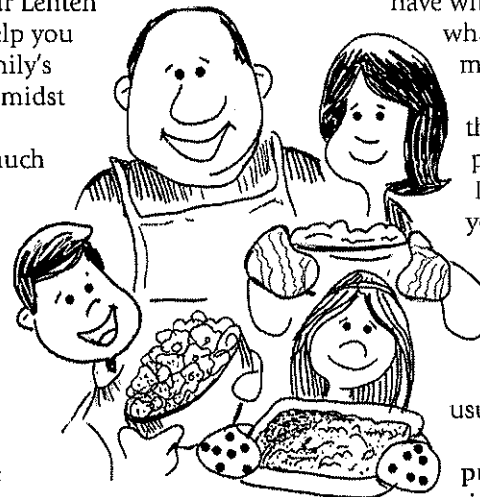
have with your family and do what you can to create more of them.

Be flexible. Accept that the landscape in a pandemic is different.

Prioritize your family, your health and the health of your loved ones. Try not to hold onto specific ideas for accomplishing your usual activities.

Swap screen time for prayer time. Spending time watching or reading bad news or

scrolling through social media sites filled with negativity creates stress. Turn to God in family prayer and rest in His presence in your lives.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe Christ is in the Precious Blood and the Host?

Once the bread and wine has been consecrated during Mass, Jesus Christ is wholly present under the appearance either of bread or of wine in the Eucharist.

In fact, Christ is wholly present in any fragment

of the Host or in any drop of the Precious Blood.

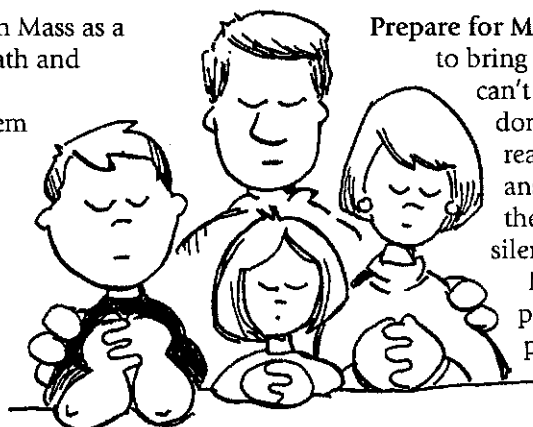
It is possible to receive the whole Christ in just one form or the other. However, it is most fitting to receive Christ in both forms during the celebration of the Eucharist.



Give your family the gift of "Little Easter"

Every Sunday is a "Little Easter," with Mass as a celebration of Christ's victory over death and sin. Many Catholic families find that strengthening Sunday habits bring them closer together and closer to God. Try these ideas:

Family forgiveness: On Friday or Saturday night, gather together and ask each other for forgiveness for offenses committed against one another. Then, if you feel comfortable, go to Confession as a family as often as you can.



Prepare for Mass: Participating in Mass is critical to bring strength to a Catholic family. If you can't attend in person, watch it together, but don't miss it. Before beginning, go over the readings you will hear at Mass so you can answer questions ahead of time. Spending the time waiting for Mass to begin in silence leaves time for prayer and reflection.

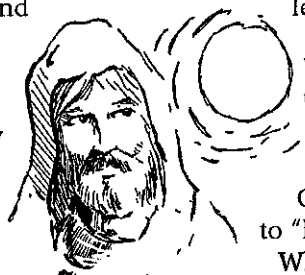
Mass intentions: Ask each person to pick someone for whom the family can pray during Mass. Write each name on a list and offer a family prayer for these intentions after Communion.

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



I had a hard time praying. Too many friends and family have been lost to the seemingly endless pandemic and I was spent. I was juggling working at home with supervising online

schooling. My husband lost his job for the second time in three years and we had used up our savings the first time. It felt like God was far away. He wasn't listening.

A few nights later I overheard our ten-year old saying her prayers asking God for help. She ended with, "Thanks for listening. Amen." Then she went to sleep. Standing outside her room, I realized that Tessa didn't tell God what to do. She asked for help, trusted that it would come, and left it to God.

I prayed for the first time in weeks and ended with, "Thanks for listening. Amen." I realized God is always listening. I was the one who had stopped talking.

Feasts & Celebrations

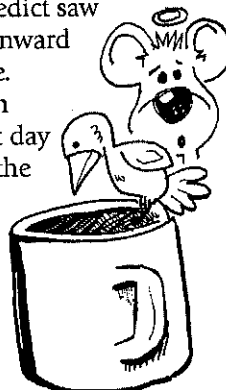
February 2 - The Presentation of the Lord. In accordance with the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to make the required offering forty days after his birth. They were faithful observers of the law of the Lord.

February 3 - St. Blaise (316). Bishop of Sebaste, he was martyred for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. Priests usually bless throats on this day because St. Blaise, reportedly a physician, healed many ailments of the throat.

February 10 - St. Scholastica

(543). Twin sister of St. Benedict, St. Scholastica founded a Benedictine community for women five miles from her brother's monastery. The twins visited each other each year and Scholastica died three days after their last meeting. St. Benedict saw her soul rising heavenward in the form of a dove.


February 17 - 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.






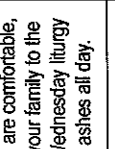

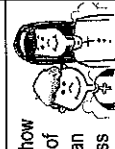
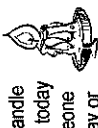
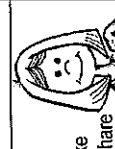




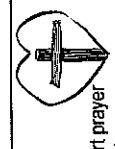


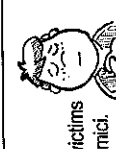
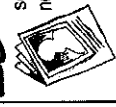


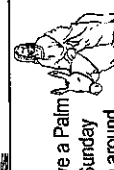
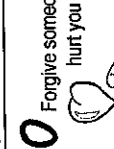
Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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 (Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and New American Bible (Rev.).)

Family Lent Calendar

 = a day of abstinence from meat

 = a day of fasting and abstinence

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>21 After Mass today, explain the Gospel and the homily in terms your children can understand.</p> 	<p>22 Contact Catholic Charities (703-549-1390, www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) to see how you can help those suffering most in the pandemic.</p>	<p>23 Invent a new family prayer you can say together each day.</p> 	<p>17 February If you are comfortable, take your family to the Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear ashes all day.</p> 	<p>18 Tape a drawing of a vase on the fridge and label it "Lent." Each day draw a flower in the vase and watch Lent blossom.</p> 	<p>19 Share a meatless family meal. Discuss your Lenten offerings to be sure all are doable and sacrificial.</p>	<p>20 Choose a family Lenten offering, such as giving up desserts, attending or streaming daily Mass, or praying a family Rosary regularly.</p>
<p>28 Before Mass today, pick a saint represented in one of the statues in your church and find out more about him or her during Lent.</p>	<p>1 March Collect stuffed animals or soft pillows, wash them well, and bring them to a local nursing home. Older folks love soft things to hug.</p>	<p>2 Ask each person to share a game, toy, or treat with someone else in your home.</p>	<p>3 Plan how each of you can show kindness or compassion to someone else tomorrow.</p> 	<p>4 Think of someone you don't like and say three nice things about him or her.</p>	<p>5 Figure out how much your family saved by not eating meat today, and put that money in the poor box at church.</p>	<p>6 At bedtime say, "Let's turn our hearts to God and think of him." Sit in silence together for a few minutes.</p>
<p>7 Light a candle in church today for someone who passed away or who needs special help.</p> 	<p>8 Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</p>	<p>9 Make cookies and share them after dinner tonight.</p> 	<p>10 Encourage each family member to perform an examination of conscience.</p>	<p>11 Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</p> 	<p>12 Every time a good deed is done, put a jelly bean in a jar. Share the jelly beans at Easter!</p> 	<p>13 Ask each person to make a sacrificial offering, such as doing an extra chore without being asked.</p>
<p>14 Laetare Sunday Have a special meal at home (or get takeout) to celebrate the half-way point through Lent.</p>	<p>15 Pick a friend or neighbor and perform an anonymous good deed for him or her.</p> 	<p>16 Encourage all family members to refrain from bickering today.</p> 	<p>17 Say a short prayer before each cross or crucifix in your home.</p> 	<p>18 Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Put canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys in it.</p>	<p>19 Serve pretzels as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.</p>	<p>20 Make simple crosses out of construction paper. Write on them, "He died for me," and post them all over the house.</p> 
<p>21 After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of faith.</p> 	<p>22 Pray for the victims of the pandemic.</p> 	<p>23 Send a card to someone who might need cheering today.</p> 	<p>24 Give up a favorite toy or treat just for today.</p> 	<p>25 Pray for someone who is sick and can't leave home.</p> 	<p>26 Place any final donations in the box you set up. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</p>	<p>27 If you feel comfortable, go to Confession or attend a Reconciliation Service. Then eat an ice cream afterwards to celebrate forgiveness.</p>
<p>28 Have a Palm Sunday procession around the house and take turns playing Jesus.</p> 	<p>30 Forgive someone who hurt you today.</p> 	<p>31 Get up 15 minutes earlier than usual today and pray as a family.</p>	<p>1 April Wash and dry each other's feet in commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles.</p>	<p>2 Pray the Stations of the Cross today, and meditate on each one.</p>	<p>3 Dress up a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.</p>	