



Lent: A Time for a Family Spirituality Check-Up

Many children today are missing the practice of family spiritual traditions and rituals. It is important to share with our children what our church, parents and grandparents passed on to us. The fabric of our whole Christian culture is strengthened by rituals and traditions of peace and reflection. Ash Wednesday is the time to reflect on what kind of faith and spirituality you want to pass on to your children.

A Lenten Reflection on Personal Discipline and Sacrificial Love

Let us start with the example given to us by Jesus in John 15:13:

“There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Lent is a time to sacrifice some self-gratification in order to follow Jesus and live a disciplined moral life.

1. Children learn to practice acceptance of God’s will based on their parents’ example.

When parents maintain their trust in God even in times of crises, share their belief that God will never abandon them, and draw good even out of the difficulties that confront them, children learn to turn to God during difficult times.

When we are angry with someone, we can withhold bitter words and instead say, “I’m angry, but I want peace between us.” Violence is avoided in the family and we take time to talk things out and establish peace. When we do this, our children are watching, listening, and learning the skills needed to be non-violent people in both words and behavior.

2. Sacrificial love is central to God’s revelation in all of Scripture.

St. Paul tells the Corinthians: “Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but we do it for one that will last forever”. 1 Cor: 9-25

The phrase used in sports training—‘*no pain, no gain*’—applies to our spiritual health as well. When we make a sacrifice during Lent, the struggle can make us stronger, give us more control over ourselves, and help us better understand the sacrifice of Jesus for our Human Family.

Indeed, ‘*no pain, no gain*’ might be translated in Jesus’ words as ‘*no cross, no Resurrection*’. Or ‘*no Lent, no Good Friday, no Easter*’. What are some things we can offer up today for our neighbor’s sake as well as our own? In the family, consider the following: eat what is served without complaint; turn off TV and use the time to help someone in need; volunteer to reach out and help someone in need, in your own family or in the larger community.

***“...we will add to the usual measure of our service something
...to offer to God of our own will with the joy
of the Holy Spirit.”***



Family Lenten Spirituality Check-Up

This tool is for parents interested in enriching the faith climate in their homes.. Take a moment to focus on the spiritual health of your family life and compare it to what you inherited from your parents. Then make a decision to have a good Lenten Season. Listed below are several religious traditions once widely found in the Christian Family.

1. Check those which were an important part of your childhood:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home shrines | <input type="checkbox"/> May crowning of Mary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing | <input type="checkbox"/> Home holy water fonts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Story telling | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Stations of the Cross |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious magazines – reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Visits to Blessed Sacrament |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using blessed candles | <input type="checkbox"/> Devotion to Patron Saints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family prayers at meals | <input type="checkbox"/> Dedication to the Sacred Heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car prayers | <input type="checkbox"/> Forty Hours Devotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Angel prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Making a sacrifice for Lent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedtime blessing of children | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly confession |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home blessings | <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Week services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scripture reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Statues of Patron Saints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rosary during Lent and May | <input type="checkbox"/> Medals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish on Friday | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Mass and Communion during Lent |

2. Circle those you choose to pass on to your children and grandchildren. Add any religious traditions, symbols, rituals, and celebrations which you have initiated in your family to replace the above. Healthy families have their own set of traditions, rituals and celebrations:

- Other _____
- Other _____

3. Choose the Lenten Rituals and/or Traditions you want to make part of your family this year:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Ministry of Mothers Sharing
An outreach ministry of the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery

