

Catholic Passage

SPRING 2025



THE PODCAST IS
BACK!

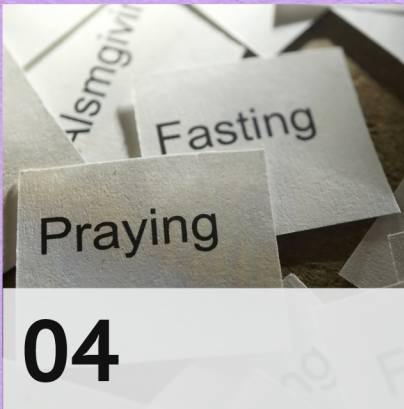
TAKING LENT ONE
DAY AT A TIME

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Taking Lent

ONE DAY AT A TIME

By: Jennifer Redenius: Catholic Passage Board Member

For many people, Lent is associated with certain kinds of sacrifice: giving up something one enjoys for the season, abstaining from meat on Fridays and fasting on days the church tells us to. These practices have taken place for years by Catholics around the world.

This practice of sacrifice can feel overwhelming when you think of it spanning over 40 days. During this season of Lent, though, I encourage you to instead think of it as going one day at a time. Doing something, or doing without something, seems much more doable for one day.

Another key element of the Lenten season is a focus on prayer. Prayer offers us an opportunity to renew our relationship with God. Prayer, after all, is fundamentally just communication with God. And as St. Augustine said, God is the one who is closer to us than we are to ourselves, which means every moment of every day becomes an opportunity for prayer. Think of ways, day by day, you can incorporate more prayer into your life during this season of Lent.

Lent is, more than ever, about taking each day one at a time. God understands the challenges we face this Lent, and invites us to experience divine love and mercy as God accompanies us in our struggles. Instead of looking at this season as a long 40 days, focus on what you can do in the 24 hours you are given that day.

Making a Family Almsgiving Box

Your kids can help with this, and this can help teach your kids about both fasting and almsgiving for Lent! First, you collect a laundry basket or box that you can decorate as your “Almsgiving Box.” You and your family can have fun decorating the box at the start of Lent. Each day during Lent, take one thing out of your pantry and put it in the box. At the end of Lent, take the food you’ve collected to a food pantry or soup kitchen. If your parish does food drives, you might just be able to take it to church with you each week and drop it off. Mother Teresa once said, “Live simply so that others may simply live.” This is so true for this activity you can do with your family. With this activity, you’re simply taking food from your own pantry and giving it to the less fortunate. It is a great way to introduce the concept of almsgiving to your family!

PEW PALS & SO MUCH MORE

By: Aaron Lorch, Catholic Passage Board Member

As we come into this time of Lent, we need to recognize the importance of penitence, reflection, prayer, and even silence alone. But it's also crucial to foster relationships that will ultimately help us in striving to become more holy. Honestly, I might argue that you should make Lent about building relationships, not giving up something. What do I mean by that? Well, let's reflect on this a bit more...

Which will better help you grow in holiness: giving up candy for Lent, or setting aside time daily for building a stronger and more relational prayer life with Christ? Now yes, I am using the candy example to make a point. Fasting and other forms of asceticism are great and important practices in striving for perfect communion and intimacy with God. Through self-denial and discipline, we look to get rid of everything in our soul that is not from God, so that God may dwell fully within.

And it's not only about cold showers. So yes, giving up another common adult Lenten fast of alcohol can truly be a struggle or sacrifice for some people. So can giving up your favorite restaurant you attend every Friday evening, with the world's best broasted chicken. But what is going on beyond the absence of a pleasure of habit? Are you filling that vacancy with God? What are you doing in conjunction with giving up that particular thing for Lent?

As we reflect on that, let's also recognize the importance of filling our buckets with relationships that help foster our spiritual lives. Just as we should take time during Lent to embrace silence while alone, we should also not be afraid to invite other people along our journey. Be that welcoming figure within your local parish community. Lives can be touched with the smallest of efforts sometimes. And we all benefit.

So often we worship in the same pew, with the same people around us each Sunday, but how many of us have interacted with our pew neighbors beyond the Sign of Peace or maybe knowing their first name... maybe? Consider trying this "Pew Pals" concept I've come across. Simply invite the fellow parishioners in your pew at Mass (or the adjacent pew if your family takes up a whole pew) to a meal with you, whether in your home or going out. And then do it again later with others! This is of course just one of many examples of connecting a faith community, along with Bible studies and existing outreach.

And in the end, remember that this coming together of hearts and minds, building a vibrant faith through growth in others, needs to also start in the home. You are your child's caretaker, but you are also so much more.

HOW TO MAKE RESURRECTION EGGS

A FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY FOR LENT

By: Jennifer Redenius: Catholic Passage Board Member

Step One: Come up with 12 Bible verses or images that you find personally important in the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Here are some ideas:

- Jesus rode to Jerusalem on a donkey. (Matthew 21:1-11)
- The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-19)
- Jesus carries his cross to the site of the crucifixion. (John 19:17)
- Soldiers divide up his clothes. (John 19:23)
- Jesus was nailed to the cross. (John 19:18,37 & John 20:25-29)
- They covered Jesus' tomb with a great stone. (Matthew 27:59-60)
- The tomb was empty. He has risen. (Matthew 28:6)

Step Two: Gather or buy an equal number of plastic reusable Easter eggs.

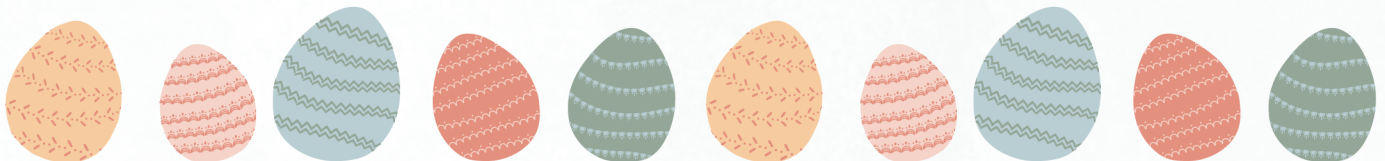
Step Three: For each verse or theme, choose an object that will fit into the Easter egg. For example, you could place a piece of bread in the egg to represent the Last Supper. You could place a rock in an egg to represent covering the tomb. Get creative and have fun! - The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-19)

Step Four: Number the eggs so they don't get mixed up.

Step Five: Place the eggs into an empty egg carton.

Step Six: Decorate the carton together.

Step Seven: Count backwards 12 days from Easter, and plan ahead so that you can open one egg each day. You can talk about the image or the verses or the story.



Capturing Concepts for You: The Newest Addition to Catholic Passage

Catholic Passage presents Capturing Concepts for You! These 3–12-minute podcasts present reflections upon key concepts from helpful books that parents or educators might not have the time to read. The goal of Capturing Concepts for You is to highlight the good work of faith-filled authors, provide concepts that are helpful in parenting and education, and make the lay faithful aware of pertinent and meaningful Catholic books for future reading. At the end of each summary will be an invitation to learn more by reading the book itself. Of course, the host will challenge you to put into practice what you might have learned from the book reflection!

These podcasts are written and recorded by lay Catholics who are passionate for learning and generously want to share with you what they have learned. The audio text is transcribed into a written transcript for future reflection. These recordings and transcripts will be posted on Catholic Passage social media outlets, website, podcast platforms. Content creators make a commitment to not communicate anything that conflicts with the Catholic Passage mission or Catholic Church teaching. These reflections are expressions of the creators' personal discipleship, faith, and attempts to grow in holiness.

The Podcasts is Back!

After a brief hiatus, we have The Catholic Passage Podcast up and running again with new episodes being recorded and released! You can find all episodes on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and all other podcast apps. Our purpose with the podcast is to highlight the good work happening in our schools, families, and communities, while glorifying God and creating an avenue for reach, faith sharing, and support. On this podcast, we share valuable insights from casual conversations and interviews across a range of people and topics. A primary interview source might be a member of a Catholic school community, on some practical examples of their community advancing the Catholic mission. We look to give schools the opportunity to build one another up in their advancement of the Catholic School mission, as well as lift up parents and other community members in a valuable and supportive podcast venture.





PREPARING SECOND GRADE CCD STUDENTS FOR THEIR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

By: Dee Blair, Second Grade CCD Leader

The 2nd graders have a lot to learn in such a short time!

I have them one hour each week from September to April, with a few days off during the holiday season. It's a challenge to fit in all the things to prepare them for the two Sacraments that they will receive this year.

First, we start with the Sacrament of Reconciliation and make sure they know their basic prayers. I send a list home with all the expectations and prayers. I try to make it fun by sending home practice sheets they can do and bring back. In class I like to sometimes make games out of learning the different prayers – putting them in teams and working together – and sometimes individually. I have prayers, the 10 Commandments and the steps on how to go to Confession cut up with magnets on the back. I hand them out and the kids have to work together to put them in order on the board. This gets the kids up and moving, thinking and working together!

When it comes time to start with the Eucharist, we use the DVD's from Dynamic Catholic with our books and have a fun activity of making our banners which celebrate our big day in April. Each child creates their own banner showing what their First Communion is all about to them. The parents get to come help create the banners we make and then display. We will then display them in the church on their First Communion Day. It is a lot to learn in such a short time and I couldn't do it without the help from all their parents! Being an involved parent as your child participates in these Sacraments is so important and will leave a lasting impact on them for a lifetime!



HOW TO MAKE HOT CROSS BUNS

Hot Cross Buns are a delicious spiced bun traditionally made on Good Friday in countries all over the world. Each bun is marked with a cross on the top to symbolize and remind us of the crucifixion of Christ. They are also packed with spices to signify the spices that were used on Jesus during the burial ritual.

Bun Ingredients

- 2 packages of active dry yeast
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 1/4 cup warm milk (between 105-110 degrees)
- 4 1/2 cups flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp allspice
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 cup currants (or raisins)
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup butter

Cross Ingredients

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup water

Glaze Ingredients

- 1 tbsp apricot jam
- 2 tps water



Directions

1. Activate the yeast. In a medium size bowl, combine 2 packages of active dry yeast, 1/3 cup sugar, and 1 1/4 cup milk warmed to a temperature between 105-110 degrees. Whisk these three ingredients together then cover the bowl with a tea towel and set aside in a warm place for 5 minutes.
2. In your stand mixer with the dough hook attached, thoroughly whisk together 4 1/2 cups flour, 2 tsps cinnamon, 2 tsps allspice, 3/4 tsp salt, and 1 tsp nutmeg. You could also sift these ingredients together.
3. Take 1/4 cup butter and crumble it into the flour mixture with your hands.
4. Into the flour mixture add in 2 eggs, 1 1/4 cup currants (or raisins), and the yeast mixture.
5. Combine with the dough hook on medium speed for 3-4 minutes or until the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the mixing bowl.
6. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured counter surface and knead for another 3-4 minutes or until the dough is smooth and springy.
7. Take a large bowl and with cooking spray of your choice, give it a good spray.
8. Cover it with a towel, set it in a warm place, and let it rise for 45 minutes to an hour.
9. When the hour is finished, the dough should be doubled in size. Punch it down and turn it out onto a lightly floured counter.
10. Roll the dough into a large smooth ball, and with a pastry cutter, butter knife, or bench scraper cut the dough into 12 even pieces.

HOW TO MAKE HOT CROSS BUNS

11. To form smooth top buns, lightly press one finger down in the center while stretching the dough up with the other hand. Then pinch it together and lay that side down.
12. Be sure to prepare your pan by first coating it with oil. Use a 9x13" that has deep sides.
13. Cover the buns with a tea towel and put it back in the same warm place to rise for another 30-45 minutes. Halfway through the rise time preheat your oven to 350 degrees and begin making the paste for the crosses.
14. For the crosses: In a small bowl combine 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 cup water, whisk together to form a paste.
15. When the rise time is up, pipe the paste all the way across one row of buns, then go to the next row, and the next row. Turn your pan and do the same thing to make the second line of your cross. Tip: Be sure to go slow and let the paste fall to each side of the bun, hugging the edges.
16. Put the buns in the oven at 350 degrees for 22 minutes or until the surface is golden brown.
17. For the glaze: Scoop 1 tbsp apricot jam and 2 tsps water into a small bowl. Heat in the microwave for about 30 seconds, stir it together, and brush across the top of each bun as soon as they come out of the oven. Orange is another flavor that would compliment these spices well.
18. Serve them while they are warm!



 SCAN ME

We invite you to subscribe to this quarterly newsletter so you never miss a release! We would also love it if you shared our newsletter with your friends and family. A signup page, as well as a collection of past newsletters, can be found at this QR code.

