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## Lent at Home

### Activities for Busy Catholic Families

Given the many challenges facing today's families, now is the perfect time and home is the perfect place to experience Lent. After all, home is where we rush and rest, where we hope and worry, where we love and forgive. It is home where we most often experience day-to-day salvation. Lenten experiences can take place in nearly every room of the house.

Here are some ideas to try to enrich your celebration of Lent at home:

#### Family Lenten Crafts

Make a decorative family “works of mercy” tree by following the directions on these PDFs (<https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/lpress-craft/files/ocf-files/lent-intergen-files/crafting-faith-44-45.pdf>). Work as a family to follow through on your promises. You can find more activities like this in *Crafting Faith* (<https://store.loyolapress.com/crafting-faith-crafts-to-help-kids-grow-in-faith>).

#### Lenten Family Mealtime

In addition to “Friday fish day,” designate one evening a week to prepare a meal together. Assign a different dish or task to each family member. Before starting, discuss how each family member is giving to the others—giving time, effort, and care to nourish the entire family to go out and do God's will. Begin with a prayer of thanks and petition.

#### Family Lenten Reading

Prominently display the Bible and other books that feature topics such as the following: Lent, forgiveness, prayer, Scripture, generosity, social justice and service for others. You might wish to display *Praying Lent: Renewing Our Lives on the Lenten Journey* (<https://store.loyolapress.com/praying-lent-renewing-our-lives-on-the-lenten-journey>), a small booklet by Andy Alexander, SJ, or *A Prayer Book of Catholic Devotions* (<https://store.loyolapress.com/a-prayer-book-of-catholic-devotions>) by William G. Storey, which offers a special section dedicated to Lenten reflection in addition to prayers for other seasons and normal time. Invite family members to choose books and discuss what you read.

#### Family Kindness and Sharing

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On slips of paper, write random acts of kindness, such as give a compliment, say hi to an old friend, carry someone's heavy load. Present each family member with a slip of paper as he or she leaves in the morning. Invite each family member to perform the kindness without seeking recognition. Afterward, talk together about what happened. Pray with one another that your kindnesses will be passed on throughout Lent and beyond.

## Giving to Charities

Ask each family member to find three to five high-quality, useful items that would be appreciated by those who are less fortunate. Donate the items to a favorite charity. Pray together for those who will receive them.

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## Fasting and Abstinence from Meat

Since biblical times, fasting and abstinence have been considered appropriate expressions of repentance for sin. As Catholics, we fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and we abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent. Fasting and abstaining from meat reminds us of our reliance on God, who is the source of all abundance and nourishment. As Catholics, we are encouraged to fast voluntarily and occasionally throughout the year in order to practice self-denial, to lead a life of moderation that deepens our compassion for people who are in need, and to develop a deeper hunger and thirst for God.

## For Catechists and Religious Education Teachers



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