

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2020

St. Michael Catholic School

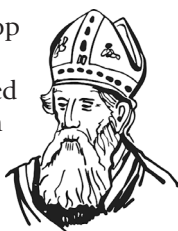
Annie Fernandez, Principal



Thoughtful Moments

St. Blaise

St. Blaise was a bishop in fourth-century Turkey and was arrested during the persecution of the Emperor Licinius. What we know about this saint is that he was courageous, faithful, and generous. For a while, he lived in a cave and cared for the animals until he was discovered and arrested. He is best known for healing a boy choking on a fish bone. According to legend, the boy's mother gave him two candles in gratitude.



Lenten Obligations

Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday (February 26th) and Good Friday (April 10th). These are the only two days of obligatory fasting and abstinence.

The U.S. bishops define fasting as eating one full meal. Some food (not equaling another full meal) is permitted as necessary to maintain strength. In addition, all Catholics fourteen years old and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.



Help children reach for Heaven

Parents want the world for their children. Catholic parents want even more than that - we want Heaven, too. We know that teaching youngsters to know, love and follow Jesus is the only way to make that happen.

Know Jesus. Would you be satisfied making a new friend only by hearing others talk about him? Close friendships happen when people connect personally and share experiences. There is no better way for children to know Jesus than for us to introduce them to him in person - in the Eucharist, in Scripture, in prayer.

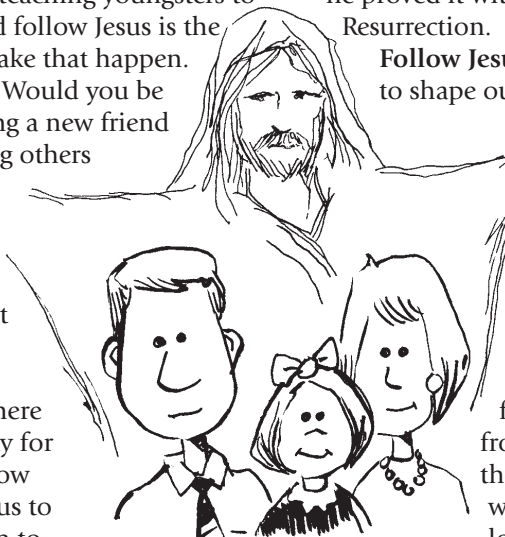
Love Jesus. Through Scripture, we learn that Jesus is strong and can do

anything. He always keeps his promises. Remind children that God loves them even more than their parents and he proved it with his life, death, and Resurrection.

Follow Jesus. Jesus wants his love to shape our hearts which then leads into our actions. When we love him, we want what he wants - Heaven for all his children.

Lead them to Jesus. Children learn to love and follow Jesus, not from the Church, not from the priest, but from their parents. The better we come to know and love the Lord, the better

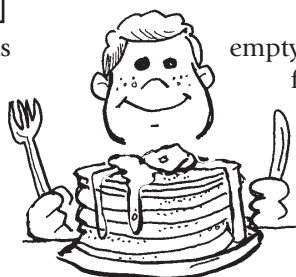
we can share him with our children. Pray and read Scripture daily, and don't miss a chance to meet Jesus at weekly Mass.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

In the early Church it was customary to give up rich foods as well as meat during the penitential season of Lent. This included milk, eggs, butter, cheese, and fat. On the Tuesday before Lent began, families would

Why do Catholics eat pancakes on Fat Tuesday?



empty the pantry of the forbidden foods by enjoying a dinner of pancakes (or in some places, fried doughnuts!). In some countries, it is even called "Pancake Tuesday." It was meant to be one final celebration of feasting before the Lenten fast.

The way, the truth, and the life during Lent

To children, Lent can be a time for sacrifice – something they'd rather avoid. Instead, explain that experiencing Lent helps us to find *"the way and the truth and the life"* that will lead us to Heaven (John 14:6).

The way – Let children map out their own journey through Lent. Instead of giving up one thing for the season, choose several, short-term sacrifices. Include days of "fasting" from a favorite food or video game, days of "abstaining" from a bad habit like biting nails or fighting with siblings. Add



days of performing good works.

The truth – Learn what it means to be a follower of Christ from those who dedicated their lives to him. Read stories about the saints or heroes in the Bible. Tell youngsters that God works through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.

The life – Lent is all about hope. On Easter, Jesus opened up heaven to give us new life. Ask children to commit to continuing habits acquired during Lent that will lead to new life in Christ.

Scripture LESSON

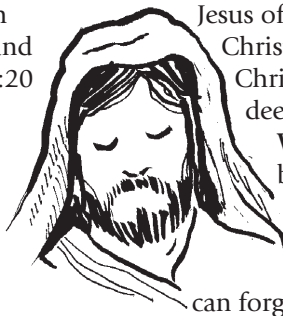
Matthew 5:38-48, Forgive always

In ancient times, the concept of justice was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That was devised to limit the conflict between clans from getting out of hand (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21). Later, the concept was misused to defend a brutal form of justice that easily escalated into blood feuds. Jesus' teaching changed all that.

Jesus' approach to justice turns our eyes, not to justice on Earth, but in Heaven. Loving our enemies or those who hurt us repeatedly means

forgiving them over and over. That often seems an impossible task, but this extreme forgiveness is what

Jesus offers us on the Cross. As Christians, we are called to be Christ to others – in words and deeds.

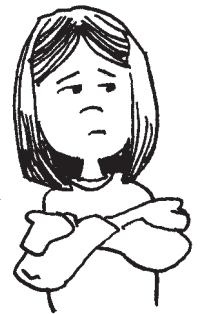


What can a parent do? The best way parents can pass on the faith in Christ is by example, especially when it is difficult. Explain that we

can forgive someone without having to be best friends with them. Explain that whatever the hurt, we can pray for the person and forgive them in our hearts.

Parent TALK

When we got in the car after Mass, I was furious. My ten-year old daughter, Tessa, had spent the hour not in prayer and quiet but in poking her sister and fighting over who got to hold the hymnal. She ignored my stern looks and her father's whispered scolding. "No screens for one week," I told her, and assigned a five-paragraph essay on appropriate behavior in church before she got the privilege back. I needed to send a solid message.



Church is the most important place we go and the best place to meet Jesus in person. Poor behavior is not only disrespectful but robs her of the chance to receive God's much-needed grace. Tessa realized that she had misused the opportunity Mass presents. To her credit, she wrote a wonderful essay. I told her God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but he does expect us to try our best.

Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 9 – St. Apollonia (249). A deaconess in Alexandria living during the Christian persecutions under Emperor Philip. She chose to suffer martyrdom at the hands of an angry mob rather than denounce God.

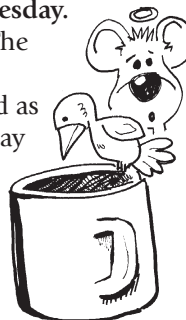
Feb. 11 – Our Lady of Lourdes (1858). The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in a small French village. Soon afterwards, a miraculous spring with healing waters emerged from a nearby cave. It is still a significant pilgrimage site today.

Feb. 22 – St. Peter's Chair

(1st century). We celebrate the establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church. The "Chair of Peter" is a relic of St. Peter's actual chair and symbolizes the spiritual authority of the Church.

Feb. 26 – Ash Wednesday.

The first day of Lent. The ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. Today is a day of abstinence from meat and fasting as penance and in recognition of Jesus' time in the desert.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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