Family Activities for the Forty Days of Lent Ideas from CFM

Lent is a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice, a time for the entire family to be more attentive to the words of Jesus and to each other. It is a time to try harder to put Christ's teachings into practice. It is a time of concentrated effort toward the springtime of spiritual growth, or rebirth and renewal. It is a time when the whole Church goes on retreat for 6 weeks. It is a 40-day journey with Jesus. Lent means doing something as well as giving up something.

Clay Pot – Shatter an inexpensive clay pot and give each family member a piece to keep during Lent as a reminder that we are like clay in God's hands. During Lent, we can allow God to shape us into new vessels.

Fasting during Lent has always been a popular religious practice.

- Fast from fast food.
- Fast from TV one day a week.
- Fast electronic games one day a week.
- Fast from using the computer and spend that time with your family.
- Fast from buying anything that is unnecessary during Lent.
- Fast from bad habits that need to be changed/given up.

Plan a simple meal around tortillas and beans. Let everyone at your table share an idea for helping hungry people. Ask God to help you carry out one of these ideas. Read 1 Timothy 6:18-19

Schedule a Family Night. Plan time together and enrich your family life. Themes for families and small groups to use at home, including prayer, something to think about, conversation starters, activity ideas for Young Families, Middle Years Families and Adult Families, entertainment, and even snack suggestions.

- Hope and Lent
- Reconciliation
- Signs of Love for Lent

Practice the 3 C's. Give 3 compliments a day to your spouse, your child or to someone else.

Remove something from your calendar and spend that time with your family.

Blessing- Parents, bless your children by making the sign of the cross on their forehead before they go to bed at night or when they leave for school each day.

Read a spiritual book. Try *Raising Kids Who Care*, by Kathy Chesto (Liguori, 2003); *Sacred Dwelling*, by Wendy Wright (Forest of Peace, 1994); *The Holy Longing*, by Ronald Rolheiser (Doubleday, 1999).

Mosaic-Cross- Cut out a large cardboard cross and many squares of colored paper. During Lent, whenever a family member does a good deed or makes a sacrifice, he or she glues a square to the cross. Try to cover the cross by Easter.

Pretzels had their origin in early Christian Lenten practices Because fat, eggs, and milk were forbidden during Lent, a special bread was made with dough consisting of only flour, salt, and water. These little breads were shaped in the form of arms crossed in prayer. Choose one night in Lent to make pretzels. Find a recipe on the internet.

Spring Cleaning- Renew a corner of your home: the attic, the garage, or the yard. Paint a room or clean out closets. Give unused toys and clothes to the poor. Hold a garage sale and donate the profits to a charitable organization.

Have a Sugarless Tuesday as well as meatless Fridays in Lent.

Give up "whining," arguing," "not listening," or "bothering people who are on the phone."

Stress the importance of quiet time and prayer time. Have a quiet time each week (or each day) –no TV, Ipods, music, or cell phones.

Choose a positive action for each day of Lent.

Write a letter or call someone who is lonely or shut-in.

Fast so others may feast. Read Matthew 25:31-46. As a family, discuss giving up some food this week – and give the savings to the Rice Bowl project or your local food pantry.

Easter Eggs- Eggs remind us of the new life that is present for all of us in the Resurrection of Jesus. In ancient times eggs were a symbol of spring and fertility. During the Middle-Ages, the eating of eggs was prohibited during Lent. On Easter morning, Christians would give eggs to one anther to celebrate the breaking of the Lenten fast. The egg became the symbol of the tomb from which Christ emerged, calling us all to resurrection and new life. When you dye Easter eggs, think about what the colors mean: red-Jesus blood, purple- being sorry for sin, green- new life, gold-resurrection.