

Forty Activities for Forty Days for Primary Students

[TN- Teacher's Note – The Lenten season begins on March 6 and goes until April 18, when the Triduum begins. The Easter season begins on April 21 – June 9. Please leave Easter crafts until the Easter season. You have fifty days to do Easter crafts.]

Monday March 4 before Ash Wednesday – Activity 1

Discuss Lent – a time to turn away from poor choices/sin and to build up our relationship with God. It will be forty days long. Lent means spring time. Discuss what happens in the Spring.

Tuesday March 5 before Ash Wednesday – Activity 2

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 teacher/priest 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 relationship with God. [if you have a classroom old palm branch – 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]

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.

First Thursday of Lent – Activity 4 – March 7

Opening the Door to my Heart this Lent – ask students to cut a big heart out of red construction paper. Cut a door shape in the middle of the heart and bend the door open so the door stays attached to the heart. Glue the heart to a sheet of white paper. Ask students to put the title above on the page above their heart. Ask them to write a one line prayer to Jesus inviting Him to help the student to be loving/merciful like He was.

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.

[TN – March Break begins – maybe you want to post the actions for these days on your classroom website or send home the suggestions so Lent continues during March Break.]

First Saturday of Lent – Activity 6 – March 9

Do a good deed for your mother or father. Something that s/he would not expect you to do. It is fun to GIVE ALMS to your mom/dad!

First Sunday in LENT – March 10

On Sundays we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord – we remember Jesus' dying and rising from the dead – so Sundays are not included in the forty days of Lent but to help us in our Lenten journey the Church is clothed in purple and we do not sing/say Alleluia. We listen to solemn readings. If individuals are preparing to be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil, Lent is intended to be a last retreat of preparation.

First Monday of Lent – Activity 7 – March 11

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 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 to do. 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 on our March Break.

First Tuesday of Lent – Activity 8 – March 12 – Pick up some litter or clean up your toys in your bedroom. This is a way to give alms.

Second Wednesday of Lent – Activity 9 – March 13

PRAY for peace in families where there is no peace. Our families sometimes struggle. Struggle can bring frustration. Sometimes the frustration takes peace away. Let us pray for all the families of the students in our school.

Second Thursday of Lent – Activity 10 – March 14 – Fast from sweets today. Instead eat fruit and veggies that are healthy for your body.

Second Friday of Lent – Activity 11 – March 15 – Drink lots of water. Water is a great choice because your body needs water to replace the water you breathe out, perspire out, and pee out.

Second Saturday in Lent – Activity 12 – March 16

Call your grandmother and tell her you love her. That will make her day a happy one as you GIVE ALMS.

Second Sunday in Lent – March 17 - Pray a special prayer for all your friends and family. Today is also St. Patrick's Day. Pray for the people of Ireland.

Second Monday of Lent – Activity 13 – March 18 –

Decide to collect Pop Tabs for people who need walking aids. Everyone in the class brings in ten pop tabs and we can give them to Sister Pat and she will bring them to the people who will convert them into money for walking aids like canes, wheel chairs, walkers.

Second Tuesday of Lent – Activity 14 – March 19

Feast of St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus. Did you know that St. Joseph is the patron saint of Canada? Joseph was not alive when Jesus died on the cross. Joseph had already died, but before he died, he taught Jesus how to be a good carpenter. Think about what your father has taught you?

Third Wednesday of Lent – Activity 15 – March 20

Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Write racial discrimination on a piece of chart paper – write it on the long axis. Explain that today the world is trying to eliminate racial discrimination [people being mean to people of different races.] Put a big red circle and a slash through the words racial discrimination. Pray that when the children are adults, racial discrimination will be over.

Third Thursday of Lent – Activity 16 – March 21st

FAST from saying something that is not positive, like “Shut up!” or using the word(s) “Stupid” to refer to someone. You pick the word(s) and try not to use it all day.

Third Friday of Lent – Activity 17 – March 22nd

Stations of the Cross

During the season of Lent, Catholics want to feel closer to Jesus in thought and prayer. One practice begun many centuries ago is called the Stations of the Cross. People would travel to Jerusalem and, on Good Friday, walk in Jesus’ footsteps from the Garden of Gethsemane to the hill of Calvary, stopping to remember what happened at different places along the way. Those different places are called “stations.” Because most people can’t go to Jerusalem to do this, the practice started of picturing those same stations so that people could pray as if they were there. Most churches today have images of the Stations on their walls.

Have the students draw Stations of the Cross using the following as a guide. Each student can draw one station. Then the stations can be prayed later in the week. It may be an opportunity for your class to join with another primary class to complete the activity and prayer time. If the stations turn out well, you may want to laminate them for another year.

First station: Jesus is condemned to death. Jesus stands in front of Pilate. Pilate wants to please the people so he believes their false stories about Jesus. He orders that Jesus be crucified.

Second station: Jesus is given his cross to carry. The soldiers make Jesus carry a big, heavy cross through the streets.

Third station: Jesus falls the first time. The cross is too heavy for Jesus and he falls to the ground.

Fourth station: Mary, Jesus' mother, pushes herself to the front of the crowd and meets her son. She is very sad that this is happening to her son but she can't do anything to stop it.

Fifth station: The soldiers notice that Jesus is having a hard time carrying his cross so they force a man called Simon to help Jesus to carry his cross.

Sixth station: Veronica sees Jesus as he passes by. His face is covered in sweat and blood. She wipes the face of Jesus with a soft cloth. Jesus smiles and thanks her.

Seventh station: Jesus falls a second time. Jesus is so tired that he falls again under the weight of the heavy cross. The soldiers force him to get up.

Eighth station: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem. There are women lining the way that Jesus travels with his cross. They love him very much and cry because they feel sorry for Jesus. Jesus speaks to them, and asks them not to cry for him.

Ninth station: Jesus falls the third time. Jesus is exhausted. He has come to the hill where he will be crucified. As he carries the cross up the hill, he falls a third time.

Tenth station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

The soldiers roughly tear Jesus' clothes from his body, and leave him only with his underwear. He looks so weak and hurt.

Eleventh station: Jesus is nailed to the cross. The soldiers nail his hands and feet to the cross. Jesus asks his Father in heaven to forgive the soldiers.

Twelfth station: Jesus dies on the cross. After three long hours on the cross, poor Jesus dies.

Thirteenth station: Jesus is taken down from the cross. The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross. His mother, Mary holds him in her arms and cries.

Fourteenth station: Jesus is laid in the tomb. A kind neighbour called Joseph offers a tomb to Mary for the body of Jesus. His body is wrapped in a clean sheet and laid in the tomb. A big stone is rolled across the opening of the tomb.

Third Saturday of Lent – Activity 18 – March 23

Go for a walk and breathe deeply. Taking care of our bodies is so important. While you are walking, fast from electronics and just enjoy the great outdoors.

Third Sunday in Lent – March 24

Individuals (catechumens) preparing to be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday night) participate in the first scrutiny. This is a process whereby the catechumens, referred to as the "elect" because they are moving forward to full initiation in the faith, are invited to reflect on their need for God in their lives. A scrutiny is a prayer to deliver the elect from evil [a minor exorcism]. It is a reminder, for all adults already baptized, that we must be aware of evil around us and fight its influence in our lives.

Third Monday of Lent – Activity 19 – March 25 – The Annunciation

Today the Church is reminded that nine months before Jesus' birth, an angel came to Mary to ask if she would be the mother of God. Does anyone know what the angel's name was? Today is the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord. Mary said "Yes!" As things get stressful for Jesus, how do you think Mary felt?

A story to grow in solidarity – The River (A story from El Salvador)

Directions: Show the children where El Salvador is on the map. It is the smallest but most densely populated Central American country. After the story, ask the children: why do you think the story is named *The River*? What else are rivers used for? Why did most big cities grow up around rivers?

Introduction: There are two mountain ranges in El Salvador. The weather is hot and wet in the lower areas and cool and wet in the higher areas. Most of the people are mestizo (mes-TI-zo: mixed European and native Indian background). Rivers are an important part of their lives.

Roxana followed her sisters down to the river. Her bare feet made soft marks in the dusty path. Her big sister Cristina lugged a pail filled with dirty dishes. Her eldest sister Angelica carried a basin of clothes on her head. The river was not very deep. Roxana walked into it with Angelica. They went to a big, smooth rock sticking out of the water. First, Angelica took a shirt from her basin and swished it into the river water. Then she put the shirt on the rock and rubbed it with soap. Their mother had made the brown soap, shaped like a ball. Angelica rubbed and rubbed the shirt. Then she dipped it into the river again and again until there was no more soap left in the shirt. Roxana watched a few bubbles and the water swirl around their toes. It swirled around the rock, around the basin of dirty clothes, and kept on going. Where did the river go? Angelica went on washing piece after piece of clothing. Bored, Roxana wandered over to Cristina. "I need more stones, Roxana," Cristina said. "Please help me." Roxana brought her several stones. Cristina placed these stones into the water in a circle, so some of the running river could collect there to form a sort of dishpan. If she did not make a stone circle, the dishes would be swept away, down the river. Roxana did not know where they would go. Cristina squatted down and scooped out some dirt swirling from this "dish pan." Then she washed the dishes in the circle of river water. Roxana helped by washing the cups. A boy brought some cows down to the river. The cows stepped into the river to drink. Roxana ignored them. She saw the cows every day. "Come on, Roxana," called Angelica. "The work here is done." Carrying clean clothing and clean dishes, the sisters began the walk home. The river kept on moving.

Taken from Anne E. Neuberger, Teaching Compassion and Justice through Stories and Activities – for Ages Five through Nine page 13

Third Tuesday of Lent – Activity 20 – March 26

Psalms are prayer songs. Psalm 23 is one that many people find comforting. It is a psalm often selected for people's funeral mass. It has been set to music many, many

times. Get a copy of the Psalm on CD or on Youtube and play it for your class. After the class listens to the song, ask the students to draw a picture of the Good Shepherd. If you prefer, use Psalm 23rd from Children's bible and read it to the students.

Fourth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 21 – March 27

Fasting helps us to feel desire inside us, whether it is for food or treats, fasting helps us to learn discipline. Fast from a behavior that causes you trouble with adults.

Fourth Thursday of Lent – Activity 22 – March 28

Hot Cross Buns – this Lenten treat was designed to remind people of the importance of the Cross during Lent. Enjoy the buns.

Fourth Friday of Lent – Activity 23 – March 29

We are half way through Lent. Give each child a purple heart to represent their Lenten hearts. During Lent we are invited to change our hearts. Write down on this heart how your heart has changed by your praying, fasting and almsgiving. We have done many activities since Ash Wednesday. How have you become more like Jesus?

Fourth Saturday of Lent – Activity 24 – March 30

The Hunger Site – feed a hungry person. This is a great way to GIVE ALMS!

Get the computers and invite the students to log on to the website

www.thehungersite.com

Fourth Sunday in Lent – March 31 - The second scrutiny of the elect takes place today. The Congregation continues to pray for the elect as they become aware of the effects of sin and evil around them. It is also the day that daylight savings time starts – jump ahead one hour after midnight.

Fourth Monday of Lent – Activity 25 – April 1

Invite someone that you don't usually play with to join your recess time fun. Everyone can be our friend if we include them in our fun. This is a form of ALMSGIVING. That's what Jesus would do!

Fourth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 26 – April 2

Good Shepherd – read the story of the Good Shepherd (John 10:2-5) A good reminder that we are to follow Jesus is this story of the Good Shepherd. Begin by explaining to the children that shepherds are people who care for sheep, watching over them and keeping them safe. They take the sheep out to where there is green grass for them to eat and water for them to drink. Sometimes the shepherds stay out all night with the sheep. Then they lead them back home. If one of the sheep gets lost, the shepherd goes out and looks until he finds it. Good shepherds care about their sheep. Tell your students that Jesus described himself as a good shepherd so that we would know he always watches over us like the shepherd watches over his sheep. We are to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as real sheep follow their shepherd. To help the children

to remember the story, show them how to make a fluffy sheep. Provide each child with a sheet of construction paper on which the outline of a large sheep has been traced. Title the paper Jesus is the Good Shepherd. With glue and cotton balls, the children can fill in the outline to make the fluffy white sheep. They should put cotton balls all over the sheep except the face and the hooves. When the glue dries, they can pet their soft sheep. Put their name below the sheep. Adapted from Burlap & Butterflies by Patricia Mathson

Fifth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 27 – April 3

Pray for your parents. Parents can always use some prayer support. You can tell them you prayed for them or do it in secret. God loves to hear you pray.

Fifth Thursday of Lent – Activity 28 – April 4

ALMSGIVING of our kindness

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

Fifth Friday of Lent – Activity 29 – April 5

Fast from unkind words. It is a good practice to think about what you are going to say before you say it. That way the unkind words are not spoken then regretted.

Fifth Saturday in Lent – Activity 30 – April 6

Clean your bedroom! Surprise your parents.

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

PRAY the Stations of the Cross.

Using the Stations created by the students, pray the way of the Cross.

Announce the station i.e. “The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death.” Then the student who drew the station – hold up the picture for all the classmates to see. That student or another or the teacher reads the description for the station (given above). If possible, have a student make a short prayer to go after the description of the station (it may be good for the students to work in pairs – while one draws the picture and other writes the prayer. For example, the prayer for the First Station could go something like:

“Dear Jesus, please help me never to make fun of anyone or to call people names. Make me kind and loving to everyone.”

Go through the fourteen stations in this way. It should be a serious prayer time. Invite the students to pray to Jesus, to thank him for his courage to die on the cross.

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

During our meditation time today, let us pray Ma ra na tha with holy hearts!
Invite Jesus to come to you with a gift of joy!

Sixth Thursday of Lent – Activity 34 – April 11

LENTEN sign of the CROSS – Praying the Lenten sign of the Cross

Make the sign of the Cross slower and larger than usual on your body. Students and teacher say: "In the name of the Father"

And hand touches forehead and stays – while teacher says
"who created me because he loved me."

Students and teacher say: "and of the Son" and hand touches belly and stays – while teacher says "who shows me how to love God."

Students and teacher say: "and of the Holy Spirit" and hand touches left shoulder then right – while teacher says "who teaches me to love everyone." Everyone says "AMEN" together.

Sixth Friday of Lent – Activity 35 – April 12

This is the last Friday of Lent. A Special Lenten Food

The pretzel is a symbol of prayer and fasting. In the Roman Empire, long, long ago, the faithful Christians kept a strict fast all through Lent: that meant they ate no milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream or meat. They ate only water, flour and salt. People then prayed with their arms crossed in front of them on their chests. One monk decided to make a treat for his brother monks to remind them to pray during Lent. So he made pretzels. The pretzels looked like little arms crossed in prayer. Today in many European countries, pretzels are served only from Ash Wednesday to Easter, to keep this ancient practice alive. Pass out twisted pretzels to your students and once they have eaten them, ask them to cross their arms across their chest and pray a short prayer that they know.

Sixth Saturday of Lent – Activity 36 – April 13

Give alms to your grandmother. Call her and tell her how much you love her. That will put a smile on her face.

Sixth Sunday in Lent – Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord – April 14

Ask your parents to bring you to Church to listen to the Passion. The Passion is the telling of Jesus arriving in Jerusalem on the Friday of his last days on earth to his dying on the cross for us.

Sixth Monday of Lent – Activity 37 – April 15

“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) If the students know how to sing the Holy, Holy from a mass setting, sing the words at the ending of the reading.

Sixth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 38 – April 16

Reflection on the Cross

Get a crucifix and hold it in front of the children. Ask them to look at it and tell you what they see. Wood in the shape of the cross. A man on the cross. The man has nails in his hands and feet. He has a crown of thorns on his head. There is a sign on the top of the cross that has the letters INRI. The man has some cloth wrapped around his private area. Ask them if they know the name of the man [Jesus].

Why is he on the cross this way? [because some people did not like what he said about God – he said he was God’s son]

On what day did this happen? [Good Friday]

INRI stands for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews in Latin. In Latin Js are written as Is. Lent is the time in the Church that we prepare to celebrate Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. What happened on Easter Sunday? [Jesus rose from the dead] The Cross is a symbol for all people who believe in Jesus [Christians] because Jesus rose from the dead and showed us how much God loves us.

Seventh Wednesday of Lent – Activity 39 – April 17

The Plot to Kill Jesus. We will never really know why Judas betrayed Jesus. Maybe Judas thought he would force Jesus to show everyone that Jesus really was the Son of God and he would defend himself like the other kings. Judas had been Jesus’ friend for three years. Maybe Judas was not strong enough to fight the temptation of the devil. Listen to this passage that explains how Jesus came to be arrested.

Luke 22:1-6 Sometimes we do something and others can’t understand why we did it. Pray for people like Judas.

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.

The Sacred Paschal Triduum – **Good Friday** March 30

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.

Seventh Saturday of Lent – **Holy Saturday** March 31

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 1

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.