

To Teach As Jesus Did

February 2018



SACRED SPACE: A Prayer As We Begin Lent

Lord, Let everything I do during this season of Lent be inspired by you. I long to be closer to you. Help me to remember that all things glorify you. It's so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day of my life and to say, "Tomorrow, I will spend more time in prayer," but now my longing meets your love and I want to do it now. Help me to rely on you for help. Please, Lord, remind me that "perfection" isn't the "successful" way I try to live my life, but that my "perfection" might be holding my many flaws in my open hands, asking you to help me accept them. Heal me, Lord, and help me to find you in the darkness of my life. Let me reach out in the darkness and feel your hand and love there to guide me. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/Daily-prayers-00.html>

SCRIPTURE: Teaching As Jesus Did

Brothers and sisters:

We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says:

*"In an acceptable time I heard you,
and on the day of salvation I helped you."*

Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor 5:20-6:2)

As "ambassadors of Christ," in what ways might we need an experience/season like Lent?

HIGHLIGHTING YOUTH MINISTRY CURRICULUM: Who is Jesus Christ?

For those catechists following the Youth Ministry Curriculum offered by the Archdiocese of Dubuque, January 2018 begins Theme #2 – "Who is Jesus Christ?" This theme focuses on Jesus, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In learning about who Jesus is – "the ultimate revelation of a personal, loving God who invites us to live a life of peace and joy in relationship with God and the Church" - the participants will also learn who He calls them to be. The first two objectives listed, as you begin to incorporate this theme into your class, are: to learn what your participants already know about who Jesus is, and to then introduce the concept of "revelation" - that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of who God is and who we are called to be.

For more information, see: <https://www.dbqarch.org/offices/adolescent-faith-formation/new-high-school-religious-education-curriculum/>

FOR YOUR FORMATION: Charting the Lenten Journey

Lent should be an opportunity for you to implement more than just a lesson plan. Chart the course of your own journey through the Lenten desert by journaling about your commitments to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Before Ash Wednesday, think about your Lenten resolutions, and then check in with them periodically throughout the season to see how well you are living up to your commitments. Challenge yourself to discover what the Scriptures are calling you to do during Lent.

SAINT OF THE MONTH: St. Blaise – February 3

St. Blaise was a bishop and a doctor. He is the patron saint of throat illnesses and animals. God appeared to St. Blaise in a vision and told him to flee his country. He went to the hills and lived with sick animals and cared for them. Blaise commanded a wolf to return a poor old woman's pig, which it did – alive and uninjured. Later, the woman came to him and brought two fine wax candles in an attempt to dispel the gloom of his darkened cell. In 316, Blaise was captured and arrested for being a Christian. On the way to jail, a woman set her only son, who was choking to death on a fish bone, at his feet. Blaise cured the child. St. Blaise is often depicted holding two crossed candles in his hand, or in a cave with wild animals.

http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=28



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TEACHABLE MOMENTS:

February 2: Presentation of the Lord/Candlemas

The Presentation of the Lord, celebrated on February 2, occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus, and is also known as Candlemas day, since the blessing of candles is included in the day's liturgy. According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII, the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, this feast day is also referred to as the "Purification of Mary," and is known as a Christmas feast, since it points back to the Solemnity of Christmas. Many Catholics practice the tradition of keeping the Nativity crèche or other Christmas decorations up until this feast.

Consider incorporating aspects of the feast day into your family's celebration:

- Ask your parish priest to bless the candles that you will be using on your home altar or prayer space this year.
- Have a family Candlemas procession.
- Read Luke 2:22-35, the account of the presentation including the Canticle of Simeon.
- Meditate on the constant fiat of Our Lady of Sorrows, who embraced the will of God even as Simeon predicted that a sword would pierce her heart.

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2018-02-02>

LOOKING AHEAD:

Upcoming Opportunities for Teaching the Faith

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

March 19 – Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary and Patron of the Universal Church

March 25 – Palm Sunday – Holy Week begins

March 29-31 – Sacred Triduum

April 1 – Easter Sunday



ENGAGING TEENS:

The Personal Component of Youth Ministry

This month, we continue our focus on the *Personal* component of Catholic youth ministry:

Seek to create small faith-sharing groups, where teens can learn to let themselves be known and where adults can more readily listen to the teens' struggles and questions, witness to Christ through their actions, and help teens identify their gifts and charisms.

How are you giving teens the freedom to express their struggles in order to discover their gifts?

<https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Article/TabId/535/ArtMID/13567/ArticleID/14409/Plugging-teens-into-the-faith-A-how-to-guide.aspx>

SUPPORTING PERSONS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES:

Puppets and Special Education

Puppets and Special Education - Special needs children are highly responsive to puppets! Lisa Mladinich, a writer for catholicmom.com, says that children with Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome and ADDS pay attention for long periods and want to touch and try the puppets on after her public shows. The feedback from parents and grandparents has been phenomenal. They tell her, in delighted astonishment, that they've never seen their kids stay attentive for so long, nor remain so connected, calm and interested afterwards.

The puppet show can be used to cap a particular concept; to frame it in a memorable way for the children, to review difficult vocabulary, a passage of scripture or make a dry subject fun (like the colors of the liturgical year, reflected in the vestments of our priests). A simple concept, enjoyably presented, has sticking power.

If you're teaching religion to students who require Special Education and need a great way to draw them in, try puppets!

For a list of Puppet Show Scripts see:

<http://www.catholicmom.com/puppet.htm#special>



ENGAGING PARENTS AND FAMILIES:

Celebrating a Family Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day isn't simply a day for chocolates, stuffed animals and flowers. Discover creative ways to engage the family in a celebration of God's love and love for one another.

- There's a reason for the hearts! Explain that St. Valentine was someone who risked his life for the sake of marriage.
- Write love letters to family members.
- Decorate the house with quotes about love.
- Spread the love and smiles! Make homemade Valentine's Day cards and distribute them to strangers.
- Make heart-shaped "hug tickets." Pass them out and let family members redeem them throughout the day.
- Tell stories of how you met.
- Start the day with an Act of Love – a prayer reminder that all love has it's origins and destiny in God.

<http://www.pbgrace.com/3-simple-ways-to-celebrate-st-valentines-day-with-your-family/>

DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM:

Joe Paprocki's Ten Tips for Maintaining Discipline

As a catechist, you will inevitably encounter discipline problems at some point, especially in working with children and adolescents. Discipline is a necessary part of faith formation. Each Lent, we practice the disciplines of prayer, fasting and giving alms. The idea is that, in order to be a *disciple* of Jesus, one needs *discipline*. When you maintain discipline in your learning environment, you are acting in the image of God – in whose name you teach. In his "Ten Tips for Maintaining Discipline," Joe Paprocki suggests helpful ideas for providing a positive learning environment while avoiding the distractions a lack of discipline can bring to the classroom.

Tip #1: Understand the Role of Discipline.

Good discipline is not an end in itself. Effective learning should be the goal of your session. One can have good discipline but still lead a poor lesson. The role of good discipline is to remove any obstacles from an effective learning experience. (Watch for more tips in upcoming issues!)

From *The Catechist's Toolbox* by Joe Paprocki © 2007 pp. 71-75

EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER SPOTLIGHT:

How can a catechist help children and youth enter into the mystery of Ash Wednesday when this normally sacred day falls on Valentine's Day? The young will likely be more focused on cards, hearts, and those sweet Valentine chocolates that they will not even be able to eat on Ash Wednesday. (No Fair!!!) How can we connect all of this to Ash Wednesday? Keep the following in mind:

- True love is about sacrificing self for the good of the other.
- Jesus is the perfect model of true love as he gives everything of himself for our salvation.
- On Ash Wednesday, we enter into a season when we make an extra effort to imitate the love of Jesus through our sacrifice of prayers, fasting, and almsgiving.
- St. Valentine spent his life teaching others about the love of God. He died a martyr's death; so, like Jesus, he gave everything of himself for love of others. He is a great role model as we begin Lent, showing us how to imitate the love of Jesus through our small daily sacrifices.
- On this February 14th, we can make an effort to give Valentine's cards to those who are least likely to get cards, promise our hearts to Jesus in prayer, and even deny ourselves the Valentine chocolates and make an offering to the poor.



The ERC has a variety of resources to help teach children/youth about true love, sacrifice, Ash Wednesday, and Lent. Just a few are listed below. Contact the ERC for more assistance in finding the resources best fit for those you teach.

Code	Title Number	Title	Level
BK	2000796	All the Muchos In The World: A Story About Love	P, I
BK	201140	Legend of the Valentine, The: An Inspirational Story Of Love And Reconciliation	P
DV	30184.1	First Valentine, The	P, I, J
DV	30798	Most	S, YA, A

Archdiocese Of Dubuque Pinterest Boards:

Saints And Heroes – Valentine:

<https://www.pinterest.com/dbqarch/saints-valentine/>

Liturgical Year - Lent For Children:

<https://www.pinterest.com/dbqarch/lent-for-children-for-the-liturgical-year/>

Liturgical Year - Lent For Youth:

<https://www.pinterest.com/dbqarch/lent-for-youth-for-the-liturgical-year/>