

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2014



## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Patrick

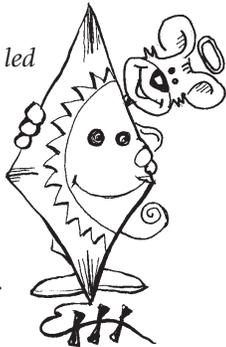
St. Patrick was just a teen when he was seized by marauders from his home in Scotland and enslaved in Ireland. He worked as a shepherd for six years before escaping. Back in Scotland, he became a priest but asked to return to the land of his captivity as a missionary. While many legends are told about him, we do know for certain that St. Patrick eventually became bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.



### Penance vs. punishment

Don't let children confuse penance with punishment. Punishment is something forced on us when we commit wrongdoing. Penance is an act we offer to God of our own free will out of sorrow when we turn from him.

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights ..."*  
(Matthew 4:1-2).



## Lent is about love

Children know that Lent is when we "give something up." But Lent is also the Church's gift to us to help us grow in love for God by the time Easter morning dawns.

**Clear the path for love.** During Lent we check to see if we are still on the path Jesus laid out for us. Can others tell by our actions that we are followers

of Christ? Are we honest, caring and giving? Are we spreading God's love? This is the time to clear out whatever is in the way so that we can answer, "yes!"

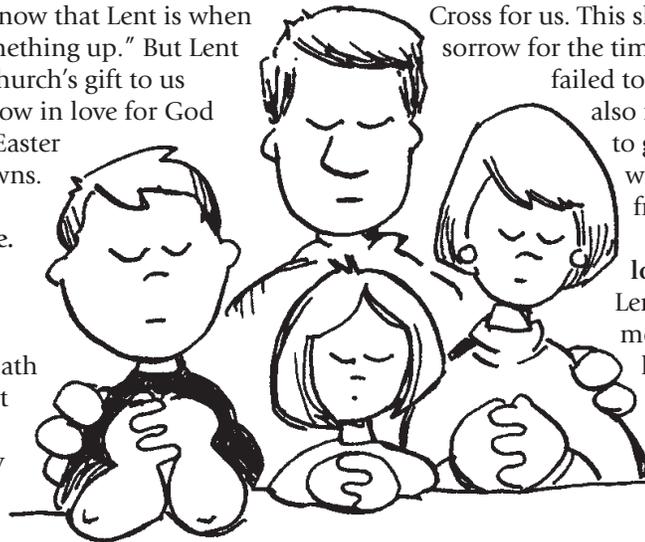
**Sacrifice for love.** Giving up favorite foods, television shows, and special toys during Lent is a way to join our sacrifice to Jesus' loving sacrifice on the

Cross for us. This shows our sorrow for the times we have failed to love him but also reminds us to give him our whole hearts from now on.

**Listen for love.** During Lent we can do more prayerful listening. Sharing Scripture with children helps them

to hear God's voice. For example, reading the gospels and meditating on Jesus' words is a sure way to teach children the words of love.

**Show love.** Next to loving and worshipping God, Jesus really wants us to love each other. Performing acts of kindness during Lent shows our love as well as expresses penance.



## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

## Why do Catholics avoid meat on Fridays during Lent?

Catholics who are at least fourteen years old are required to abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent. This practice is meant as a reverential sacrifice in honor of Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday. It is also an outward, penitential

sign of our faith.



The Church still recommends abstinence on all Fridays of the year, not just during Lent. In fact, if we don't abstain from meat on non-Lenten Fridays, we're asked to substitute some other form of penance.

## Positive products of praise

Scolding doesn't always produce good behavior. Add earned praise to your parenting toolbox during Lent and you may even find your children have better behavior when Easter comes around.

**Notice small improvements.** Pick two or three behaviors you would like your child to improve, set goals, and praise even slight progress. "I only had to call you once to set the table today. Thanks for starting to take responsibility for your chore." Your



child will look at himself in a new way – as someone who is responsible instead of forgetful – and may repeat this behavior hoping for more praise.

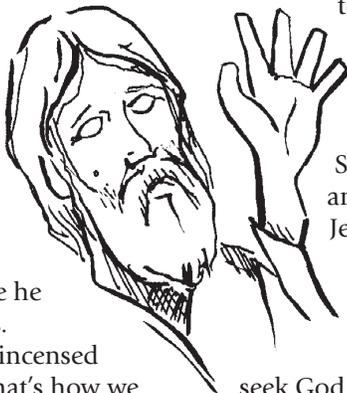
**Focus on the positive.** Instead of "You call this a clean room? What about all stuff on the floor?" try to focus on what was done well. "You made your bed and hung up all your clothes. Now all you have to do is put your books on the shelves and your room will look great." She will feel good about the job already done and be motivated to finish.

### Scripture LESSON

#### John 9:1-41, A blind man saw clearly

Seeing Jesus for who he was, a blind man came to him for healing. Jesus spread a paste made of clay and saliva on the man's eyes. Then he told the man to wash the dirt from his eyes so he could see. Sometimes God allows us to become uncomfortable before he reveals his truth to us.

The Pharisees were incensed by this miracle and that's how we know that they were false shepherds. Seekers of the truth ask questions

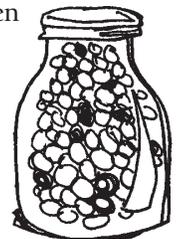


sincerely with a willingness to find God. The Pharisees were so anxious to hold on to their positions that they proclaimed silly conclusions such as, "if this man were from God he wouldn't heal on the Sabbath." In fact, all they did and said led people away from Jesus – a very serious error.

**What can a parent do?** Encourage children to ask questions so that they can know God better. When we seek God sincerely with a willingness to obey him, he will always lead us to the truth.

### Parent TALK

Each year my children give up chocolate, arguing, eating desserts, watching television for Lent - all good choices but things they shouldn't do much of anyway. I thought we would take a different approach to Lent this year.



I put out two large jars, an empty one and one full of jelly beans. Whenever we perform an anonymous good deed or sacrifice during Lent, we can move a jelly bean into the empty jar to fill it up. On Easter we will share the candy as a symbol of the sweet reward of Heaven when we do what Jesus asked.

Then we made tissue paper flowers and put them in a box. Each time we pray a decade of the Rosary during Lent we can put a flower in the vase on the kitchen table. We get to see our spirits "blossom" during the season as we prepare for Easter.

### Feasts & Celebrations

March is the month in which we honor St. Joseph (March 19), Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother. He is a model of fatherhood and protector of families.

March 7 – **Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (203).** Perpetua was a young mother and beautiful noblewoman of Carthage who refused to renounce her faith. Felicity was a slave and expectant mother who also refused to deny her Christianity. Felicity gave birth and then both women were executed three days later.

March 23 – **St. Toribio de Mogrovejo (1606).** A brilliant scholar, he was a professor of law when chosen to lead the archdiocese of Lima in Peru. He was ordained priest and bishop and worked with intense fervor to strengthen his diocese.

March 25 – **The Annunciation (first century).** The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



#### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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