

Forty Activities for Forty Days for Junior Students

TN – Most of the activities can be moved around. There are activities suggested for March Break but we are not in school during those days, so if you want to move an activity to when we are in school, that is your choice. Please keep a Lenten spirit in your classroom for the whole time. There are fifty days of Easter after we return on Easter Tuesday. Why not celebrate with Easter crafts and activities during the actual season.

Monday before Ash Wednesday – Activity 1 – March 4

Discuss Lent – a time to turn away from sin and to build up our relationship with God. It is forty days long. Lent is a time of repentance. Repentance means to express sadness and sincere regret for doing wrong or for not doing something right. It is easy to say “I’m sorry.” But when we show repentance we mean that we are sorry and that we are really going to try hard not to do it again.

Tuesday before Ash Wednesday – Activity 2 – March 5

Discuss what will happen tomorrow on Ash Wednesday. Where do the ashes come from? The palm branches of last year’s Palm Sunday celebration are burned and the ashes are collected. A priest/teacher will make a cross of ashes on our foreheads. We are invited to leave the cross on our foreheads as a sign that we want to grow in our friendship with God. We want to live our lives like Jesus. [If you have a classroom old palm branch or ask students to bring in old palms from home – burn it with the class and add it to the school’s supply of ashes – be prepared to have to burn just a little of it because it can take awhile for the whole branch to become ashes – allow for cooling time too.]

Ash Wednesday – Activity 3 – March 6

Change the prayer cloth to violet/purple.
Take off every else except a candle, crucifix and bible.
Put away all other icons of faith until Easter.

There were three traditional ways we were invited at the service/mass to live Lent, what were they? [Praying, fasting, and giving alms] What do each of these activities look like if someone is living them?

First Thursday of Lent – Activity 4 – March 7

Have the students make a Change-of-Heart Tree to show their progress in keeping their Lenten resolutions.

Assign a group of students to design the trunk and bare branches of a tree out of brown paper. Have them glue it to a piece of white paper (about 3 ft x 2 ft.) Invite the other students to cut out purple hearts and write their Lenten resolutions (promises) on them. Have each student cut out seven leaves from green paper. Post the banner and collect the green leaves in a container. Tell the students that once a week, whenever they feel that they have kept their Lenten promises, they may glue a green leaf around their purple heart. By the Easter Triduum which begins on Holy Thursday evening, the Change of Heart Tree will be complete, symbolizing renewed life in Christ.

First Friday of Lent – Activity 5 – March 8

Bury the ALLELUIA.

Make a large sign of ALLELUIA (you can laminate it).

Get an empty pot of sand or soil and bury the alleluia until we use it at Easter. Alleluia is a word of celebration that comes from our Easter celebration. During Lent we do not say or sing this word. We are fasting from the word so it will have renewed meaning for us at Easter.

First Saturday of Lent – Activity 6 – March 9

Clean your bedroom. Lent is about spring cleaning our hearts. When we clean our environment it helps us to be ready to go inside and open our hearts to God.

First Sunday in LENT – March 10

Sundays are not included in the forty days of Lent because we celebrate the Lord resurrection at Mass. We take bread and wine and remember that Jesus told us to relive the Last Supper on Sundays. “Do this in memory of me!” So the Church is dressed in purple, we sing about praying, almsgiving and fasting. Sometimes

special songs are sung or less music is used during the Sundays in Lent.

First Monday of Lent – Activity 7 – March 11

PRAYING during Lent: take a few minutes to ask your students how they are going to pray during these Lenten days. Invite them to write a prayer that they can say every day during Lent. The prayer can express repentance, thanksgiving or intercession. Invite them to make it a personal prayer to God. God loves to hear the voices of children in prayer. Thank God for your family and friends.

First Tuesday of Lent – Activity 8 – March 12

Social Justice requires that we explore what Sin is – personal sin and social sin (communal sin).

What is SIN? Sin is anything we say, think or do that turns us away from God. God is always watching us and caring for us, however, there are times when we turn our eyes, ears and hearts away from God's presence, God's voice and the way of life God invites us to live. Sin is a reality for us. Sometimes it is a sin of omission [not doing something that is good or right to do] or sin of commission [doing something wrong or hurtful.] In our world there is a lack of awareness of sinfulness. In fact, there is an idea that "if I do/say/think it is okay, then it is okay." This is a lack of conscience formation. There are right words/actions/thoughts and there are wrong actions/words/thoughts. We need to teach young people that they need to make good choices. They need to acknowledge that there is an objective right and wrong in many situations i.e. it is wrong to murder someone.

Second Wednesday of Lent – Activity 9 – March 13

It was this date on 2013 that Pope Francis was elected. Say a prayer for Pope Francis. He has a big leadership job in Rome to do.

Second Thursday of Lent – Activity 10 – March 14

ALMSGIVING of our kindness

Today let us look for ways to be kind to one another in our classroom. During Lent we are asked to give ALMS. Alms can be money, time, our talents, and our kindness. So let us focus today on finding ways to be KIND to our classmates, teacher and family members.

Second Friday of Lent – Activity 11 – March 15

FASTING FROM SAYING NO when my response should be YES. Today we are going to work on fasting. Fasting means we stop doing something so we can grow closer to God. When responsible people ask us to do something that is good, it is right to do it. Sometimes we don't want to do it. But the right choice is to do it. So today, when our friends, our teachers, our principal, our parents, or our brothers/sisters ask us to do something good/right, we are going to do it. We are going to FAST from saying no and doing what we want. When we fast in this way, we make good choices and we grow closer to God. We also get along with everyone and have a more peaceful time.

Second Saturday of Lent – Activity 12 – March 16

Do a good deed for someone in need. The little act of kindness can bring joy to someone who is not expecting help. Look around and see what you can do.

Second Sunday in Lent – March 17 – St. Patrick

Go for a walk and breathe in some wintery air. Listen to see if you can hear any birds. Feast of St. Patrick - Wear green clothes and eat some green food.

Second Monday of Lent – Activity 13 – March 18

What's With the Pretzels?

Ask students to show you a common posture for praying (kneeling, standing with hands pressed together in front of them, sign of the Cross)

Explain that, in the early Church, Christians often prayed with their arms folded across their chests, each hand on the opposite shoulder (demonstrate of them – like someone who receives a blessing at communion). Invite students to stand and to fold their arms in the manner described. Together pray the Our Father holding arms in prayer posture. Next show the students a twisted pretzel, show how the pretzel imitates the prayer posture that they used. Explain that, because we are called to pray and fast during Lent, the pretzel has come to be seen as a Lenten food because it reminds us of the prayer posture of the early Christians and it is a simple good that we can eat in place of a treat.

According to tradition, an Italian monk invented the pretzel as a reminder to his brother monks to pray during the season of Lent. Distribute playdoh and invite students to roll the clay into a “rope” about 10 cm long then twist it into a pretzel shape. Use this opportunity to talk about prayer postures in our personal prayer as well as at Mass (standing, sitting, kneeling, bowing, genuflecting, sign of the cross and so on)

Second Tuesday of Lent – Activity 14 – March 19 – St. Joseph Feast of St. Joseph

St. Joseph is the patron saint of Canada. He is Jesus’ foster father and husband to Mary. Discuss the concept of the Kingdom of God. If we lived lives of LOVE like Jesus did, how would our school, our neighbourhoods, and our city be changed. Jesus wanted everyone to be included in our circle of belonging. Jesus wanted everyone to have everything they need like food, water and shelter. Jesus wanted us to feel safe and protected. What would have to change in how we live for the Kingdom of God to become a reality right now!

Third Wednesday of Lent – Activity 15 – March 20

Fast from the electronics today. Become aware of how much energy you use to play with the computer, or Xbox or iPod, or iPad, Gameboys...etc. See if you can hold the fast all day.

Third Thursday of Lent – Activity 16 – March 21

What is the Golden Rule? How does the Golden Rule connect with Lent? Take time to use the Golden Rule today in your interactions with others in the school yard at recess time. Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Go to the following website if you want ideas of how to participate.

<http://www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/international-day-elimination-racial-discrimination>

Third Friday of Lent – Activity 17 – March 22

VISIT the Church and Look at the Stations of the CROSS

This activity could take several days (there are fourteen stations). If your school is close to the church you could break up the Stations into three visits. Visit 1 – Stations 1-4; Visit 2 – Stations 5-9; Visit 3 – Stations 10-14. You can explain that the stations were originally created as a way for illiterate people to pray in the footsteps of Jesus.

If you want to do all fourteen stations – I have Stations of the Cross for Children prayer service that you pray as you move through the moments of Jesus' passion. Keeping the stations simple is what is required at this age.

Third Saturday of Lent – Activity 18 – March 23

Thank everyone who does anything for you. We may think we are grateful every time but we can become a bit lazy. It is good for us to say thank you out loud. People all around us are serving us in so many ways.

Third Sunday in Lent – March 24

All around the world there are adults preparing to become full members of the Church. At the beginning of Lent they move from being called catechumens to “The Elect.” On this Sunday in Lent the Elect participate in the first scrutiny. This is a “mini exorcism” whereby the Church community prays with the person to help them to resist evil and to acknowledge their need for God. Everyone attending mass prays for the same thing for themselves.

Third Monday of Lent – Activity 19 – March 25 -- Listening to Jesus
Lent is a good time for us to think about how clearly we listen to Jesus. Do we take the time to talk to Jesus in prayer every day and to listen for his message for us in our hearts? What keeps us from listening to Jesus? What helps us to listen to Jesus? Sit up straight with both feet on the floor, quietly and perfectly still, for as long as you can. Close your eyes and let your heart and soul listen to Jesus. As students become quiet the teacher can pray in a quiet voice “Loving Jesus, quiet our hearts. Help us to pay attention and hear your message to us this week. Amen.”

Third Tuesday of Lent – Activity 20 – March 26

Why is Easter celebrated on a different day every year and not the same day like Christmas?

“The dating of Easter was settled definitely at the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. (a long time ago). Many Church leaders felt strongly that Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday, to commemorate the day of Jesus' Resurrection. So the decision was made to celebrate Easter on the *first* Sunday following the *first* full moon *after* the vernal equinox (the time of year when the number of daylight hours and

night hours are approximately the same all over the earth) or the first day of spring.” CATECHIST magazine, February 2010 page 31-32.

Bring in a calendar that shows the phases of the moon. Show the students when the full moon after the Spring equinox takes place. Go to the first Sunday after that – that is Easter Sunday. Usually Passover happens around the same time of the year because Jesus was celebrating the Passover with his apostles at the Last Supper which is the Thursday before Easter Sunday.

Fourth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 21 – March 27

Bring in 100 pennies and place them on a table/desk in the centre of the class. Tell students to imagine that these pennies represent all the earth’s resources and wealth. Ask for 10 volunteers to represent the world’s population. Divide the pennies in the following manner (according to the UN statistics)

20% (2 volunteers) get to share 85 pennies

20% (2 volunteers) get to share one penny

60% (6 volunteers) get to share 14 pennies

Point out that 20% of the world’s population enjoys 85% of the world’s wealth and abundance (explain that most people in Canada/US can be included in this 20%)

Ask if anyone can name the three main ‘disciplines’ of Lent:

Praying, fasting, and almsgiving

Get students to go to The Hunger Site www.thehungersite.com.

By clicking the Give Free Food button – sponsors of the site pay to give cups of food to the poor. This is one way to give alms. You can visit the site daily and click to give food to the poor. If you want more information about the hunger site – go to About the Hunger Site.

The Hunger Site provides simple, effective, feel-good ways to address an urgent, specific humanitarian need: the eradication of world hunger. This is a simple online action to do just that.

Fourth Thursday of Lent – Activity 22 – March 28

We are called to be “salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13) Salt, in the way Jesus spoke of it, can season our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving...The symbol of salt can help flavour and preserve our commitment to Jesus as his faithful disciples. Today, salt is so common that we speak of how we ought to eat less of it. At one time, however, salt was more valuable than gold. Before refrigeration, freezing and canning techniques were developed, salt

was one of the few ways to preserve food. It allowed people to travel far carrying their food with them. (Long before fast food and restaurants and grocery stores too.) Around 2,700 B.C.E., an explanation of different kinds of salt, how to extract it, and how to use it was circulated in China. The word 'salary' comes from the word salt, a frequent form of pay for soldiers and others in ancient Rome.

Adapted from CATECHIST magazine, February 2010 pages 36-37 Give each student a package of salt and invite them to be salt for the last half of Lent.

Fourth Friday of Lent – Activity 23 – March 29

Today is World Water Day. Canada is so blessed to have so much fresh water. Every time you use water today, say "thank you" to God. Give drink to the thirsty. Remind students about our precious natural resource of water. There are children around the world who don't have clean water to drink. Students can help by making an effort not to waste water, for example, by turning off the faucet while brushing their teeth or by during the water out of the tap and not bottled water. Have students research what bottled water is doing to water supplies around the world. For activities go to <http://www.worldwaterday.org/>

Fourth Saturday of Lent – Activity 24 – March 30

Earth Hour 8:30-9:30 p.m. As Canadians, we choose a future where climate change is no longer a threat. Participating in WWF's Earth Hour is a simple way to show that you want to be a part of the solution and it sends a powerful message that together we can make a difference. Canadians are encouraged to participate by turning off their lights for an hour and to share their participation on social media using the hashtag #uneheurepourlaterre

Fourth Sunday in Lent – Laetare Sunday – March 31

Laetare means "rejoice" in Latin. It is the halfway mark about our Lenten journey so we are encouraged to rejoice. The Church will be decorated in rose coloured garments.

The Elect along with the whole church community experience the Second Scrutiny. Usually each scrutiny is held at a different mass so each mass community gets to experience one scrutiny. Daylight Savings Time starts today, jump ahead one hour.

Fourth Monday of Lent – Activity 25 – April 1

Pray the First Sorrowful Mystery with your class.

Agony in the Garden – Matthew 26: 36-39

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.”

And going a little further, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

Our Father / 10 Hail Marys / Glory Be

It is intended that while people are praying the prayers that they are reflecting on the scripture story.

Fourth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 26 – April 2

Write a letter of appreciation to your parents.

Each and every day our parents take care of us.

This is a great way to give alms. Say thank you to your parents for their love and care.

Fifth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 27 – April 3

Stony Hearts – a symbol of what we still need to change.

Give each child a rough stone not a polished type. Ask the students to reflect on how they may still need to remove some stony-ness from their hearts. Do they need to forgive someone who has hurt them? Do they need to act with kindness toward someone who they have hurt? Lent is a time to give our stony-ness to Jesus and he will fill our hearts with much love.

Fifth Thursday of Lent – Activity 28 – April 4

Say a prayer for the children of Syria who have been traumatized by the war and all the experiences of what it means to be a refugee.

Ask God to give them hope.

Fifth Friday of Lent – Activity 29 – April 5

Take a song with a Lenten message and look at the words with your students. Reflect on the words and then if you are able sing the song together.

The Servant Song

Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road;
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow til we've seen this journey through.

Or any similar song....**remember no Alleluias yet.**

Fifth Saturday of Lent – Activity 30 – April 6

Fast from sweets today. Many years ago children were invited to fast from their favourite food for the whole six weeks of Lent. It is a long time to keep a fast. If you would have spent money on the sweets, give that money to the Share Lent collection taken up at Church tomorrow.

Fifth Sunday in Lent – April 7

The third scrutiny of the elect takes place today. It is common that a collection for Development and Peace is taken up today. This collection is called Share Lent in Canada. The money collected today is used for the ongoing support of justice projects in the developing world. Some people prefer to make this donation on Good Friday.

Fifth Monday of Lent – Activity 31 – April 8

Read a book with a Lenten message. Some suggestions: The Giving Tree; Something Beautiful; The Golden Rule; Wangari's Tree of Peace; How to Heal a Broken Wing; Stone Soup; Every Human Has Rights; One Hen; "Why are all the Taxi Drivers..?" The Good Garden; Sit-In; (any book from Equity & Inclusive Education Kit).

Ask students to summarize the key/main ideas. How does the book fit the theme of Lent? Does it talk about prayer? Fasting? Almsgiving? A search for Justice? The Cross? Let students work at the connections between the book and Lent. Encourage them to think "outside the box".

Fifth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 32 – April 9

Petition Prayer – Children learn to PRAY by praying. They need to learn to ask God’s help for themselves and other people. It is part of our life as Christians to care about others. The teacher asks the class, “Who should we pray for today? Who needs God’s help today?” So the student says, “My Nonna.” The teacher says, “let us pray for Susie’s nonna and everyone’s nonna today...We pray to the Lord.” Ask students to say together, “Lord, hear our prayer.” Ask students to say that after every prayer. Continue until students have had ample time to pray...if you want to ask every student to have one person/situation ready for which to pray as you begin so you can move from student to student.

Sixth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 33 – April 10

Call your grandmother(s) to tell her that you love her. That is almsgiving at its best. She is sure to smile afterward.

Sixth Thursday of Lent – Activity 34 – April 11

* modify for your class as needed

Cross reflection – invite your students to draw a cross. The cross was an ancient form of capital punishment – criminals who did crime paid with their lives. This was done in a public display in order to be a way to prevent further crime. Take a crucifix and show it to the class. Jesus’ body was nailed to the cross. The nails would have passed through his wrists so that the weight of his arms would not rip down. Some crucifixes show Jesus’ hands nailed to the cross but historical evidence disproves this idea. There was a little platform for Jesus to stand up and his feet would have been nailed together. Early during the time on the cross the crucified person would have strength to hold themselves up on the platform. But as the time passed and they became tired, the fluids of their body would pool in their feet and ankles. Those who were crucified died by asphyxiation, meaning that their diaphragm got tired of moving up and down with the arms extended and the person could not get enough air into their lungs. Jesus died on the cross not because he was a criminal. Jesus died on the cross to show us how much he loved us. That is a lot of love.

Sixth Friday of Lent – Activity 35 – April 12 – PD Day

Watch a Godtube video about a Lenten theme. Look at the Catholic Culture update for an example that will fit for this week. Discuss the video's message with your class.

Sixth Saturday of Lent – Activity 36 – April 13

Call your grandfather(s) to tell him that you love him. Give him alms. It will make his heart happy.

Sixth Sunday in Lent – April 14 - **Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord** Ask your parents to bring you to Church to listen to the Passion. The Passion is the telling of Jesus' story from his arriving in Jerusalem on the Friday of his last days on earth to his dying on the cross for us. Everyone gets a palm branch to re-enact Jesus riding on a colt into Jerusalem.

Sixth Monday of Lent – Activity 37 – April 15

Beginning of Holy Week

“Hosanna” is a word that was prayed and sung at mass yesterday. As Jesus rode on the back of a donkey into Jerusalem people put palm branches on the road to lessen the dust. They waved the palm branches in the air and sang “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.” Read the gospel account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Luke 19: 28-40) What part of the Mass do we hear the words “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” [Holy, Holy] Every time we attend mass those words are repeated.

Sixth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 38 – April 16

Read Mark's gospel account of the Plot to Kill Jesus. Mark 14:1-11. Jesus' words come true, here we are 2000 years later hearing about the kindness of the woman who anointed Jesus. Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus? Have you ever betrayed someone in a small way? It doesn't have to be for money. Sometimes we speak behind someone's back...that is a small betrayal. Pray to not be tempted to betray anyone.

Seventh Wednesday of Lent – Activity 39 – April 17

Was Jesus foolish to die for us?

Read Mark's gospel account of The Passover with the Disciples.

Mark 14: 12-21, 26-31. Read the first passage (12-21) then discuss

"What is Passover?" We must remember that Jesus was a Jewish man. Every year the Jewish people celebrate Passover – when the Spirit of Death passed over their homes so they could leave Egypt

and be slaves no more. Their doors were marked with lamb's blood so the plague would not touch their families. There is a very special meal that the Jewish people eat at Passover, it recalls the events of

the time of Moses and the exodus of the Jews into freedom. So on Thursday night of Passover Jesus celebrated with his disciples.

Read the second part of the passage (26-31). Can you see the scene in your mind?

Peter was one of Jesus' good friends for three years. Peter wants to protect Jesus. But Jesus knows that when the scary events of later that night take place, Peter will fall away too.

Have you ever had a similar experience?

Seventh Thursday of Lent – **Holy Thursday** – Activity 40 – April 18

On Holy Thursday Christians throughout the world remember the Last Supper. Bring a picture of DaVinci's last supper to class. Ask the students to look at the picture or wall-hanging (relief) carefully. If they were present at the Last Supper, hearing Jesus say that he was about to die, what would they think? This is the time that Jesus started "The Mass." He asked his disciples and us to remember him at the breaking of the Bread and when the cup is passed around. Christians have been celebrating the Eucharist since that first Holy Thursday. Read Mark 14:22-25.

The Sacred Paschal Triduum – **Good Friday** – April 19

This is the day that Christians throughout the world remember that Jesus died for us. We remember as a Church at 3:00 p.m. No masses are celebrated today; only communion prayer services. The hosts that were consecrated at mass on Holy Thursday night are served today. This is a day of Fasting and abstaining from eating meat.

Seventh Saturday of Lent – **Holy Saturday** – April 20

During this day Christians reflect upon what it would have been like to sit around missing Jesus very much. This is like a wake, when

someone we love dies. We sit and remember all the things that the dead person did and said. Mary, his mother, must have been filled with sadness. His friends must have been very sad that Jesus was gone. In fact they were hiding in the upper room because they were afraid that the people who killed Jesus might do the same to them.

EASTER SUNDAY – Resurrection of the Lord – April 21
Jesus rises from the dead. How exciting! No one has done this before. He is no longer in the tomb. His friends go to visit the tomb and the stone is rolled away and his body is not there. Alleluia! Jesus is risen like He said. Alleluia! Dig up the Alleluia, wash it off and post it in the prayer corner. If you have a cross without a corpus...display it as a sign of Easter joy.