

Catholic Passage

WINTER 2024

Love

A LENTEN
SEASON OF LOVE

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
PRAYER JAR

Step-by-step guide for a
prayer jar for your family to
use each day during Lent.

Faith



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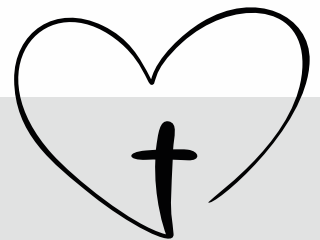
A Lenten Season of Love

Jen Redenius- Catholic Passage Board Member

This year Ash Wednesday falls on the same day as Valentine's Day. Personally, I have been reflecting on this rare coincidence. It is not often that my husband and I celebrate the "Hallmark Holiday" of Valentine's Day. It is not that we are against going out on a date night, rather, with four young kiddos under the age of seven, we just have a hard time scheduling it into our busy day-to-day. After reflecting on the coming together of two seemingly different celebrations, I found that pairing them together is actually quite fitting.

Ash Wednesday is when we begin the Lenten season. Typically during this season, we focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The "Hallmark Holiday" that is Valentine's Day, on the other hand, is typically filled with gifts and indulging in good food and chocolates. You typically would not put these two events together, but perhaps they have more in common than I initially thought.

If you think about it, some of the keys of a successful marriage might be the same things that result in a successful Lenten season—humbly giving, sacrificing, and prayer. Penance, almsgiving, prayer—these are all acts of love. Lent is meant to prepare us for the celebration of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. This Gospel story is the greatest act of love the world has ever known, and the Lenten season is an incredible opportunity to celebrate the love Christ has for all of us. Beginning our Lenten journey on the day we celebrate love is an excellent reminder of the underlying theme of the Gospel. Together, we will spend the next few weeks getting our hearts ready for Christ, who loves us most of all. Take this as a chance to reflect on how you plan to grow in love for Christ during this season.



Who was Saint Valentine?

The Catholic church celebrates Saint Valentine's feast day on February 14th each year. While most people celebrate "Valentine's Day" as the traditional day of love, many do not realize that it is the feast day of Saint Valentine. In 268 AD, the Roman Empire was ruled by Emperor Claudius II, and he persecuted the Catholic Church. He did not let young people get married because he believed that unmarried soldiers fought better than married soldiers. Polygamy was also popular during this time. St. Valentine took on the mission of sanctifying marriage.

He would marry young couples in the Catholic Church despite the ruling of the emperor. He was imprisoned and tortured because of this. He is honored as the patron saint of lovers today.



Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

What Makes a Logo?

Fr. Brian Feller

Our logo, like other aspects of Catholic Passage's inception and growth, came about through team effort. In March of 2023, I sought out the inspirational and artistic help of Erica Schieffer, a connection originally from back in Carroll. After looking at some of her samples, I asked her to implement the idea of a drop of water creating a ripple effect. After consulting with Aaron Lorch and Abby Glass, two early-on contributors to Catholic Passage's beginning, the logo you see today was created by Erica.

In a way, life is like a raindrop that falls from the sky to a lake and creates a small ripple. The ripple's impact reverberates beyond the point of contact. We have one shot at life on this earth. We have a certain amount of time, number of heartbeats, and opportunities. And what we do with our lives will impact – in some way – others, including people who come after us. We are the raindrop, our encountering of the lake is one's life on earth, and the ripple is the impact.

The ripple of water in the Catholic Passage logo represents three realities: the waters of our Christian baptism into Christ, the energizing effect of God in the Christian, and the Christian's impact in the world. The falling "flame within a drop" resembles both the water of baptism and the dove and flame of the Holy Spirit. The cross, which serves also as the 't' in the word Catholic, represents Christ and his Paschal Mystery. Receiving and remaining in communion with God, the Christian is an open door through which the Father's blessing flows into the world.

When we enter Christ through baptism, we become one with Him. He lives in us, and we live in Him. Therefore, animated by the Holy Spirit, we bring Christ to each moment of time. Christ is with us in each opportunity of life. For the Christian, our impact in the world is never meant to be just our impact; it is Christ's impact. Not Christ alone, but He pours out the blessing of the Father in the Holy Spirit.

This is why the cross is at the center of our logo. Heaven and earth collide in Christ and in the heart of the Christian. Because of this, we can have impacts in this world that ripple into eternity. At Catholic Passage, we want to help adults pass Christ and his way of life onto young people so that they can enter an eternal friendship with God.

A small ripple from one raindrop seems inconsequential. But with God, the blessing packed into the smallness of our lives can create a tsunami of grace in someone else's life. Just think how many raindrops can change a desert into an oasis. So too, Catholic men and women can join "the great cloud of witnesses" of faith in being with Christ, conduits of the Father's blessing to all those who look to them for life and guidance **(Hebrews 12:1).**



LENTEN JOURNAL PROMPTS

Take the opportunity this Lenten season to reflect on one of these prompts each day:

1. How will I be different when I wake up on Easter morning?
2. What does God want me to change about my life?
3. In what ways can my spouse and I become closer to God today?
4. How can I help my children become closer to God today?
5. What is the Bible verse that I want to focus on this Lenten season?
6. What can I do today to better serve God?
7. Who or what needs forgiving today?
8. What am I most grateful for today?
9. What part of the Gospel story is most intriguing to me?
10. What verse gives you comfort in hard times and why?
11. With what do I need more patience today?
12. How can I serve others today?
13. What am I most afraid of? Why?
14. What problems can I leave at the cross today?
15. How can I give praise to the Lord today?
16. Which individuals in the Bible most inspire me?
17. Which stories in the Bible most inspire me?
18. How can I give more to my church?
19. When was a time that God answered one of my prayers?
20. What is my prayer today?
21. How can I pray for my family today?
22. How can I pray for my friends today?
23. How can I be more humble?
24. Who is hard to love? How can I pray for them?
25. What do I need to make more time for today?
26. How can I praise instead of complain?
27. Of the gifts of the spirit, which do I want to possess and why?
28. What is my purpose?
29. What does "following Christ" mean to me?
30. How does the Gospel story inspire me?
31. Why do I love God?
32. What hard times am I grateful for?
33. When do I feel God is close to me?
34. How do I think God sees me?
35. When was my last confession? Can I make time to go to confession in this next week?
36. What gifts am I most thankful for?
37. Which Saint can I pray to today?
38. Which Saint do I want to be like? Why?
39. From what do I need healing?
40. How have I grown this Lenten season?



Lenten Coloring Pages

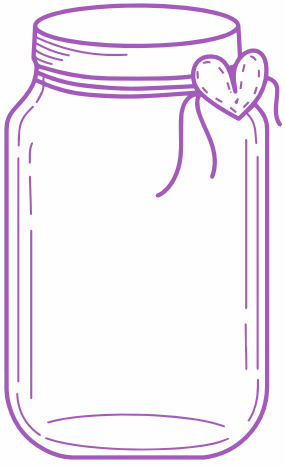
Use these coloring pages as a springboard for having a conversation with your family about prayer, almsgiving, and fasting during this Lenten season. These coloring pages came from www.thecatholickid.com.



Fast - © TheCatholicKid.com







Lenten Family Activity

PRAYER JAR



A prayer jar is a great way to pray together as a family during the season of Lent. You can get your kids involved by having them help make and decorate the jar, and then each day of the Lenten season, you will pull out a popsicle stick to help spark your family prayer and reflection.

Materials you will need:

A mason jar or some other jar that you can decorate
Glitter, paint, gems, etc. that you can use to decorate your jar
40 popsicle sticks
Marker you can use to write on the sticks

Directions:

On each of the 40 popsicle sticks, you will want to write a Bible verse, a prayer prompt, or a question to think about. Some examples are listed below.

Decorate your jar and put all of the popsicle sticks in it.

Each day, pull out one popsicle stick that you can use to spark prayer and discussion as a family throughout the season of lent!

Examples:

Pray for a family member in need.

What is a positive thing that has happened to you this year?

Pray for your teacher.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (Romans 12:12)

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”
(Luke 18:1)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

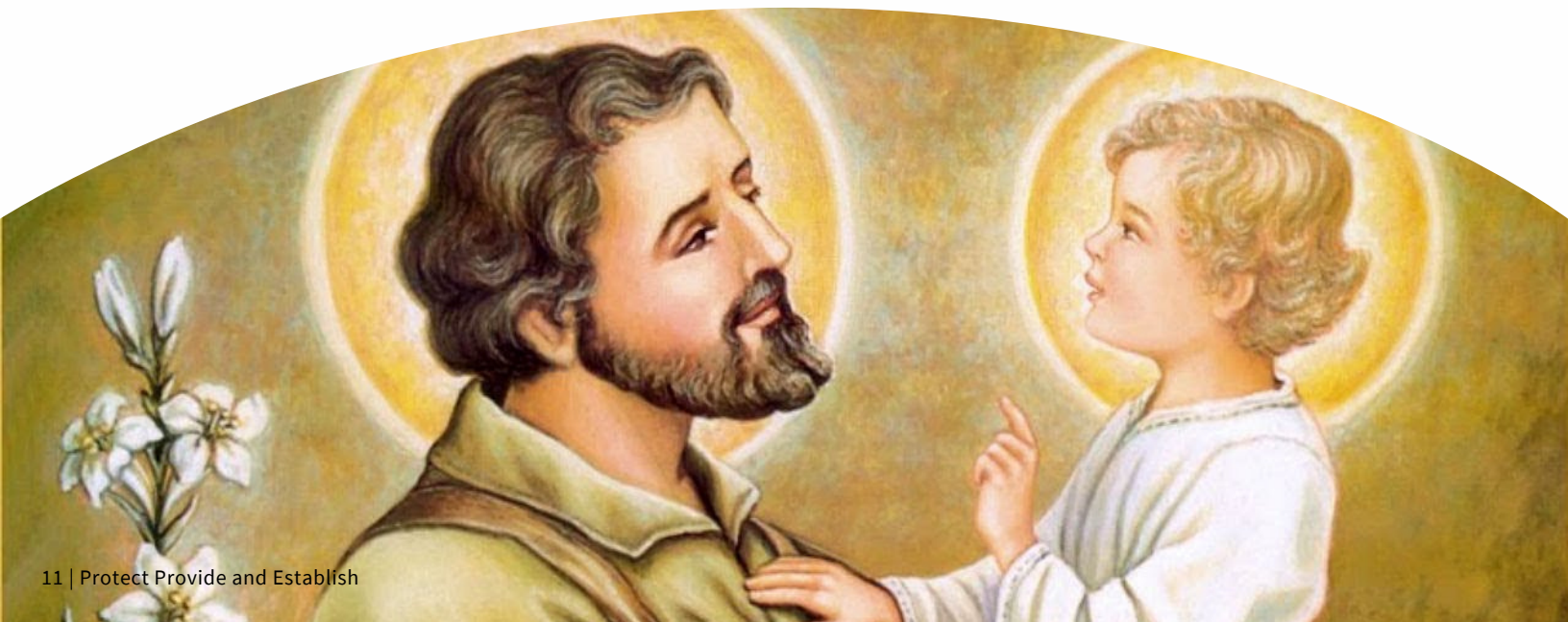
Threefold Advice for Fathers Protect, Provide and Establish

**John M. Sandy | District Court Judge
Iowa Judicial Branch
Catholic Passage Board Member**

Joseph was a man who was eminently practical, doing what needs to be done, and never saying a word. Matthew 1:19 gives us a one-word description, that he was “just” or “righteous.” Yet as we read between the lines, we see that St. Joseph played a role of immense importance in the life of the Holy Family. I have endeavored to apply Father Baer’s threefold advice for fathers - protect, provide and establish- to the life of St. Joseph. Although I write this from the perspective of a layman, Fr. Baer certainly meant for them to apply to the spiritual fatherhood of priests as well.

First, St. Joseph is a **protector**. More than once, Joseph protects his wife and child, even from mortal threats. Yet he not only safeguarded their physical wellbeing, he also protected Mary’s honor “for he did not want to expose her to shame.” Thus, in addition to being the guardian of the Redeemer, he is also the guardian of Mary’s virginity.

For a father to protect his family, he must not have just a sense of justice and duty; he must also have courage to confront whatever threat – physical or spiritual - there may be to his wife, children, or those he loves. You and I may not be running from a tyrant king trying to murder our infant child, but we don’t have to look far to see very real threats to our family: a secular culture which actively works to break down marriage and family, increasing drug and gun violence, political division, media that disparages family values, and so on. May we be like St. Joseph, courageous in confronting and eliminating threats, and then have the strength to take the necessary steps to make and maintain barriers from these evils.



Threefold Advice for Fathers - Protect, Provide and Establish continued...

Next, St. Joseph is a **provider**. The Gospels tell us that St. Joseph was a *tekton*, which can be translated as carpenter, (*although some scholars believe he was more like a general contractor, working both wood and stone*). Through his work, he provided his family with shelter, food, and clothing. Because a father who loves his family understands their needs, he provides for these needs through his work. This might seem obvious, but underneath this simple truth lies a deeper reality of the dignity of work.

We often only see the material, temporal aspect of what we are doing. St. Joseph helps us to understand the greatness of work in the eyes of God. When we place our work at the service of God and our family, it is a participation in the creative work of God the Father, who provides for his children. Of course, this is not always an easy thing to do, especially during long days at the construction site or the office. But St. Joseph shows us how to handle these hardships with grace, for he did not work for human glory, but to obey God's will. Just as Jesus worked alongside his father in the workshop, let us imagine that Jesus is working with us, for as we work to provide material wellbeing for our family, the fruits of his labor provide for the whole world.

Finally, St. Joseph **establishes** his family. He put in place those things which will enrich and sustain Mary and Jesus. As father of the family, he is the authority figure responsible for formation and education, which not only shows them how to lead a good life, but how to prepare for eternal life. According to the Israelite custom, children were educated by their fathers. This included reading and writing, as well as religious instruction. For sons, this even extended further, as they would also learn their father's trade. Thus, from the age of 7 or 8, Jesus was at St. Joseph's side almost every moment of the day. We can only marvel at the kind of father and teacher that St. Joseph was, teaching Jesus not only carpentry, but also how to read the Torah, how to pray, and how to care for his mother, for he knew that one day, he would not be present to protect and provide for Jesus and Mary.

This third aspect is the most abstract, but in some ways, it is the most important. To establish is to set up a sure foundation, which family members rely upon. To do this, a father must be prepared, educated, and understand how to properly exercise authority and leadership. In doing so, he teaches his children how to securely protect and provide for themselves, preparing them so that they can enter adulthood and pass on the faith to the next generation. This is a serious responsibility fathers ought to reflect on every day. Of course, we don't go it alone. Men need the support of their wives, other family members and friends, a parish community, and of course, our God and Father.

Protect. Provide. Establish. Even though St. Joseph's life is hidden, by reflecting on these three aspects through his role as husband and father in the Holy Family, his holy presence is undeniable. We begin to see more and discover a great saint – one still wrapped in mystery, but one of great importance for us today.

¹ Fr. William Baer was my rector at St. John Vianney Seminary at the University of St. Thomas located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Fr. Baer has since passed away.

Drawing out Virtue This Lenten Season

Erin Bohlmann –Catholic Passage Board Member

The word ‘educate’ comes from a Latin word that means “to draw out”. This reminds me that there is already something beautiful at work within children, and that my role as an educator and coach is to nurture those seeds and help them grow. As I partner with parents in the education of their children, I join in their delight when their sons and daughters flourish in academics or shine in newfound talents, but what we most enjoy celebrating is when their child grows in virtue!

The seeds of certain virtues have already been sown in our hearts at our Baptism. These Theological virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity. They are so named because they are given by God and lead us back to God. These three give life to all other virtues, which are called moral virtues. The moral virtues can be grown and strengthened through practice.

Virtue is, simply, a good habit. The Lenten season is an excellent time to examine our habits. How are we imitating Jesus? One way is to grow in the very virtues He demonstrated. Being virtuous is a call to excellence; a call to be our best selves, which makes us happy and holy. In pursuing virtue, we pursue the Good and choose it with concrete actions.

My PreK-12 Catholic school uses a program called “Virtues in Practice”. It was developed by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation as a free program to help students and staff grow closer to Jesus by imitating His life and virtues.

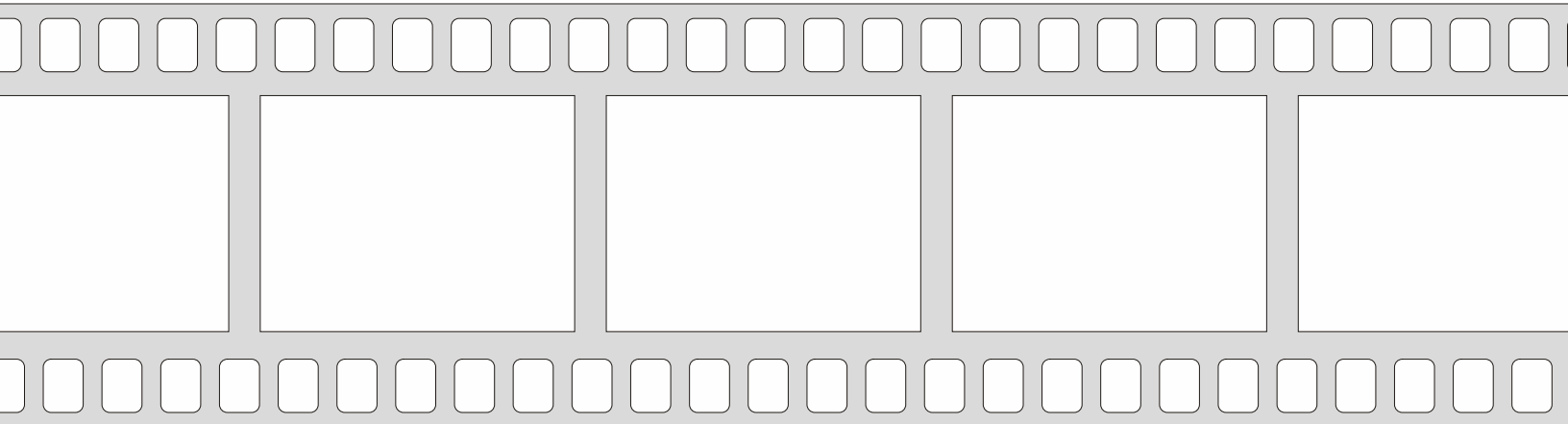
Our entire school system learns about a virtue of the month and an accompanying saint that demonstrated that virtue. We invite the families to join us in promoting and celebrating virtuous behavior at home, too. The “home project” component encourages the entire family to demonstrate and strengthen the virtue of the month in their home. The program covers 27 virtues over a three-year cycle, with 81+ saints held up as models of the virtue.

This Lent, I will grow with my students and athletes in the virtue of cheerfulness during February. We can “look on the bright side” when we persevere through struggle in keeping our Lenten sacrifices. A “home project” families might choose is to remove a “thorn” from a homemade crown of thorns each day that family members successfully (and cheerfully!) fast from what they gave up. Or perhaps family members could add a pinto bean to a jar for meeting a daily challenge involving prayer, fasting, or almsgiving. On Easter morning, the pinto beans could be replaced by jelly beans!

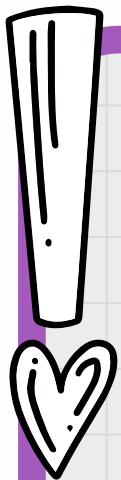
As Lent continues into March, we will grow in the virtue of temperance when we “enjoy things in a proper, balanced way”. Families can strive to eat and drink more simply as a prayer intention for those around the world that suffer from food insecurity. Another concrete step could include a resolution to moderate screen time. These are just a few ideas that families could adopt within their own homes to grow in virtue during Lent. To draw out virtue is to draw closer to Jesus!

LENTEN VIDEO SERIES

Aaron Lorch—Catholic Passage Board Member



This Lent, Catholic Passage is launching a special video series, featuring laypeople from all walks of life throughout the Diocese of Sioux City. Viewers already tuned into the Facebook and YouTube channels may recognize some familiar faces from past videos. Those men and women have invited a couple of others to take part in discipleship and embark on this new video series. They have collaborated both in-person and virtually to create content on important themes relating to all Catholics. The men will be speaking on courage and fortitude. Viewers will learn about these distinct virtues and receive encouragement on how to live them out. Additionally, the women will share about trust and the act of trusting God, especially when it's most difficult. They will share how faith without trust isn't faith. Altogether, the series will consist of 24 videos that will be released throughout the Lenten season. Each video, while short in length, will provide substantial spiritual takeaways for reflection and a call to action. It will surely be an encouraging spiritual companion as all embark these 40 days with the Lord.



We are excited to invite you to support our mission even in these early stages as Catholic Passage, Inc. diligently works towards obtaining 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.

Your contributions will be invaluable in laying the groundwork. Please note that donations at this time may not be tax-deductible, but they will directly impact our efforts. We appreciate your generosity and belief in our mission!