

## From ST. JAMES SPIRITUAL GROWTH and LITURGY COMMITTEE

Here are 40 options for prayer, fasting and almsgiving, in no particular order, ways to help you experience a grace-filled Lent-a Lent in which you deepen your relationship with God.

1. Learn about your patron saint.
2. Pray for – by name – people you don't like and for people that don't like you.
3. Participate in a healing service.
4. Take home & read a book from our church library; videos are there, also.
5. March 19, in honor of St. Joseph, patron saint of carpenters and fathers, build or build upon a relationship with one of your children.
6. Buy two of everything on your grocery list, give the duplicates to the local food pantry.
7. Find out why you should have fun on Laetare Sunday, and then do so.
8. Start a "cuss bowl." For every unkind word you utter, put in a dollar – two dollars during Holy Week. After Easter, give the money to an English as a second language program.
9. Bring a "Baltimore Catechism" to a gathering of Catholic friends, and start asking each other questions.
10. Give away a material item you really value.
11. Pray for those, e.g., children, parents, spouse, siblings, who have left the church.
12. Talk to a neighbor you rarely or never talk to.
13. Keep a dish of ashes in a prominent place as a constant reminder of the season.
14. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis.
15. Test your knowledge of Scripture.
16. Read a biography about Archbishop Oscar Romero and/or watch the video "Romero."
17. Open a Christmas Club account with the intention of giving the money to our monthly charity collection.
18. Visit church when you don't have to.
19. Reserve a button on your car stereo for a Christian radio station (e.g., KCMR, 97.6).
20. Pray the news – for the people whose stories of hardship are reported daily & weekly.
21. Read an entry from a Catholic encyclopedia.
22. Attend Mass at a parish other than your own.
23. Tithe your tax return.
24. If Catholic schools get NCAA tournament bids, learn for whom those schools were named.
25. Observe five minutes of silence every day.
26. Instead of watching the Academy Awards, watch "The Passion of the Christ."
27. Use a Lenten theme in decorating part of a room.
28. Memorize a Proverb.
29. Participate in a faith formation presentation.
30. Tell someone your story(ies) of faith, how God has made a difference in your life.
31. Disconnect the TV and/or the computer.
32. Identify your God-given gifts, how you use them, and how you could use them better.
33. Fast from gossip.
34. Pull the rosary out of your drawer and say it. Too boring? Say the Scriptural rosary.

35. Remove your watch before leaving for church on Sunday.
36. Develop a prayer list; join the St. James Prayer Chain (call Donna, 585-4856).
37. Read a history of the papacy.
38. Take part in St. James Lenten observances: Weekday Masses, Stations, Holy Hours, Eucharistic Adoration.
39. Sacrifice your time in order to help others.
40. In the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary use words."

## **LENT AND THE FAMILY**

Would you like to make Lent more meaningful this year? Well, if your answer is "yes," following are some family activities that will help you to reach that goal and , as a bonus, will bring your family closer together – guaranteed.

- At the beginning of Lent have each family member pick out one day during Lent that will be his or her special day. On their special day each member will be expected to be especially helpful, kind and complimentary to the other members of the family.
- Donate time to serve the needy in your area. Maybe you could help serve a meal at a Dorothy Day or Loaves and Fishes site or help out a local food shelf. If this is not possible, make a donation of food or money and as a family, take it to the food shelf or other charitable organization of your choice.
- Ask each family member to be responsible for a Prayer before Meals for one week of Lent. Encourage the members to write a prayer of his or her own.
- Encourage each member of the family to "give up" something for Lent. The sacrifice should be something of value but also reasonable. Giving up television for the entire Lenten season would be very difficult for a child but for a week would be achievable.
- Attend Daily Mass together one day a week and/or make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Share a poverty meal of one or two basic foods several times during Lent. Talk about how it must feel to have such a small amount of food for every meal. Figure out how much money was saved by having poverty meals and contribute that amount to the Heifer International Program at St. James Catholic Church.
- Pray the Rosary together. Make sure everyone knows what each decade is about. "Scourging at the pillar" may take some explanation. Take turns being the leader.
- Make the Stations of the Cross together. Take turns explaining the action at each station.

**Good luck to you.** May this coming Lent be the most satisfying you've ever had.