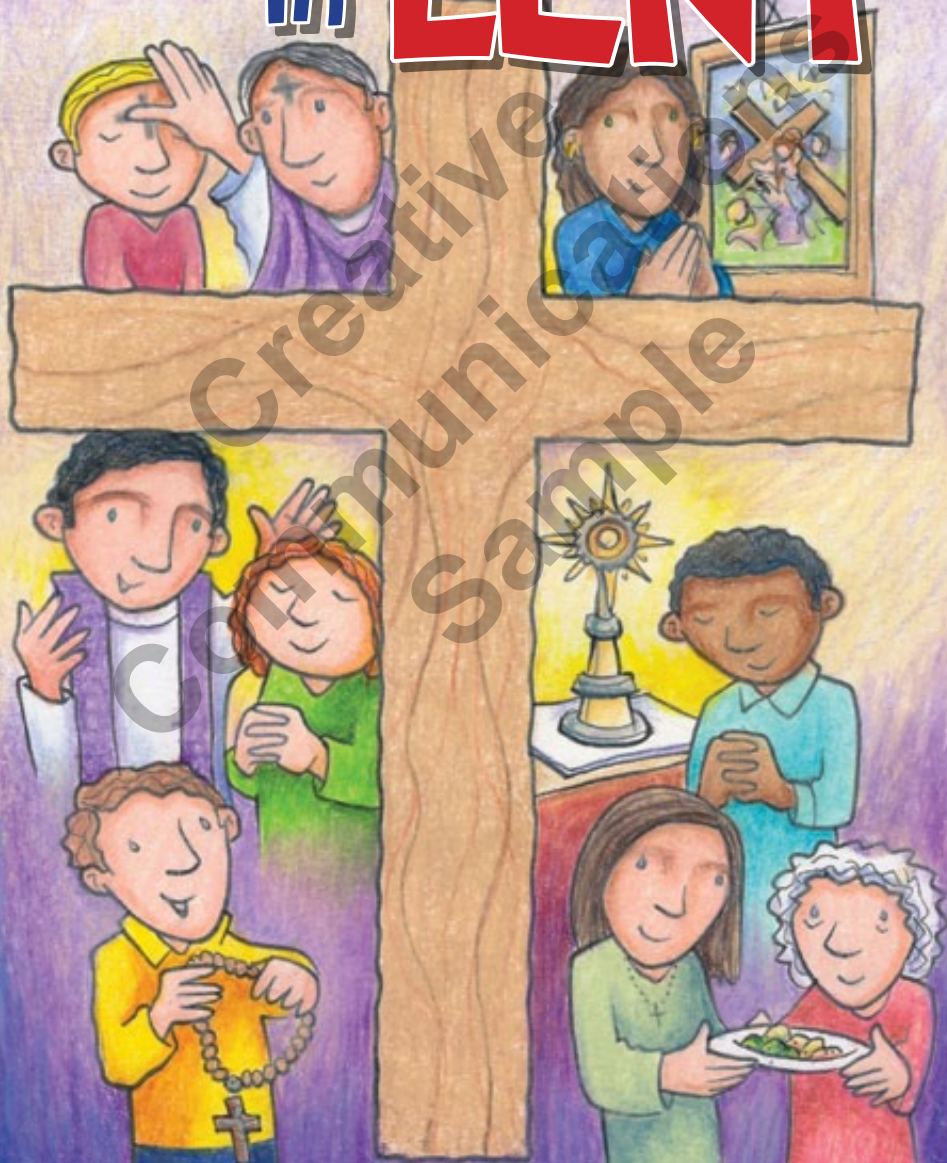
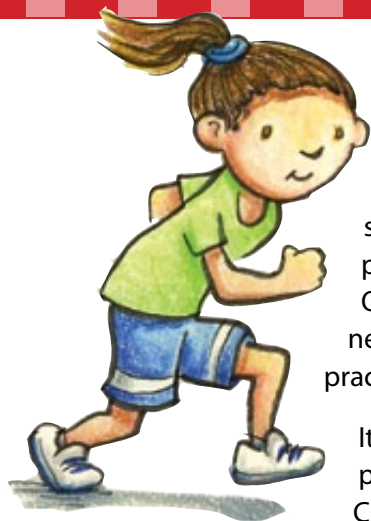


What We Do in LENT





You watch a great basketball game or hear a cool song, and you think, “Gee, I wish I could do that!” Would you be surprised to find out that you need to practice to become good at those activities? Of course not. To do anything well, we need to learn the right way to do it and then practice—a lot.

It may sound funny to think of Lent as practice, but we’re not born being good Christians. In fact, we make mistakes all the time. A sin is a mistake that moves us away from God. But God is merciful, and with his help, we can become better followers of his Son, Jesus.

Everything we do during Lent—from getting ashes on our foreheads to giving up meat on Fridays—can train and strengthen us for the great life God has in mind for us. If it gets hard to do sometimes, we have to pray and rely on God.

That’s where this little booklet comes in. It can help you understand Lent’s basic training practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving so you can become, as Pope Francis says, “an athlete for Christ.”

As you finish each page, place the correct sticker on the bottom of the page. It’s easy to do. Before you know it, you’ll be Lenten-strong!



Ash Wednesday

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Some teams or clubs have a T-shirt or uniform for members. Ashes are a little like that. We go to church on Ash Wednesday and get ashes to remind us that through our baptism, we belong to God. Ashes are placed on our foreheads in the shape of a cross to remind us that through Jesus' life, death on the cross and resurrection, we hope for eternal life. We might make mistakes and sin, but we'll never get kicked off God's team.



But why ashes? Why not stickers or something that isn't so, well...dirty? Good question. Before they were placed on your forehead, those ashes were once palm branches. We get palms on Palm Sunday, the sixth Sunday of Lent, to remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before his suffering and death. Every year some of those palms are burned, and the leftover ashes remind us that death isn't the end. Through Jesus, we hope to live with God in heaven forever, happier than we can ever imagine.

Believe it or not, ashes were once used to make soap! That's another reminder of how we are born into sin, but with Jesus' help, we turn away from sin and get washed clean.

When you get ashes on Ash Wednesday, make some plans for Lent. This little booklet can help you.



40 Days to a Stronger You!



If you want to play an instrument or sport, you need regular practice times. That's why we set aside 40 days of the year for Lent. But why does Lent begin in the middle of the week? Why not Monday? Or Sunday? For an answer, just look at the moon.

That's right. The moon helps us figure out when Easter is. Unlike Christmas, which can fall on any day of the week as long as it's December 25, Easter always falls on a Sunday. That's the day the Bible tells us Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus' Last Supper was during the Jewish feast of Passover, which always falls on the first full moon after the first day of spring (also known as the vernal equinox). So we can figure out that Easter will always be the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring.

Now if you count backwards 40 days from Good Friday (be sure to skip Sundays because they're not part of the Lenten fast), you'll end up on a Wednesday—Ash Wednesday.

Speaking of numbers, 40 is an important one for biblical people: Noah spent 40 days in the ark. Moses and his people searched for the Promised Land for 40 years. And before beginning his ministry, Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert.

Try tracking the moon's phases—from new moon to full—during Lent. And remember to thank God for this amazing creation.



Lenten Basics

Prayer



The trouble began this morning when Josh overslept. Then he skipped breakfast. Now he's waiting to begin his piano recital, and he's so hungry he can't focus. What if he makes a mistake in front of everyone?

Can you spot where Josh went wrong? You probably know that eating a good breakfast—and getting healthy food—can keep you going strong. The same is true of prayer. Just talking to God can do wonders for us, especially when we need help. If you haven't been praying much, Lent is a good time to get into the habit.

Here are some ways you can pray during Lent and all through the year.

Start every day by making the Sign of the Cross: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Ask God to stay with you throughout the day.

Visit your church on a day other than Sunday to talk with God about whatever you want.

Make a list of people who need prayers, and pick one to pray for each day. (Start with your parents, family, priests, the pope, people in the hospital—you get the picture.)

Every night before you go to sleep, think back on your day. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how God was part of it. If you made mistakes, ask for God's help so you can do better tomorrow.

Can you think of other ways you might pray during Lent?



What We Do in LENT

Lent, we all know, is a time to get ready for Easter. But why does it start with getting ashes on our

foreheads? Why can't we eat meat on Fridays during Lent? Should I give up candy in Lent? Knowing what we Catholics do in Lent is important, but it is even more important to know why we do it. Learn about Lent in this booklet, and when you finish each page, mark it with a sticker that shows you understand the what and why of Lent.

Other Living Faith Sticker Books



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