

# The Season of Lent

*A 40-Day Journey to Easter*

Parent Session for Sacramental Preparation

# The Big Question

*How do we prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter?*

## 40 Days

Jesus in the desert, Israel's 40 years—a time of testing



## Three Pillars

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving  
—turning to God and neighbor



## Holy Week

Walking with Christ to the Cross



## Easter Joy

Resurrection! Our preparation finds fulfillment

# What is Lent?

*"Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

— Ash Wednesday

**40 days:** Begins Ash Wednesday, ends Holy Thursday evening

**Biblical echoes:** 40 days of flood, 40 years in desert, Jesus' 40 days of temptation

**Color violet:** Purple signifies penance and preparation

**No Alleluia:** We 'bury' this word of joy until Easter morning

**Purpose:** Conversion — returning to God with our whole heart

# The Three Pillars of Lent

*Matthew 6:1-18*

## PRAYER

*Turning to God*

- Daily prayer time
- Stations of the Cross
- Scripture reading
- Family Rosary

## FASTING

*Self-Denial*

- No meat on Fridays
- Give up sweets/screens
- Simplify meals
- Fast from complaints

## ALMSGIVING

*Turning to Neighbor*

- Rice Bowl donations
- Give away toys
- Serve at food bank
- Visit the lonely

# Holy Week: The Journey's Climax

**Palm Sunday**

Jesus enters Jerusalem; we wave palms

**Holy Thursday**

Last Supper—Eucharist & foot washing

**Good Friday**

Jesus dies on the Cross; we venerate

**Holy Saturday**

Silence and waiting; Easter Vigil

**Easter Sunday**

**HE IS RISEN! Alleluia returns!**

# Lenten Fasting Rules

## Ash Wednesday & Good Friday

- Fast: One full meal only (ages 18-59)
- Abstain: No meat (age 14+)
- Two smaller meals permitted

## All Fridays of Lent

- Abstain from meat (age 14+)
- Fish is permitted
- A family tradition opportunity!

*For Children: Fasting can mean giving up sweets, screen time, or favorite activities. The goal is learning that love sometimes means saying 'no' to ourselves for the sake of others.*

# Family Lenten Practices

## Traditions to Start

- Create a family Lenten plan together
- Use a sacrifice calendar or jar
- Stations of the Cross on Fridays
- 'Bury' the Alleluia until Easter
- Go to Confession as a family

## Meatless Friday Ideas

- Friday fish fry as family tradition
- Simple soup and bread meals
- Let children help cook
- Frame it as special, not punishment
- Invite another family to join

*Lent is a time for the whole family to grow closer to God — together.*

# Questions for Reflection

1

What does your family need to 'turn away from' this Lent? What do you need to 'turn toward'?

2

How can you make the three pillars (prayer, fasting, almsgiving) concrete and age-appropriate for your children?

3

What one Holy Week service will you attend as a family this year?

*"Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful."*

— Joel 2:12-13, First Reading of Ash Wednesday, NABRE

Key References: CCC 538-540, 1434-1439 | Matthew 6:1-18