

Pretzels and Lent

During Lent we practice fasting from rich foods as a sacrifice. Because pretzels do not contain any rich food ingredients, they are considered to be a traditional food for Lent.

They are made of only flour, water and salt.

2 pkg yeast (2 1/2 tsp)

1 1/2 cups water

4 cups flour

1 tsp sugar

1 egg

1 tsp salt

1/2 cup coarse salt

Mix 2 packages of yeast with 1 1/2 cups of warm water.

Add 4 cups flour.

Add 1 tsp salt.

Add 1 tsp sugar.

Mix, turn out on floured surface, punch down, then fold. Repeat punch/fold 10-20 times.

Make 6-8 small balls. Roll and shape. Brush with beaten egg. Sprinkle with coarse salt.

Put in preheated 425 degree F oven. Bake 12 minutes.

Making pretzels with your children can begin a discussion about what we individually sacrifice for Lent.

Talk with your children about what they might give up during the season of Lent so they can concentrate on strengthening their faith life with Jesus.

FUN FACT: because they were created to be a Lenten food, the pretzel was first shaped in the form of praying hands.



Family Activities For Lent





Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is on Wednesday, March 2 this year!

On Ash Wednesday, Catholics attend a special service where ashes are applied to the forehead in the form of a cross.

These ashes are a symbol of penance made sacramental by the blessing of the Church. The ashes that are used on Ash

Wednesday come from the burning of the blessed palms from the previous year. Wearing the ashes on Ash Wednesday reminds Catholics that the Lenten season ahead is a time of reflection, prayer, sacrifice and renewal.

One of the best ways to teach children about the importance of Ash Wednesday and Lent is to take them to Lenten services and devotionals and then talking about them. This is especially true if these practices are incorporated into everyday life.

This resource contains some ideas for hands on activities; prayers, crafts, videos, and stories, that can help deepen your own understanding of this important season of our faith and help you pass along that understanding to your children.

Crown of Thorns

Make this crown of thorns from salt dough and wooden toothpicks with your children on Ash Wednesday [recipe below].



While making the crown, parents can explain to their children about sin and the suffering Jesus endured for our sins. Lent is a time to look over our lives and ask for forgiveness for the things that we do that are wrong. It gives us a chance to make sacrifices of our own as a penance for our sins and to help us remember not to sin again. Explain that each toothpick you will put in the crown represents a good deed or sacrifice that your family members will be

making during Lent. The idea is for the family to make enough sacrifices during Lent so that all of the “thorns” will be gone by Easter. On Easter you can paint it gold and decorate it with gems to make it a crown for our risen King!

Salt Dough Ingredients

- 4 Cups Flour
- 1 Cup Salt
- Water
- Toothpicks

Directions:

- *Mix the flour and the salt & mix enough water to make a stiff clay.
- *Knead the dough until smooth.
- *Roll three long ropes and loosely braid them.
- *Form the braid into a circle and stick toothpicks loosely throughout the entire crown (do not put them in too deeply or they cannot be pulled out intact).
- *Bake at 350 degrees for an hour or until dry & light brown.

Finally, place the crown of thorns on a deep purple cloth in a prominent place so that you will remember to speak often about your Lenten sacrifices!

Almsgiving

One of the important disciplines we practice during Lent is almsgiving. Alms are funds we set aside for the care of the poor. The money we collect goes to help the poor all over the world.

Your family can use a Rice Bowl as an opportunity to teach even the smallest child about Catholic Social Justice teachings.



Each time a family member goes without a treat - or forgoes dessert - and places the money in the Rice Bowl box, they are learning about sacrificing for others. When Lent is over, you can continue this practice by encouraging children to put money in the box for the poor located in your local parish/church. [This is also a great opportunity to pull one of the “thorns” from your Lenten crown of thorns!].

Rising to New Life!



As Lent begins, help your children plant some crocus bulbs in a bowl of sand, covering them halfway. Leave them in a dark closet for two months, making sure to keep them moist (this process is known as “forcing”). When the shoots appear, take them out of the closet and put them in a sunny location.

Don’t forget to leave one bulb unplanted as a reminder of what they looked like before they “came to life!”

A Lenten Cross

This is an activity that can help create an atmosphere of prayer and thankfulness for all the good things we have in our lives.

Have children cut out crosses from cardboard (or have them already cut for them). Next, they cut out small pictures from magazines and glue them on the crosses. They can choose whatever pictures they want and as many as they want. Then once the project has been completed, encourage your children to tell you why they chose each of the pictures on their cross.

Explain to them that the reason you put them on the shape of a cross was so that they would understand that we should also be very thankful for the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

Ask the children how they can make Jesus a part of their everyday life just like all the other things they are thankful for.

