

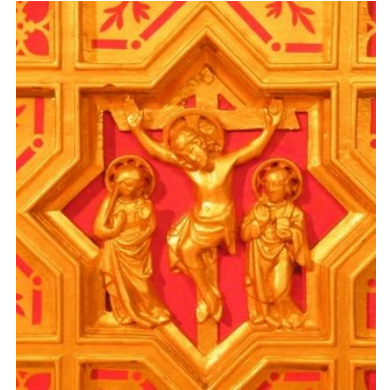
St. Joseph's Children's Liturgy of the Word Lent 2023 (Year A)



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St. Joseph is the patron saint of the family, and the family is the “domestic Church.” These sheets were developed to support my parish of St. Joseph in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, but they are now used by parishes and schools not just in the UK, but some are sent to contacts abroad as well. As always, feedback and suggestions are most welcome.

Sunday Mass is the cornerstone of our week; These resources are designed to be used in a family setting or in Children's Liturgy of the Word at Mass, or in the classroom. Please make them your own and feel free to pass them on for free.



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Lent is a beautiful journey.

The Gospel readings for Year A may be used any year in Lent, especially if there are people being prepared for the sacraments at Easter. These readings point specifically to Baptism and culminate in the story of the raising of Lazarus with Jesus saying that He is the Resurrection and the Life, on the 5th Sunday of Lent. The fourth Sunday of Lent is Laetare Sunday, and the colour of the vestments is rose (not pink). Rose is a paler version of purple and gives us hope that our time of penitence is nearing its end. The Church knows our human nature and this Sunday, together with Gaudate Sunday in Advent, we have a brief respite from fasting and the restrictions we have put ourselves under for the penitential season. Whereas in Advent, in the liturgy we hear “Gaudete” which means “rejoice” today we hear “Laetare Jerusalem” which means “Be joyful Jerusalem.” The Church is the new Jerusalem, and so even in the midst of our Lenten fast, we can take a break and rejoice that the time is almost upon us to celebrate the source of our salvation in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Additionally in the UK the fourth Sunday of Lent is always celebrated as Mothering Sunday (see the notes below).

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

Professing the faith (speaking about it and learning the faith)

Celebrating our faith in the liturgy and the sacraments



Living the faith in Christ (making choices by the grace of Jesus Christ)

A prayer-filled life where the Our Father takes centre stage

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:1-6,16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them; I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: ***Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ***

Discussion on the Gospel for Ash Wednesday

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

So often the first thing that people refer to in Lent is "giving up" something, whether that is cakes, sweets, sugar, the TV.... But let's look carefully at what Jesus is asking us to do:

Q: What does Jesus mean by "good deeds"? (A: Nice, kind things we do for other people.)

Q: What does Jesus mean by "giving alms"? (A: Giving money or things to people that need it.)

Q: What does Jesus mean when He says that our left and right hands must not know what they are doing? (A: We give in private, or in secret, without telling people! [Obviously children need to check with their parents before they start giving things away!])

Q: How can we give of our time to other people in secret? (A: We can do some helping at home or in school without being asked and without boasting about it, we can put a bit of our pocket money in a charity box without boasting....)

Q: What was Jesus' second instruction? (A: To pray in secret)

Q: How can we pray in secret? (A: Open, but suggestions are, to say a prayer in bed as soon as we wake up, or when we go to bed as we go to sleep, to go and spend a few moments away from everyone else to pray the "Hail Mary" or may be to decide to pray a decade of the Rosary each day. We can pray silently when we are in the car or walking to school.)

Q: And finally, what was Jesus' third instruction? (A: To fast without being gloomy.)

Q: What is "fasting"? (A: It means going without something.)

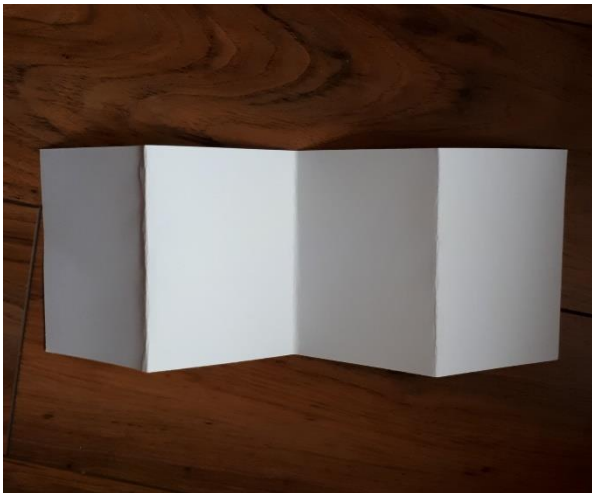
Q: Apart from the usual "giving up" of sweets etc how can we fast this Lent. What can we do without? (A: Open, suggestions are to have a "devise free evening" etc.)

Q: To sum up, what are the three actions Jesus asks us to do in Lent? (A: Giving alms/doing good deeds; prayer in secret; fasting)

Let us ask our Heavenly Father to help us to decide how we can discipline ourselves this Lent and for the grace to stick to our Lenten resolutions.

Our Father

Make a Lenten booklet to help you pray, be generous and fast this Lent.



On the next Page are labels you can cut out, (or draw and write your own).

1. Begin with a piece of A3 Paper or card (or Sellotape two pieces of A4 together.) Fold in half lengthwise and cut along the fold so that you have a long rectangular page.
2. Fold this in half so that the short ends meet and then fold each of the short ends backwards to make a zig-zag.
3. Stand your zigzag upright so that the front is like a book with the opening on the right.
4. Stick the cover page (below) on the front.
5. Open the booklet and write "Week 1" "Week 2" etc on each of the folds as in the picture.
6. Don't write "Week 6" but write "Holy Week" on the 6th page, and on the 7th Page write Easter!
7. Each of the quotes in text boxes on the next page are adapted from the entrance antiphon for Mass each Sunday of Lent. These in turn mostly come from the Psalms (if you have a missal, you can see the references beside the antiphons).
8. Stick the quotes from the next page under the label for each week.

Help and encourage the children* to use the booklet all the way through Lent to record their thoughts and how they have been able to follow Jesus by giving, praying, and fasting.

* Children? ... we are all children of God so this activity can be used by children from aged 5-500!

1. Jesus says, "When you call on me, I will answer you. I will deliver you and give you glory, and I will grant you length of days.

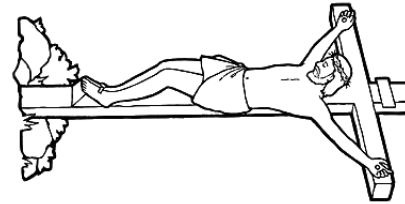
2. Of you dear Jesus, my heart has spoken,
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
Do not hide your face from me.

3. My eyes are always on you O Lord,
for you rescue me.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor without you.

4. Rejoice,
Be joyful, all who were sad.

5. Give me justice, O God,
and plead my cause against faithless people.
Rescue me from those who lie and try to
trick me, for you, O God, are my strength.

Jesus is
inviting me to
draw closer to
Him this
Lent
2023



Holy Week: (Palm Sunday)

The children ran to meet Jesus;
in their hands they carried palm branches
and with a loud voice cried out:
Hosanna in the highest!

Easter: The Lord is truly risen, alleluia.
To him be glory and power
for all the ages of eternity, alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel for 26th February,
1st Sunday in Lent Year A**

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

*Man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

*He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'*

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

*You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'*

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Discussion on the Gospel



- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: Where has Jesus gone? (A: To the wilderness/desert.)

Q: Why was Jesus hungry? (A: Because He ate nothing for 40 days.)

Q: What did the three things that the devil tempted Jesus to do? (A: Turn a stone into bread, jump of the temple wall, worship the devil.)

Q: Why did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into bread? (A: Because Jesus was hungry.)

Q: If it's nearly dinner time and we are hungry, what might we be tempted to do? (A: Take a biscuit or eat something that we are not supposed to and ruin our appetite.)

Q: What did the devil mean when he wanted Jesus to worship him? (A: He wanted Jesus to think about earthly power and be a king of a country and not the King of the Universe.)

Q: The first of the Ten Commandments is that we must worship only God. that means that we must put God first in our lives. How can we do this in our everyday lives? (A: Open, e.g. Say a morning prayer, think "What would Jesus do")

Q: Jesus was working out what kind of Messiah the Father wanted Him to be, He knew that He could do miracles, but He also knew that doing fantastic miracles for the sake of a show was not going to save us. We can be tempted to do all sorts of things which our heavenly Father does not want us to do... what sort of things? (A: Various, e.g. lie, take things that are not ours, eat too much, say mean things.....)

Q: How does Jesus answer the devil each time? (A: He quotes the the Bible.)

Q: When we are tempted to do something that we know is wrong, what can we do to keep us strong? (Open, e.g. say a prayer, make the Sign of the Cross, say the Our Father, the Hail Mary and quote the Bible.)

On the next page there are Bible quotes to colour in and put up at home to use when you are tempted.

God says, "Man does not live by bread alone... but by everything that comes out of the mouth of God." (Deut. 8:6)

God says, "Do not steal."

(Exodus 20:15)

God says, "You must not tell lies." (Ex.20:16)

God says, "You shall only worship Me." (Exodus 20:3-5)

God says, "Blessed are the merciful (those who forgive)." (Mt. 5:7)

Gospel for 5th March

2nd Sunday of Lent Year A

Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

The Transfiguration is always read on the second Sunday of Lent. It serves to remind us that Jesus is God and when He became man and was born as a tiny baby, He left behind the glory that is his due as being the eternal Son of God. In the Transfiguration, Jesus' glory is briefly seen by His Apostles and by us too.

Q: Where did Jesus go with Peter, James and John? (A: Up a mountain to pray.)

Q: How did Jesus change as He prayed? (A: He began to shine brilliantly.)

Q: Who appeared talking to Jesus? (A: Moses and Elijah.)

Q: Who can tell us anything about these two people? (A: Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and gave them the Ten Commandments, and Elijah was a prophet who had had a very special relationship with God [see for e.g., I Kings 19:9-17]).

Q: What happened when Peter was speaking? (A: They were all covered in a cloud.)

Q: What did they hear? (A: A Voice saying, "this is my Son the Chosen One, listen to Him.")

Q: What was the other occasion that a voice from heaven was heard? (A: Jesus' Baptism.)

Q: When Jesus was baptised, the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove but here the Holy Spirit is appearing as something else, what? (A: A Cloud.)

Q: In this scene then, we have God the Father's Voice, God the Son (Jesus) is there and the God the Holy Spirit as a cloud. What phrase do we use to show that God is three Divine Persons? (A: The Holy Trinity/Blessed Trinity.)

Q: We can't see the Holy Spirit just as we can't see wind. We see the effects of wind [trees moving etc] and in the Bible there are various signs of the Holy Spirit. What are they? (A: Dove, cloud, fire, water, wind ...)

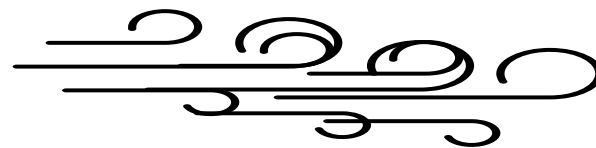
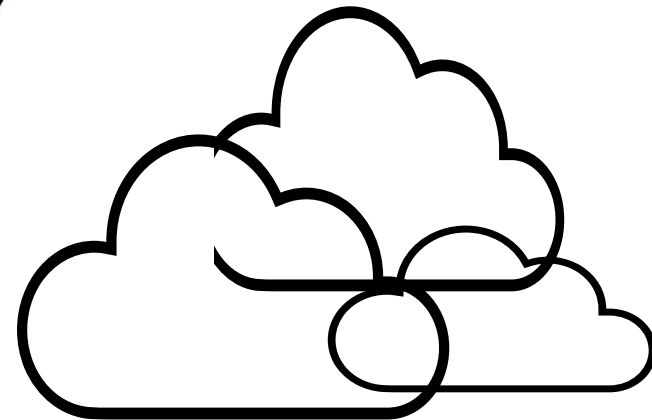
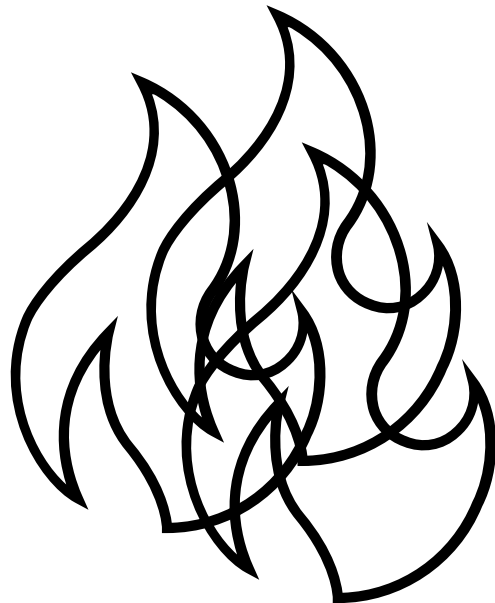
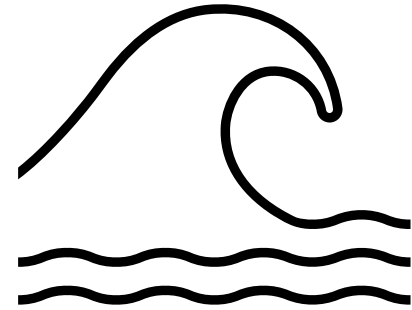
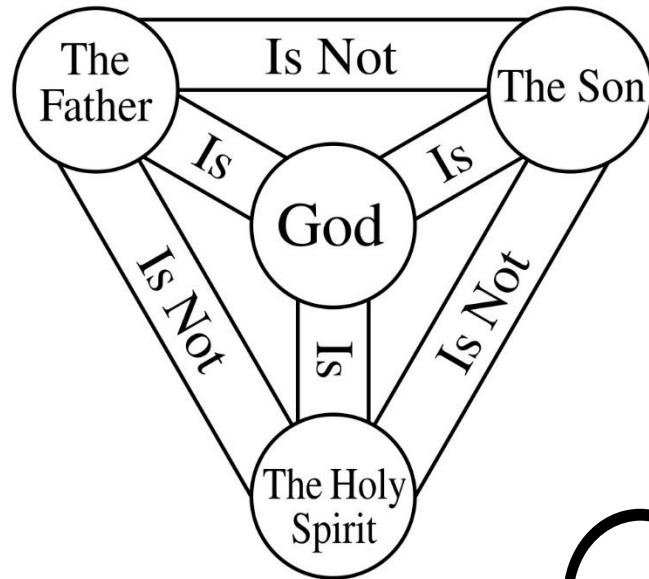
Q: How does the Holy Spirit help us? (A: Open, e.g. helps us, wisdom, understanding etc.)

Either colour in the signs of the Holy Spirit on the next page, or make a collage by sticking a picture of a dove, and make tissue paper fire and water and cotton-wool for the cloud on black paper with the Holy Trinity triangle in the middle.

Colour in these signs of the Holy Spirit



THE HOLY TRINITY



Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Gospel for Sunday 12th March, 3rd Sunday of Lent Year A, John 4:5-16,19-26,39-42

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.'

'Sir,' said the woman 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.'

Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know: for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already – when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants.

God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes, he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel



- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

This wonderful encounter with the Samaritan woman shows us what a beautiful spiritual director Jesus is. He gently leads her to a level of self-awareness that she had not had before, and in the process filled her with such joy that she was able to lead other to Jesus. Jesus' message that He is the fount of living water reminds us of Baptism. This Gospel can be used any year in Lent if there are people in the congregation being prepared for Baptism at the Easter Vigil. This session would benefit from a bucket with labels inside listing all the things we can do by Jesus' grace. See a suggested list below. If this is too complicated, just invite the children to suggest what grace will help them to do and finish with the prayer.

Q: Where did Jesus sit down? (A: By a well.)

Q: What is a well? (A: Water is drawn [pulled out with a bucket] of a well in areas where there are no taps.)

Q: What did Jesus ask the woman for? (A: A drink.)

Q: Why couldn't the woman give Jesus a drink? (A: Because he didn't have a bucket.)

Q: Jesus isn't interested in the well water anymore. He now tells the woman that anyone who drinks the water from the well will get thirsty again. What kind of water does Jesus want to give? (A: Water that turns into a spring inside and will "well up to Eternal Life".)

Q: What is Eternal Life? (A: Loving Jesus who leads us to His Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit on earth and for ever in heaven.)

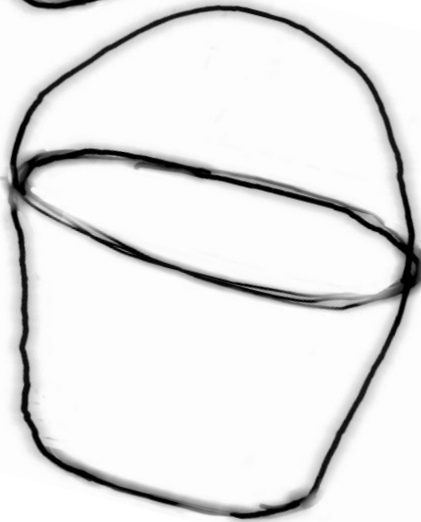
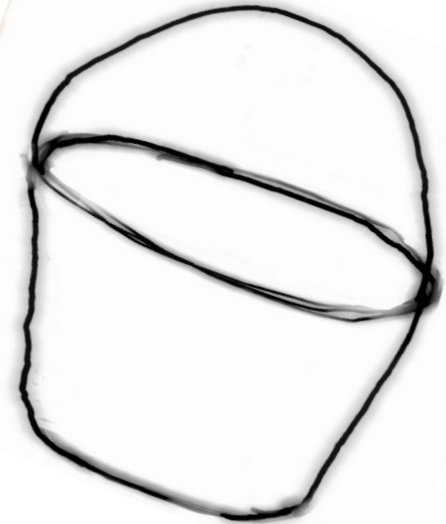
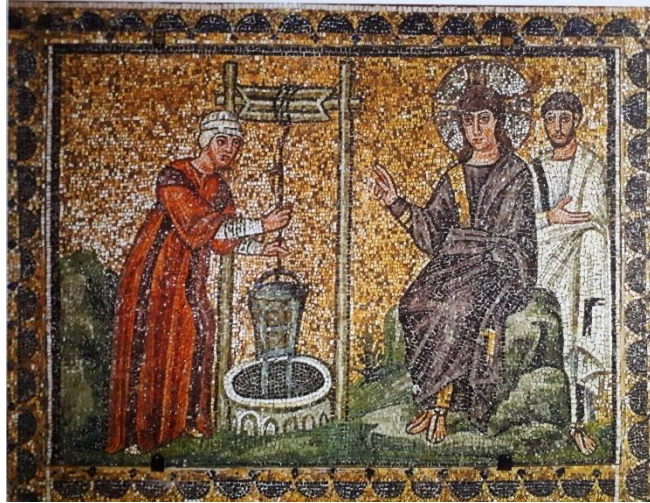
Q: When we are baptised, water is poured over our heads and that water is a sign of the grace that Jesus gives us. Grace is a special power from Jesus which means that we CAN live as He wants us to. Let's see what grace can help us to do: Invite the children to pull out a paper that mentions something we need grace to do, from the bucket. Discuss each one and may be stick on a poster with the picture below in the middle.

Q: Let's finish with a prayer asking Jesus to give us even more grace. Invite the children to repeat each phrase after you.

Dear Lord Jesus,/ I ask you to give me more and more of your grace./ By your grace I can love you more and more./ By your grace I can love my family more and more./ By your grace I can love people who I find difficult to love. /By your grace I can resist temptation and not sin./ By your grace I can live as you want me to live. / I ask this through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus gives us living water which is His grace.

In each of the buckets on this page, write something that Jesus' grace will help you to do this week.





Jesus' grace helps me to:

Do as I am told

Be kind to my family

Stop doing something bad (sinning)

Work hard at school

Pray

Pay attention at Mass

Say sorry

Love people I don't like

Forgive

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Lent, (Laetare Sunday) (Rose vestments)

John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

The discussion today leads up to an awareness that we have the opportunity to worship Jesus in the Eucharistic Prayer. It may be worth letting the priest know and maybe he can remind the congregation about this too.

Q: Who did Jesus see? (A: A man blind from birth.)

Q: How did Jesus heal him? (A: Made a paste with his spittle and put it on the man's eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam.)

Q: What did other people including the Pharisees, think about this?
(A: They were cross because Jesus had healed [therefore worked] on the Sabbath (God's holy day of rest).)

Q: What did the man born blind say that Jesus was? (A: He is a prophet.)

Q: Jesus asked the man born blind if he believed in the Son of Man. Who is Jesus talking about? (A: Himself.)

Q: What did the man born blind say when he realised that he was looking at the Son of Man? (A: Lord, I believe.)

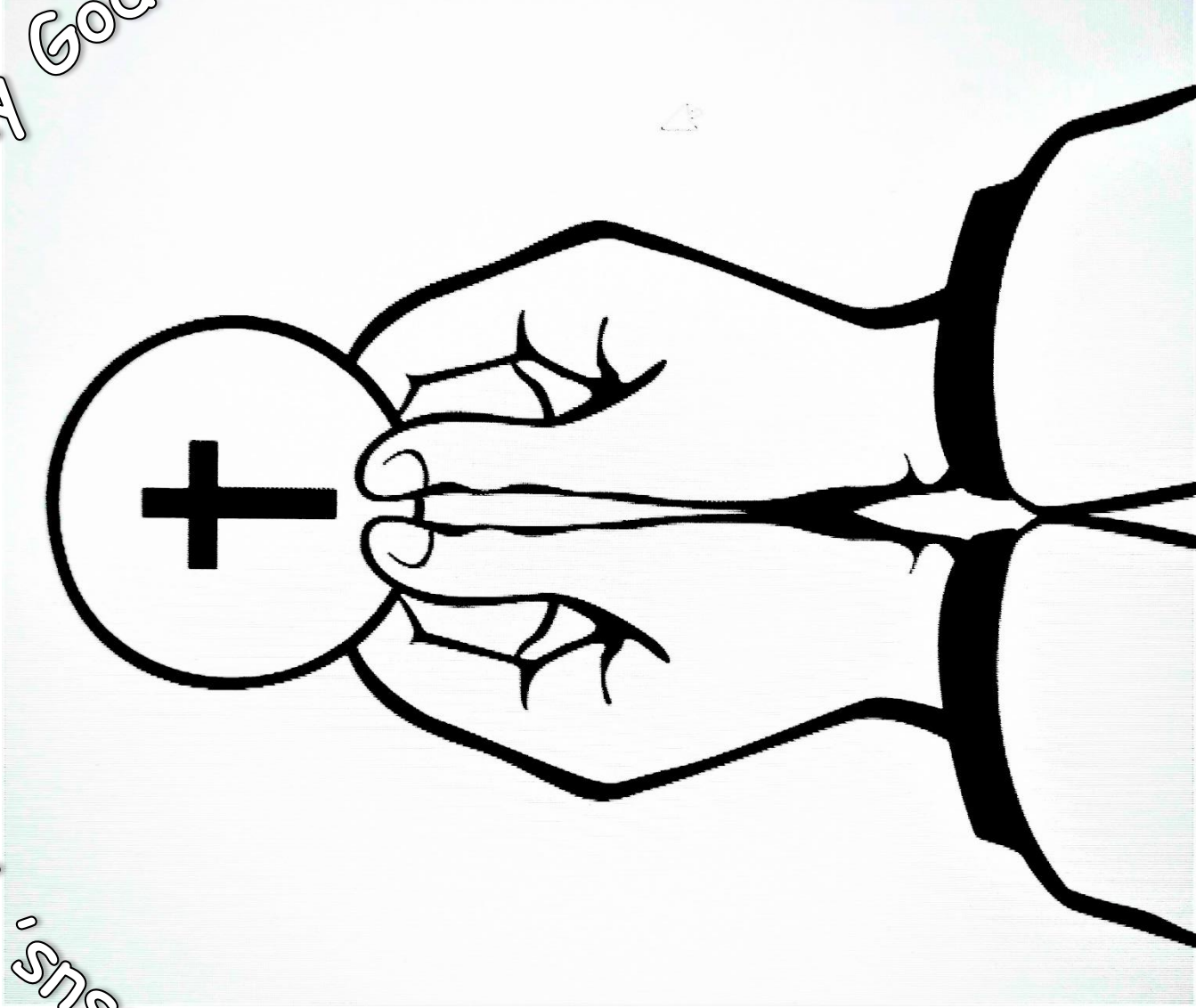
Q: What did the man do then? (A: He worshipped Jesus.)

Q: When do we worship Jesus? (A: At Mass.)

Q: In the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest holds up the Host when it has become the Body of Christ and the chalice when it becomes the Blood of Christ. Usually, an Altar server rings a bell. What can we do when this happens? (A: We can look at the Host and the chalice and say "I love you Jesus" or "My Lord and my God".)

Q: This is worshipping Jesus. This is why we are on our knees. When you go back to Mass, make sure you listen out for the bell and make sure that you are kneeling then, and don't forget to tell Jesus that you love Him.

Jesus, You are my Lord and my God



I love you Jesus

Notes on Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day)

Mothering Sunday, or more commonly said, Mother's Day, has its origins in the medieval times when the readings used by the Church then reflected the Church as mother. It became the habit for people to return to their "mother Church" (i.e. the Church where they were baptised) on this, the 4th Sunday in Lent, and also to honour Mary, the mother of the Church. Despite the Reformation and the dropping of the references to Our Lady, the tradition continued, with girls in service being sent home to their mothers on the 4th Sunday of Lent.

During the English Civil wars (1642-1651) it was noted that, *"Every Midlent Sunday is a great day at Worcester, when all the children and godchildren meet at the head and cheife of the family and have a feast. They call it the Mothering-day"* *Diary of the marches of the Royal Army during the great Civil War* p.27.

In the 1913 a "Mother's day" was created in the USA to be celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in May. This was a purely secular celebration, and this date is the one that is celebrated many other countries, although in Malawi it is in October, and in Nigeria it is on the same date as ours. In the Middle East it is on 21st March this year.

The important thing is not the date, but that we honour our mothers, thus obeying the 4th Commandment. We can also use the day to honour our Blessed Mother, Mary, the mother of the Church.

Let us ask Mary, our mother to pray for all mothers, whether they are with us or not. This is a good prayer as we appeal to Mary as mother:

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

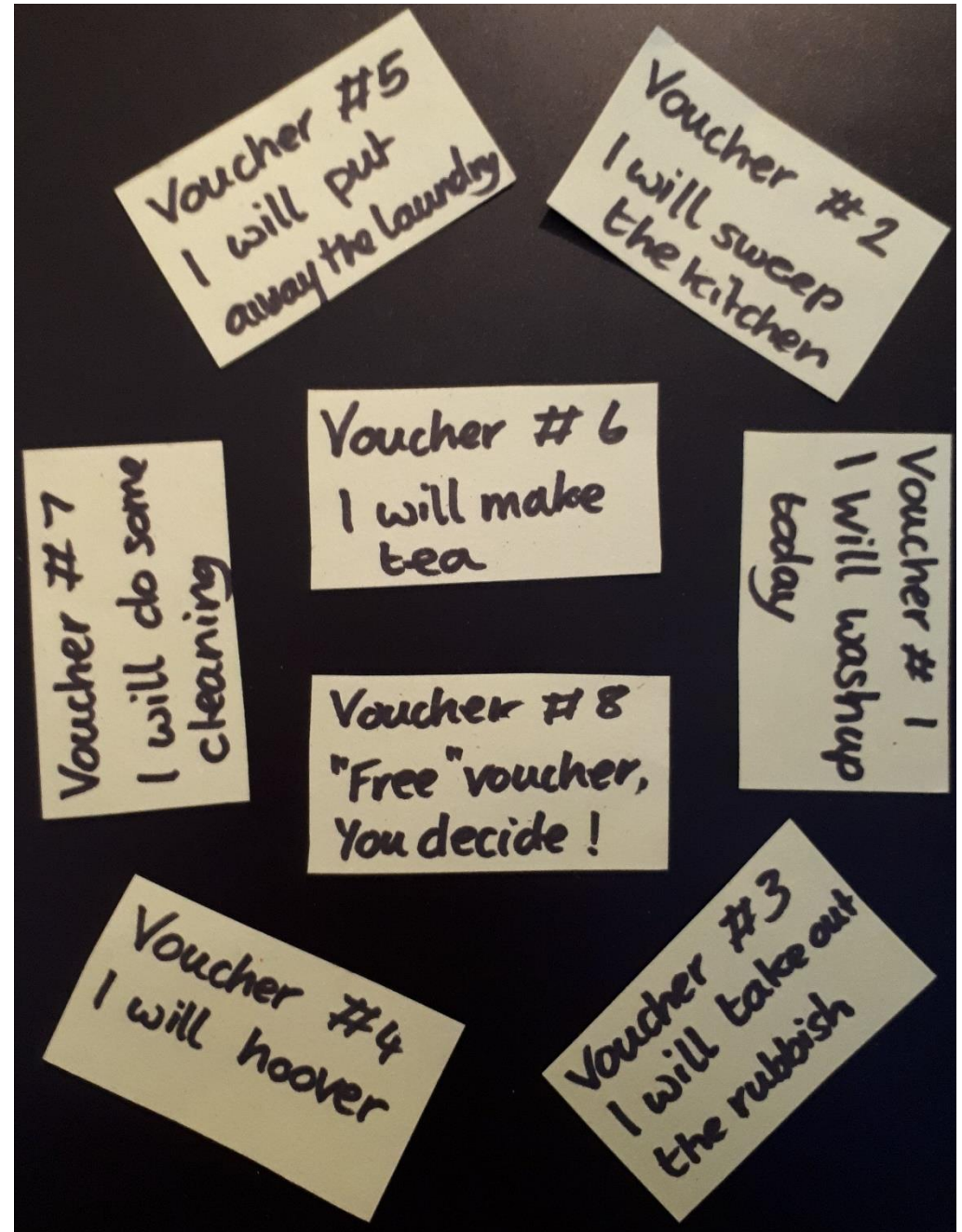
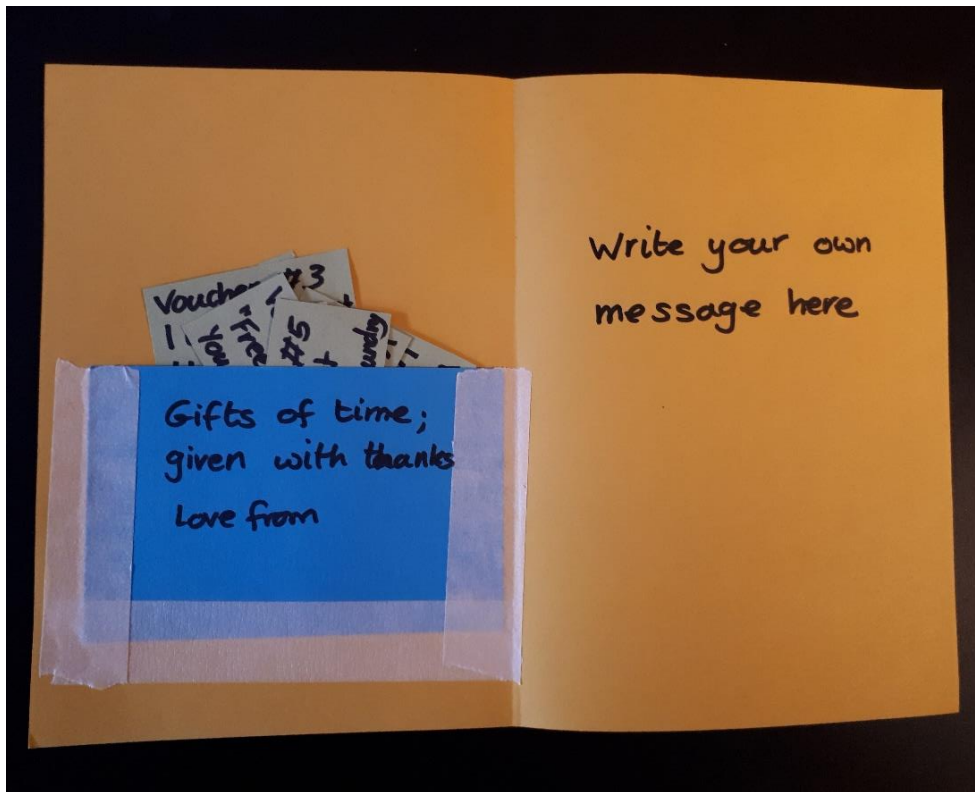


Jesus Crowning His mother, Mary, Queen of Heaven.

Mosaic from St. Mary Major in Rome.

Make a gift of your time for your mother:

Traditionally we give our mothers flowers or other gifts, but why not give her some time. Make a card and decorate the front in any way you like and then in the inside, make a pocket and fill the pocket with "vouchers" offering to help Mum around the home. Mum can use them when she needs extra help. Here are some ideas.



**Gospel for Sunday 26th March, 5th Sunday of
Lent Year A**

John 11:3-7,17,20-27,33-45

Mary and Martha sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, our brother is very ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had died and had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him. The Gospel of the Lord

R/: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Discussion on the Gospel



✠ Light a candle

✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

An interesting fact here – Martha is the one who expresses belief in Jesus – yet it was she who was chided by Jesus for not choosing the “better part” – that is sitting at His feet and listening to Him. (c.f. Luke 10:38-42). I have edited this Gospel slightly to focus on the fact of the Resurrection.

Q: Who was very ill? (A: Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha.)

Q: What happened to Lazarus before Jesus arrived? (A: He died.)

Q: What did Martha say to Jesus? (A: If you had been here, my brother would not have died.)

Q: Jesus says that He is the Resurrection and the Life. Why does He say that? (A: Because Jesus would rise again from the dead.)

Q: Where had Mary and Martha put Lazarus? (A: In a tomb with a stone over the door.)

Q: How did Jesus raise Lazarus to life? (A: He called him to come out.)

Q: What happened then? (A: Lazarus came out still bound up in his grave clothes [strips of cloth wrapped around the body].)

Q: What happened to the people who saw this happen? (A: They believed in Jesus.)

Q: When do we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection? (A: Easter Sunday.)

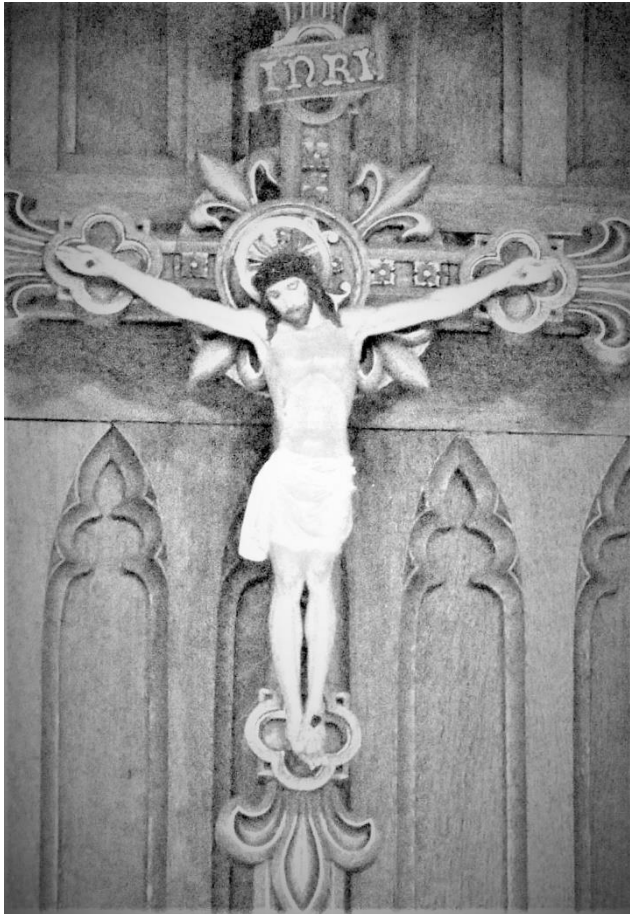
Q: We also celebrate Jesus Resurrection every time we come to Mass. There is a tiny prayer we say just after the consecration (which is when the bread and wine become Jesus Body and Blood). There are three version to choose from, let's read them. (After having read them, ask) Which is your favourite – why?

The children can write their own prayer in the banner or colour in the two pictures. (Another suggestion if you have the resources is to make an Easter Garden with the open tomb) as a group activity, to be used for Easter Sunday.)

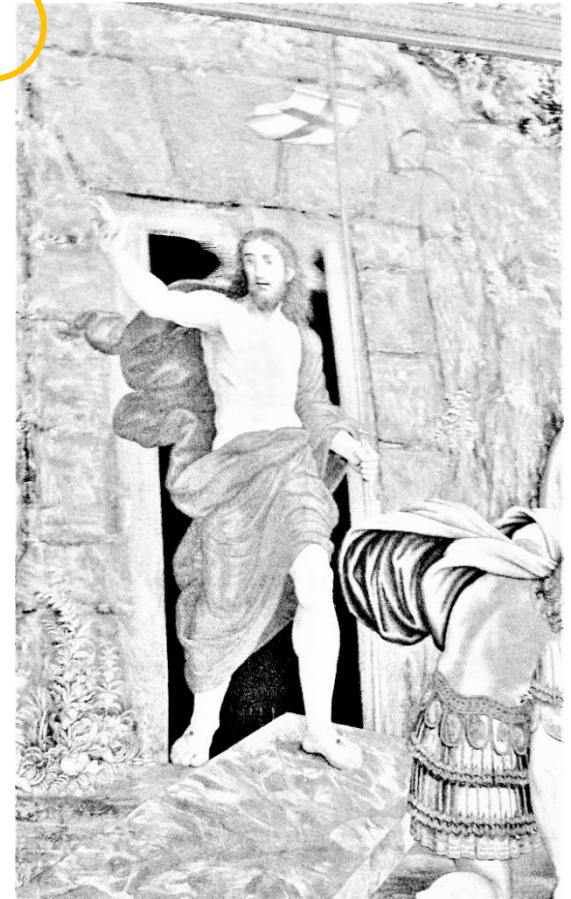
We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.



Dear Lord Jesus...



Some Lent Activities

Fasting = Giving up something for Lent

Why do we fast? Why do we do without something that we like? We do it because it helps us to be self-disciplined and to say to Jesus, "I love you more than this biscuit/ cake/ chocolate/ video game..."

If 6 weeks is too long to "give up" something, may be choose something different each week? E.g. one week, give up snacks between meals and the next limit playing video games to just one hour a day, and the next week you can choose something else. The point is that whatever you do, you do it for Jesus because He gave up everything for you and me. Jesus gave up His life so that we can go to heaven and be with his Father for all eternity. What can we give up for just one day (at a time)?

Learn the Apostles Creed by heart.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Apostles Creed rose out of the baptismal promises made by new Christians in Rome in the very early Church. They had to publicly claim faith in God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Q: How is God the Father described? (A: Creator....)

Q: Who is Jesus described as? (A: Son of the Father, our Lord [Lord is a title for God])

Q: What was Jesus' suffering? (A: His crucifixion is mentioned but you could discuss the fact that He was mocked, beaten, whipped, wore a crown of thorns, etc)

Q: Which lines recount what we commemorate in Holy Week and Easter? (A: Suffered...rose from the dead)

Q: From where will Jesus come to judge us? (A: the right hand of the Father in Heaven.)

Q: In the Bible there are lots of symbols of the Holy Spirit, e.g. cloud, water, fire, dove. Which symbol of the Holy Spirit was used in the Gospel account of the Transfiguration? (A: The Cloud that covered Jesus before the voice of the Father was heard.)

Q: Who forgives our sins? (A: The Father does through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. In confession, when the priest says "I absolve you" He is speaking for Jesus, so the work of forgiving is Jesus' work, not the priest's)

Pray the Apostles Creed slowly together and may be work on learning a few lines together each day.

Here are some Lent questions. The answers are all in the word bank here

1. Where did Jesus go to pray after His Baptism?
2. Who tempted Jesus when He was in this place?
3. Who looked after Jesus when He was in this place?
4. What was Jesus tempted to turn a stone into?
5. What actions of ours offend God?
6. On what day of the week did Jesus die?
7. As well as giving up something and helping people, what else are we asked to do more of in Lent?
8. How many Days are there in Lent?
9. On what day do we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead?
10. What is the Sunday before Easter called?
11. What is the word for giving up something that we like?
12. What is the Prayer that Jesus taught us?

Word Bank

Our Father, Desert, Satan, Bread, Angels, Praying, Forty, Friday, Sins, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Fasting,

Stations of the Cross:

Reflecting on the stations of the Cross can help us to enter more deeply into what Lent is all about. It does not have to be morbid or gloomy, and children can express their real sense of injustice in their simple words and drawings. There are various things you can do to help children to reflect on Jesus' last hours. E.g., take them to see the stations of the Cross in a church there and talk about them. Invite them to say ad-hoc prayers. May be later to draw pictures of some of the stations. Over Lent, you can build up a collection of pictures and reflections which you can draw on and develop over the years. These are the titles of the stations in order:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Jesus is condemned to death, | (9) Jesus falls the third time |
| (2) Jesus carries his cross | (10) Jesus is stripped of his garments |
| (3) Jesus falls the first time | (11) Jesus is nailed to the cross |
| (4) Jesus meets his mother | (12) Jesus dies on the cross |
| (5) Simon of Cyrene helps to carry Jesus' cross | (13) Jesus is taken down from the cross |
| (6) Veronica wipes Jesus' face | (14) Jesus is placed in the tomb |
| (7) Jesus falls the second time | (15) Jesus rises on Easter Sunday morning |
| (8) The women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus, | |



A Lent activity for Teens

The Ten Commandments are a blueprint for a just and fair society and help us to live at peace with God and one another. You might have heard people say that the Ten Commandments are irrelevant for modern society but try this exercise with teens and then see what they say.

- ✠ Read the 10 as set out here slowly all the way through.
- ✠ Then read them as reverse commandments, e.g.:

So instead of “*I am the Lord your God; you shall have no strange gods before me*” say, “I am not God, you can worship anything you like”. Then instead of “*You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain*” say, “Take God’s name in vain – swear by the name of Jesus, or Christ.” Instead of “*Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day*” say, “Don’t worry about Sunday – it’s a day like any other!” And it goes on –

- ✠ Disregard your parents – you are your own person
- ✠ You can kill (especially the old and the unborn)
- ✠ Commit adultery
- ✠ Steal – take whatever you want, it’s your “right”
- ✠ Lie about other people; destroy their character
- ✠ Covet, that is, desire your neighbour’s spouse
- ✠ Covet, that is, desire what other people have.

How then to we move on from here? It’s worth reflecting on these reverse commandments for ourselves. It’s a good way to examine our conscience during Lent; have I taken what is not rightfully mine? Do I desire what other people have? Do I pay proper respect to my parents? (And that includes God the Father and Our Lady). Use this as a time of prayerful reflection with teens.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me. (*Don't think that other things in life are more important than God*).
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. (*Don't swear using any of God's names*).
3. Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day. (*Put time aside for Mass each week*).
4. Honour your father and your mother. (*Do what they say and respect them!*)
5. You shall not kill. (*This means anyone, regardless of how old or how young they are*)
6. You shall not commit adultery. (*Love your husband or wife.*)
7. You shall not steal. (*Don't just take other people's things, don't take their reputation!.*)
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. (*Don't tell lies*).
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. (*Don't be jealous of other people's friendships*)
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods. (*Don't be jealous of what other people have and be happy with what you have.*)

Almsgiving = Giving to charities or helping other people during Lent

Almsgiving is the third of Lent's focus on growing spiritually: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. If we save money because of the fasting, this can be given to a good cause that is dear to our hearts. However, we can also support people in need physically. Maybe an elderly neighbour needs some help walking the dog, or with the shopping. During this covid pandemic we can't meet people so easily, but there are opportunities to make sure that everyone around us has everything they need. Maybe children can make a nice card for an older person, or take them some flowers. Just to show that they have not been forgotten.

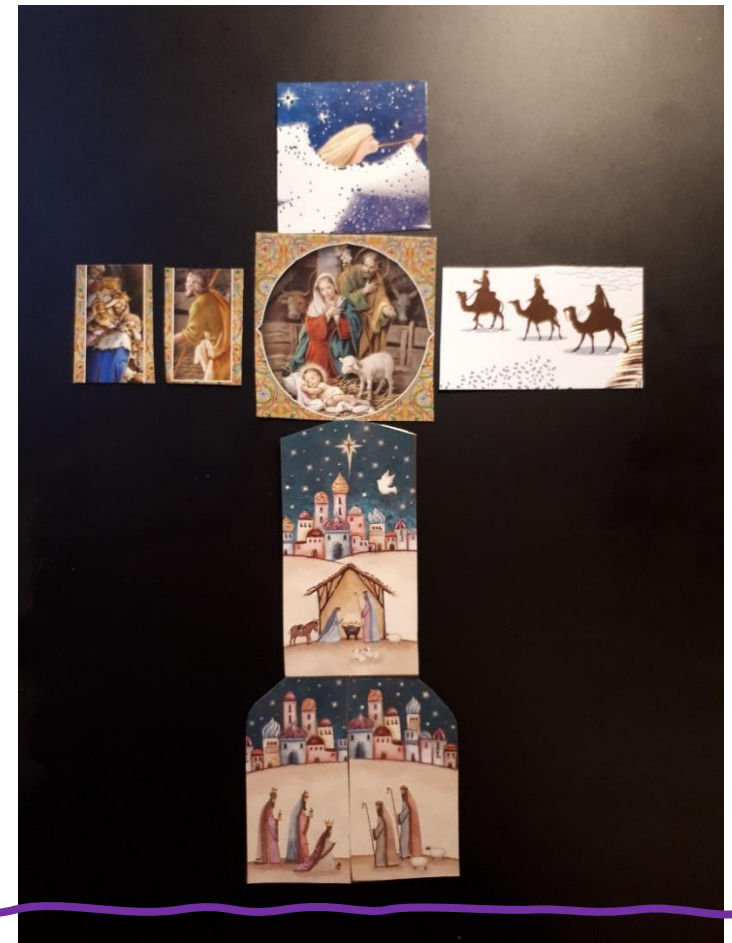
Perhaps as a family you could do some fundraising for a charity. Possibly begin with selling unwanted or outgrown toys on eBay! Last year the feedback was that someone made biscuits for an elderly neighbour and I heard that a youth group offered to clean cars at church whilst people were in Mass for charity.

Keeping to Lenten resolutions

Helping family members to keep to their resolutions is a good idea. Help them to be balanced - i.e. too demanding and they are sure to fail, not demanding enough, then they won't grow closer to Jesus in this special season.

This article has some helpful ideas, just click on the link: <https://aleteia.org/cp1/2021/03/02/how-to-encourage-kids-to-keep-their-lenten-resolutions/>

One suggestion is colouring in squares on a calendar. More pro-actively here a jigsaw of a cross can be made. On the next page are jigsaw pieces of this jigsaw made from Christmas cards. Each day that a Lenten resolution is kept, a piece of the jigsaw can be put in place. Either print the page onto card and cut out the pieces, or make your own. There are 40 pieces here one for each day in Lent. I suggest that the pieces are glued in place as you go along!





Praying, drawing closer to Jesus during Lent

There are as many ways to pray as there are people. However, Lent is a wonderful opportunity to refresh what we do. It's a bit like thinking of a friend with whom you have not been in touch with for a while and you decide to get in touch, arrange to meet up or have a phone conversation, (rather than chat on social media). Getting in touch with Jesus is like this - our prayers at Mass can sometimes fall into the routine and we "lose touch". When we lose touch then our children are less likely to be able to enter more deeply into a life of prayer. Already we have looked here at the Creed and reflections on the stations of the Cross. Maybe during Lent you can:

- Write a family prayer diary - each day someone contributes to it.
- Say the Rosary
- Say grace before / after meals
- Reflect on the Stations of the cross
- Decide to learn a new prayer by heart
- Go to adoration
- Have a time of quiet meditation on a Gospel passage
- Read and reflect on the lives of some saints
- Draw or paint a picture of a scene from the Gospels
- Create a list of people that you want to pray for, and pray for them each day; maybe have a new list each week.

In light of this theme, let's look at one of our most popular prayers, the "Hail Mary".

The Hail Mary is made up of three parts:

"Hail (Mary) full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women", is what the Angel Gabriel says to Mary at the Annunciation (Lk. 1:28).

The angel does not address Mary by her name, but as "Full of Grace" which is the English translation of the Greek which means "mightily favoured". Mary is the one chosen by God, the favoured one who is "full of grace." We receive grace in the sacraments and grace is the "stuff" which enables us to live our Christian lives. Mary, conceived without original sin is therefore FULL of grace, whereas we have grace but because of our habit of sinning, are rarely, if ever, FULL of grace.

"and blessed is the fruit of thy womb (Jesus)", comes from the greeting of St. Elizabeth (Lk. 1:42)

When Mary arrives at her older, pregnant cousin's home, Elizabeth recognises that Mary, also pregnant, brings with her, her Lord, in her (Mary's) womb. In the "Hail Mary" prayer, we acknowledge that Mary is the new "tabernacle" of Jesus. The Blessed Sacrament, Jesus, is reserved, (kept) hidden, in the tabernacle of our churches, and before He was born, He was hidden in Mary's womb, so her womb was a kind of tabernacle.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

This petition began to be added in about the fifteenth century. (The first two parts are really a greeting, and people had been individually adding their own private prayers to the greeting). The first recorded version of the prayer as it is now, comes from 1514, and in 1568 the Church officially recognised the form of the "Hail Mary" prayer as we know it now.

Information from: Thurston, H. (1910). Hail Mary. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved March 16, 2021 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07110b.htm>

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

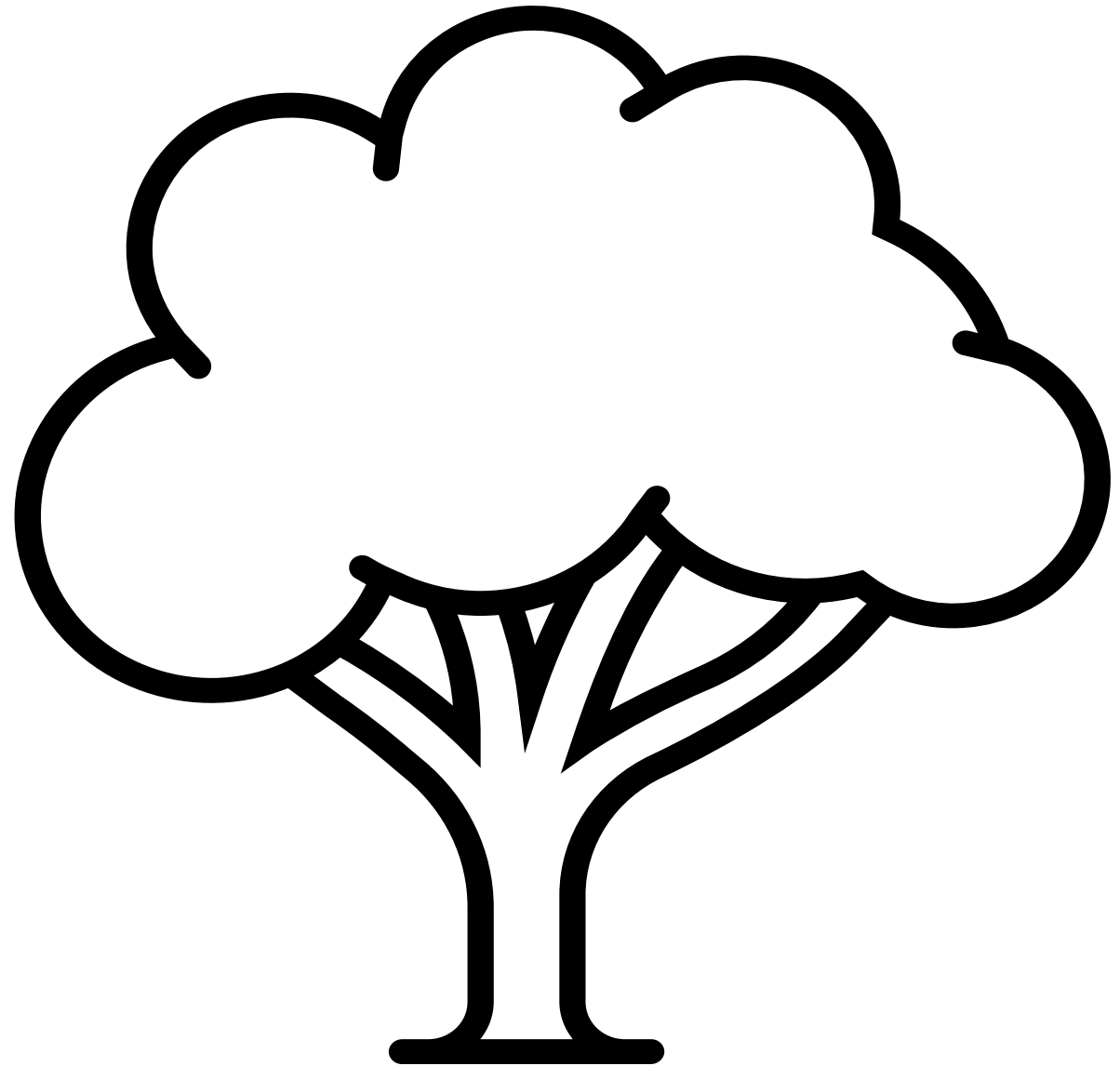
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Why not pray some "Hail Mary's" for people who need our prayers? People who are sick, who are dying, or who have died. People who are struggling with life in general, or who are having to work too hard. People without work... the list goes on. Make a list of people you would like to pray for and then say a "Hail Mary" for each of them. E.g....

For John who is ill... Hail Mary, full of grace....

For Bert who died last week..., Hail Mary, full of grace...

You could choose one or two people a day to pray for.



A prayer tree:

Draw a large tree, like this one, or cut this one out.

Inside the tree, write down all the intentions you and your family are praying for this Lent. You can also add notes of prayers answered - such as praying for a safe journey and the journey was safe, etc.

Online resources:

There is a whole world of material online, but we always have to discern as to its suitability. When I find good links, I will share them with you, so that you know that the material is sound and safe.

Aid to the Church in Need is an excellent charity that supports the persecuted Church, as well as the Church in material poverty, such as supporting seminaries in less well of parts of the world. They have a range of free resources for schools, parishes and families, and below are two resources that could help raise awareness in families, parishes and schools. If you want to know more, contact Teresa Kehoe on Teresa.Kehoe@acnuk.org

The Primary Resource is a prayerful way to explore the stations of the Cross. See here for more details:

<https://acnuk.org/resource/lent-2023/>

The Secondary Resource is Challenges teens to spend 24 hours without their mobile phones! See here for more details:

<https://acnuk.org/resource/lent-2022-secondary/>



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