

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2023

Saint Dominic School

## Thoughtful Moments

### Instill confidence in prayer

Many Catholic parents worry their children will be tempted away from the Faith. The good news is that children who grow up with a strong prayer life, regular Mass attendance and Confession often are likely to stay Catholic. Youngsters who turn to God from an early age grow up to revere and lean on Him. Teach children to pray and have prayer aids handy. Pray regularly as a family, and stay close to the greatest Catholic prayer – the Mass.



### Love of God and others

Christian parents, by example, can help their children live the greatest commandments – love of God and neighbor. By creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, and humility flourish, the family places the spiritual above the material aspects of society. Children learn to love as God loves – freely, confidently, and without limits.

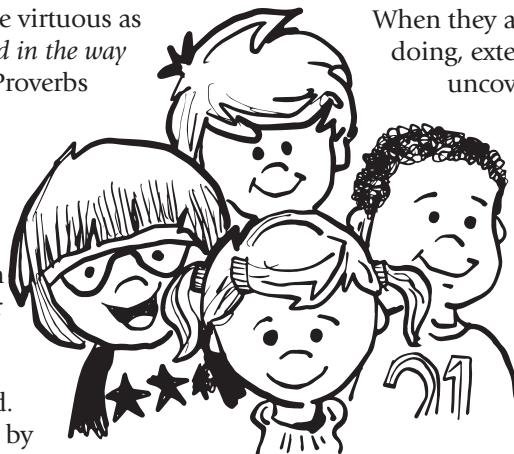


*"Discipline your children, and they will bring you comfort, and give delight to your soul" (Proverbs 29:17).*

## Four holy habits to teach children during Lent

The season of Lent is a call to change our ways and repent. It's also a chance to help our youngsters grow in holiness. In turn, we will find ourselves becoming more virtuous as we *"train a child in the way he should go"* (Proverbs 22:6).

**Patience:** Children often have trouble waiting, but impatience can make us sad or mad, and lead us to stop trusting in God. Teach patience by calmly waiting your turn, don't complain when enduring difficulty, and encourage children to pray while waiting.



**Kindness:** Flowing out of the virtue of charity, it is best learned by feeling it so it can be reproduced. Make kindness a signature virtue your family shares.

**Honesty:** Deception in any form is sinful. Children may lie to get out of trouble, to get something they want, to avoid upsetting others.

When they admit to wrong doing, extend mercy. If you uncover a lie, require an apology and impose steps to repair damage done.

**Obedience:** Our fallen nature means that disobedience is more natural to us than submitting to authority, but

obedience recognizes rightful authority. This virtue encourages us to submit to God's will – a critical life skill. We can model obedience when we seek God's will in prayer and Scripture, pray for His guidance, and model those habits for our children.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

Each color highlights a particular aspect of the season and helps us enter the mystery we're celebrating. Green symbolizes spiritual growth and is worn during Ordinary Time. Purple (or violet) is for the penitential seasons of Lent

## Why do we use different colored vestments during Mass?



and Advent. White and gold signify joy and glory and are for Christmas and Easter. Red, recalling Christ's blood, is worn on Good Friday and the feasts of the martyrs. It also recalls the Holy Spirit and is worn on Pentecost and Confirmations.

## Explain the Faith on five fingers

The best gift we can give our children is a close, loving relationship with Christ. An easy way to explain the basics of our faith in Him is to use the five fingers of the left hand:

**Pinky:** The smallest finger reminds us that we're weak and need a Savior. We must ask Him each day for the graces we need.

**Ring finger:** Traditionally, this is the finger on which married people wear a wedding ring. God's love for us is forever, like the perfect,



endless circle of a wedding ring.

**Tall finger:** Jesus died on the Cross for our sins and then He rose, victorious. He promises that if we stay close to Him, we will also rise, victorious, to Heaven.

**Pointer:** Jesus chooses each of us to imitate His example of love. He asks us to inspire others with our words and actions.

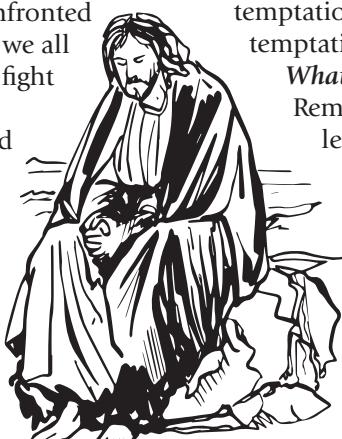
**Thumb:** As part of Jesus' Body, we are stronger together than alone. "Thumbs up!" reminds us to stay close to Him and invite others, too.

## Scripture LESSON

### Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus leads us to victory

In this Gospel reading, Satan tried to tempt Jesus to sin. Jesus confronted the three basic temptations we all face and showed us how to fight them: choosing self-control over selfishness, serving God instead of expecting Him to serve us, and remaining faithful to God's plan, even in the face of difficulties.

During the season of Lent, we join Jesus in the desert in prayer and fasting for forty days (not counting Sundays). We use this time to go deeper in relationship with God and to purify our hearts to love well, and to grow in virtue. Sooner or



later in our lives, we all encounter temptations, especially the temptation to give up.

#### What can a parent do?

Remind youngsters that the lesson of Lent is to come back to God and encourage them to make offerings that help them think, choose, and love like Jesus. For example, they can resolve to only say kind words, sacrifice dessert, help around the house. Teach them to pray whenever they feel tempted. When we stay close to Jesus, He will lead us home.

## Feasts & Celebrations

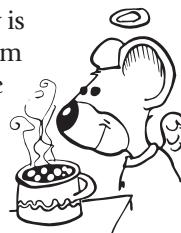
**February 2 – Presentation of the Lord.** In accordance with the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple forty days after His birth, and Simeon praised God for revealing the long-awaited Savior.

**February 3 – St. Ansgar (865).** St. Ansgar was born in Picardy, France. He was sent to a Benedictine monastery after his mother's death. After taking vows, he traveled to Denmark and Sweden to preach the Gospel.

**February 4 – St. Jane of Valois (1505).**

Briefly a queen of France, St. Jane was unwillingly married to the Duke of Orleans. Despite an unhappy marriage, she remained loyal and patient. When their marriage was annulled, she retired to Bourges and founded the Order of the Annunciation.

**February 22 – 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 – one regular meal and two smaller meals that together don't equal a full meal.



## Parent TALK

Lent often felt like a holy diet to me. I focused on cutting out sweets, alcohol, and snacking. I ended up, six weeks later, pounds lighter and not an ounce holier. When the children came along, I decided to look at the three pillars: prayer, penance, and almsgiving.

On Ash Wednesday Mass we each offered a sacrifice – a favorite toy, screen time, some luxury. Then, we agreed that each night before bedtime we would pray a decade of the Rosary and offer spontaneous prayer.

Finally, we spent the weeks setting aside gently used toys and clothes to donate at the end of the season. We also increased our contributions to the poor box at church.

The emphasis on God and the practices the Church encouraged brought us out of ourselves and helped us approach Easter with a new perspective. As my daughter said, "Isn't that the whole point of Lent?"

## Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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