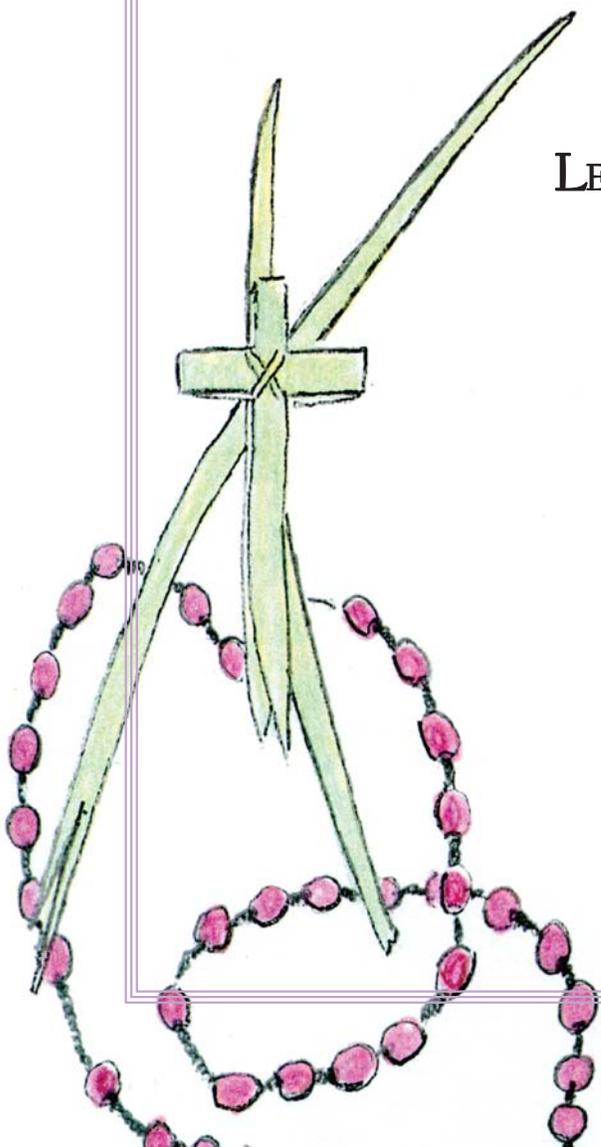


**Part
Two**

**Ways Families Celebrate
Lent and Easter**

**2011 SURVEY RESULTS
LENTEN PRACTICES FOR ADULTS AND
CHILDREN, RECIPES, AND MORE**

Compiled by Catholic Heritage Curricula
www.chcweb.com



As a parent, which Lenten activity/prayer/practice is the most helpful to your own spiritual growth and renewal?

Doing sacrificial things as a family is helpful to me. It is like holding hands through life. It's a personification of our Lord suffering with us as we are met with each day.

Renee in Belleville, WI

During Lent, I try to pray the rosary more diligently. At the beginning of the Lenten season it seems so labored to try to squeeze it into my already busy schedule of raising 3 young children, but by the end of Lent it is like second nature. I love that. I feel so much closer to Jesus and Our Mother Mary by the time Easter is here.

Lindsey in Boerne, TX

The Rosary and prayer to Padre Pio help to calm my soul and prepare for motherhood as a daily calling.

Sarah in Corpus Christi, TX

Stations of the Cross, Benediction, and Adoration.

Anne in Barron, WI

Concentrating on the Sorrowful Mysteries while reciting the rosary.

Molly in Ridgway, PA

For me, it's praying a decade of the Rosary. I was not raised Catholic so just saying that prayer aloud with my child is still very powerful to me. I don't take for granted that I am giving him a solid foundation in the Catholic faith.

Stephanie in Broussard, LA

We have Lenten speakers every year. Every Thursday night we have a speaker and then Confession. It keeps me on the right track through the Lenten season.

Marta in Cincinnati, OH

The Way of the Cross has been the most powerful prayer for me.

Robin in Hickory, NC

We practice the "Our Father" during Lent each day. It helps the little ones to learn the words. It also gives everyone a chance to ask questions about what the words mean especially if they don't understand. Sometimes the kids ask questions that I'm able to answer right away and others I have to research. The questions help me with spiritual growth because it gives me a chance to think about Our Lord for a longer period during my busy day.

Tiffany in Disputanta, VA

Trying to keep all of Lent austere - no celebrating if possible, trying to turn off as much interior and exterior noise as possible, and particularly trying to keep the Triduum as solemn a time as the little ones will allow. We are so bombarded by noise and images that it makes it difficult to hear and see God sometimes; this helps me to see Him more clearly.

Lu in Spring Lake, MI

Praying the Stations of the Cross is especially powerful for me during the Lenten season.

Karen in Bethel, CT

It is all of the things we do put together, it is putting Jesus constantly on our minds and in our hearts.

Jamie in St Cloud, MN

The Family Stations our parish has organized really bring families together. Everyone participates whether it be reading or making a picture. Each family chosen presents the station in their own way. A variety of ages always makes for a blessed experience.

Cathy in Louisville, KY

Discipline. If I work at being disciplined as a mother, prayer time and spiritual growth are a priority.

Mallory in Bemidji, MN

Increased spiritual reading. Helping the kids understand Lent, helps me too.

Cathy in St. Louis

Last year, our parish gave out Lenten devotionals called The Little Purple Book. This was a great way for me to focus and meditate on my Lenten journey.

Melissa in Albuquerque, NM

We open our home and share our beautiful woods each Friday during Lent. Homeschooling families are invited to join us for The Outdoor Stations of the Cross.

We have built a "Stations Journey" through the trails of our woods...the images (which we purchased from CHC!!!) hang on trees with a small cross and a purple ribbon on each one. We have cleared out a circle at the foot of each Station, where my 14 year old son stands with a HUGE wooden cross he constructed to lead us in procession...as we go from Station to Station, we sing the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Afterward, families are invited in for a light snack and fellowship.

This has strengthened my children in their journey, has taught them about the importance of work...as service...(they had to help build the stations and maintain their upkeep)...and also teaches them that we have a larger family in the community, with whom we are blessed to share our Lenten journey.

By far, one the most enriching Lenten exercises I have ever done was keeping Lenten Gratitude Journal about my husband. Each day, I was to write 3-5 ways in which he blesses my life or things I am thankful for about him...it was VERY healing and nurturing to my soul...in so many ways...at Easter, I tied the journal in a lovely ribbon and gave it to my husband as an Easter gift! I HIGHLY recommend this for anyone who wishes to grow closer to Christ in their marriage during Lent.

Judy in Warfordsburg, PA

This past year has been a spiritual awakening of sorts and it began during Lent by reading scripture daily and we have continued throughout the entire year and loved it! We love to say the Rosary too and my sons really enjoy joining in on the activity, even my three year old!

Ann-Marie in Rome, NY

I tie purple ribbon on each and every holy picture and statue in our home. Seeing that purple reminder makes me stop and think about Christ's sacrifice, even for a brief moment, throughout the day.

E. D. in Sanford, NC

Each year is different. I try to choose a new inspirational read. Last year's book was "Ascending the Heights" by Father John Mack. I don't often set aside that time for myself to tackle a book, so I really look forward to it.

Laura in Campbell, CA

The Little Black Book that my church offers every Lent. A doable bit of prayer and meditation and scripture for a busy mom.

Hilary in Leeds, AL

The sacrament of Reconciliation just before Easter helps me to feel a sense of renew that I don't get at any other time of year.

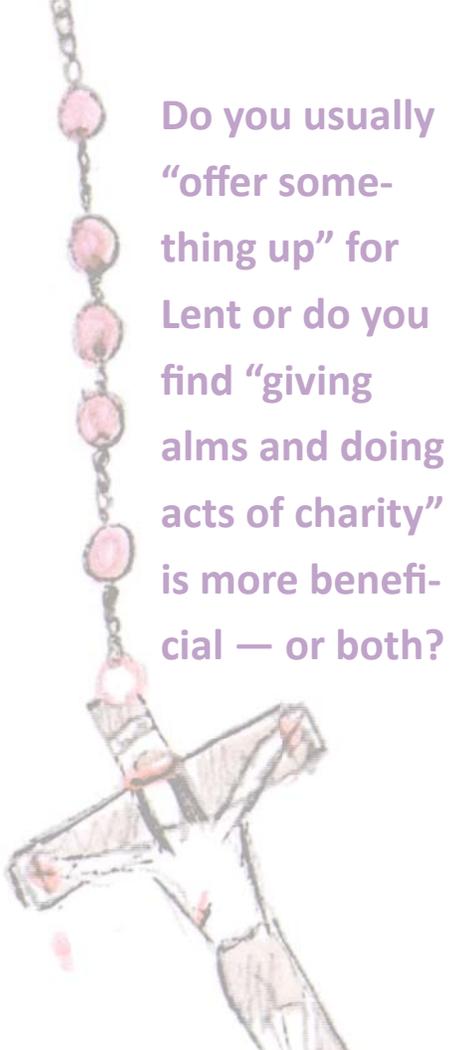
Bridget in Los Gatos, CA

The Lenten Group (Lenten prayer group that meets each week in Lent). We have run it for 15 years in our home. It certainly has brought us closer to Our Lord. The Stations make me cry and want to do good always.

Leanne in Medowie NSW Australia

Giving something up - usually sweets or chocolate - has been just right for me, as I tend to 'indulge' in such things when stressed, tired, crabby, etc. The sacrifice is difficult -- all the more incentive to try to curb my appetite!

Polly in Grand Rapids, MI



Do you usually “offer something up” for Lent or do you find “giving alms and doing acts of charity” is more beneficial — or both?

Both, we give up something during Lent. The children might make it candy or chips. I seek to make life quieter during this time. Turn off the radio in the car or no TV. We eat no meat on Fridays and send extra food to the Mother Theresa Day Shelter for the Homeless.

Sarah in Corpus Christi, TX

Each year I try to offer something; I also add something... this helps me to teach and involve the kids as well as make the sacrifice my extra time and energy.

Jeannette in Washington, LA

We give something up and offer something as a family. We decide together and post it on the refrigerator.

Tammy in Sulphur, LA

We cut out a big red heart from construction paper and write down what we will give up or do extra. The year my husband gave up chewing tobacco was the best!

Anne in Barron, WI

Offering something up works better for us, because it is too easy for us to slide and not “look for” opportunities to do acts of charity. Our sacrifice is with us every moment throughout Lent.

Molly in Ridgway, PA

I find giving up TV for a certain part of the day to be moving. Even though some days I wouldn't watch TV in the morning at all, it was still powerful when it became an offering to Jesus.

Stephanie in Broussard, LA

I do give something up, but I'm very involved in church, so I give a lot of time to service work.

Marta in Cincinnati, OH

Usually we offer something up and give alms. We usually decide to give up something different the night before at the dinner table. The kids usually give up a different thing each day (40 days is a little long for small children. I feel it loses the message, but each day is really more meaningful for them). And my husband and I give up something for the entire time, plus whatever the family chose to give up on a daily basis.

Tiffany in Disputanta, VA

We usually give up something and try to think of something charitable to offer our good deeds too.

Kim in St. Augustine, FL

Both are important. I think that it is a great way to balance the spiritual life, and to remember that we must both deny ourselves as well as do unto others, not just one or the other.

Lu in Spring Lake, MI

Ideally, I like to try to do both! Sometimes our “giving alms” is only a little coin folder or cardboard box - something we can do without really thinking much about it. Fasting (especially from TV!!) is more of a constant reminder, a sacrifice renewed again and again, which has more impact on me personally.

Karen in Bethel, CT

We like to do both. We usually give something up as a family, like no desserts or something like that. We also each individually give something up. We add The Chaplet of Divine Mercy in the afternoons. We do a Sacrifice jar where they put dry beans into the jar whenever they sacrifice something or do something extra like an act of charity, even doing someone's chores. I'm not stingy with the beans, every little thing counts. Then on Easter Sunday, those dry, brown beans turn into bright colored jelly beans!

Jamie in St Cloud, MN

We do both, although I prefer doing acts of charity. We try to avoid the things that are temporary (ie. giving up soft drinks and then diving right back in on Easter). I like to take it as a time to make real sacrifices that last and change me for the better.

Cathy in Louisville, KY

I am due with baby boy #3 on Easter Sunday, which means that the last days of my pregnancy will be during Lent. God has a sense of humor, because those last 40 days of pregnancy aren't a piece of cake, and I know that this year I'll work on making those sacrifices JOYFULLY.

Mallory in Bemidji, MN

I have been giving up "being lazy" for the last few years. Helps me to be a better parent, wife - and reminds me that I can always improve in that area. And as a family this year we are giving up buying things we don't need - no extras.

Cathy in St. Louis

We like to offer things up as a sacrifice and also give to others as much as possible. This year we are going to forgo electronics (internet, computer games) as a family. I am looking forward to it since we tend to sometimes get too caught up in these things.

Ann-Marie in Rome, NY

Offering something up is pretty standard for me. It is that solid daily reminder that I am in the season of lent.

Laura in Campbell, CA

We try to do one good act every-day.

Bridget in Los Gatos, CA

We offer up and have taught our children to offer up. We do almsgiving as well. We do these through the year as well.

Leanne in NSW Australia

I think it is a balance of extra prayer, almsgiving, and sacrifice.

Robin in Hickory, NC

I usually give up sweets - because that is a love of mine, and I really notice the lack of it!

Kiera in Tallahassee, FL

We offer something up and then try to have extra things like almsgiving and completing acts of charity for others.

Helen in Wingello NSW Australia

I do try to 'offer up' my sacrifice of sweets; on one hand it seems so minor, but I know God can use my weakness. With small children in the home, the witness is wonderful. "Look (gasp)! Mom isn't having maple syrup in her oatmeal again!" With little ones it's hard to do 'big' things like visiting a soup kitchen, but I can set good example at home this way.

Polly in Grand Rapids, MI

Hands down, I believe offering something up is the most beneficial for my family. Acts of charity are something we work on throughout the year so it is part of ordinary life. Because we are very low income and Lent is a particularly income restricted time of the year for us, alms gets incorporated into other times of the year for us. But offering something up ... that is a very Lenten thing. And for me as a former protestant, it is also what sets the Catholic Church apart. Protestants that I knew growing up just never did that. However, my childhood Catholic friends did give things up (like chocolate or tv) and that really intrigued me. So I really embrace this practice and find it means a lot to my kids also.

Karla in Fargo, ND

We try to do both... I especially like not eating meat or having desserts on Fridays, and we eliminate cartoons on Saturday mornings as well.

Megan in Pearland, TX

I find that if I "offer up" a food, I end up thinking of Lent as a diet, rather than a spiritual exercise. So for me, it's better to "add" --like attend more weekday Masses, chant Evening Prayer, go to Adoration for a few minutes daily...

Lenora in Carlisle, PA

We usually offer something up for a daily sacrifice, but we also like to do an act of charity as a family during the Easter season.

Megan in Apex, NC

I usually offer something sweet and try to add something to increase my spiritual devotion like following a daily Lenten reflection or adding more adoration time. I like both but for me giving up some type of food or pleasure that I enjoy really helps me refocus on letting God purify my heart spiritually.

Andrea in Fort Collins, CO

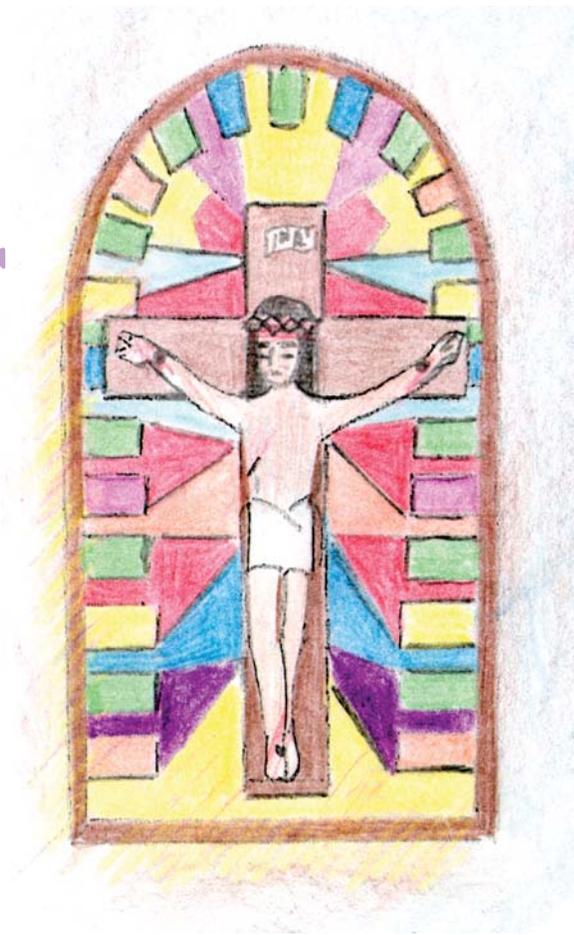
We try to do both, to remove a normal activity that we do that gets in the way of our relationship with God and to collect funds for the needy.

Melanie in Iowa City, IA

Both because it teaches us to love and have an open heart. Sometimes we are so cluttered with things and activities we forget how truly important we are to each other.

Nicole in Brook Park, OH

Lenten Recipes



We make whatever meal we would normally make, such as: Meatloaf, mashed potatoes, and green beans...

But...we SKIP the meatloaf, leaving an empty space for it on our plates....and we JUST have the potatoes and beans...

This helps to visualize the sacrifice to the children and FEELS much more as though we are "offering something up".

We can SEE the empty spot on our plate...and the meal, while still nutritious enough...is definitely more sparse and meager.

Judy in Warfordsburg, PA

DELUXE SPINACH QUICHE

5-6 eggs
cup of milk (goat milk works too)
seasonings - herbs
1 cup of steamed spinach (1 minute in the microwave)
1/4 cup mild cheese
1/8 cup parmesan cheese
salt & pepper

Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.

This is the perfect meal to make for someone during Lent -- an act of charity, plus it tastes wonderful!

Krista in New Market

Cannot beat Cheese artichoke or vegetable pizza.

Kristi in Lansing, KS

I have a few! Some of my meatless recipes are here:
<http://jamieskitchenblessings.blogspot.com/search/label/Meatless>

Jamie in St Cloud, MN

Quesadillas - melt cheese between two tortillas and serve with your favorite Mexican toppings.

Anne in Saint Paul, MN

Salmon mornay made with pasta noodles.

Leanne in Medowie NSW Australia

Eggplant Lasagna...replace the meat w/ eggplant that you have peeled and lightly coated with flour and fried, also great w/ zucchini in it as well - made the same way!

Melanie in Iowa City, IA

Our standby recipe is Mac-n-cheese with tuna and peas added in. We also often have tortilla chips served with a dip made of half refried beans and half cooked rice, with generous amounts of grated cheese and salsa mixed in.

Sharon in Shelby Township, MI

COWBOY HOTPOT

(really ridiculously easy)

1 big can of baked beans
1 can mixed vegetables
Scalloped potatoes.

Layer in casserole. Bake at 375 for 20 minutes.

Hilary in Leeds, AL

A simple pasta dish with a tomato based sauce that I add basil and pine nuts to then mix through the pasta and top with some grated cheese.

Helen in Wingello NSW Australia

MEDITERRANEAN QUESADILLAS

Spread a crushed garlic clove or garlic powder on 4 tortillas;
Sprinkle 1/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese on each tortilla;
Cover with thinly sliced tomato and a generous sprinkle of dried or fresh basil (and salt and pepper to taste);
Sprinkle 1-2 tablespoons of feta cheese over tomatoes and a pinch more mozzarella, if desired;
Cover each tortilla with a second tortilla to make a "sandwich" and spread a very thin layer of olive oil on top of the second tortilla;
Bake at 400 degrees for 12 minutes;
Let rest 10 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

Kiera in Tallahassee, FL

YELLOW SPLIT PEA SOUP.

I don't remember the recipe exactly but something like:

1 lb dried yellow split peas, rinsed
dried vegetable broth (or chicken broth for non-Lenten times)
onion & celery sautéed in butter until onion is soft
coined carrots to taste
lots of water (sorry, don't remember the quantity!)

Put all of the above in a pot and simmer while stirring often or cook on low in a Crockpot all day. Check water level frequently (since I can't remember the amount, I have to do that too!)
Serve with Lawry's Season Salt as garnish and sourdough bread and salad on the side.

Karla in Fargo, ND

ZUCCHINI SOUP

6 zucchini
1 large onion
3 potatoes
salt pepper to taste

Boil in low water until soft: blend until smooth!
TBSP olive oil in the serving bowls and Parmesan cheese. Served with toasted baguette or homemade croutons.

Kim in St. Augustine, FL

Here's some ideas:

1) Bean soup (cook pinto beans, add fried onions, a jar of spaghetti sauce and various veggies. Sprinkle cheese on each bowl when serving.) Great with homemade whole wheat bread!
2) Salmon Corn Chowder- Sauté onions in bottom of stock pot, add water, chopped potatoes and carrots. Boil till cooked. Add frozen corn and a can of salmon (mush up the bones well with a fork first) add some milk, salt and pepper and fresh dill to make it tasty.

Mary Ann in Sainte Anne, Manitoba

MEATLESS LENTIL LOAF

1 1/2 cups lentils
3 1/2 cups water or vegetable broth
2 onions, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbsp olive oil
2 cups pre-cooked rice
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 cup ketchup or barbecue sauce
1/2 tsp sage
1/2 tsp Italian seasoning

Preparation:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large soup or stock pot, simmer the lentils in water or vegetable broth until cooked, about 30 minutes. Drain thoroughly then mash the lentils until they are half mashed. Sauté the onions and garlic in olive oil for 3 to 5 minutes, or until soft. Combine the onions, garlic and olive oil with the mashed lentils and add the rice, salt, ketchup or barbecue sauce, sage, and Italian seasoning. Gently press the mixture into a lightly greased loaf pan. Drizzle a bit of extra ketchup on top if desired.

Bake for 1 hour. Allow to cool slightly before serving, as this will help the lentil loaf to firm up.

Bridget in Los Gatos, CA

It's fun to focus on new and interesting grains, when we shift away from eating meat during Lent. One of my favorite dishes is "**Creamy Vegetable-Millet Casserole**" from John Robbins' "May All Be Fed" (Avon Books, 1992). Any grain/vegetable combination that your family likes can be substituted!

3-1/2 cups water
1 cup millet
8 medium carrots, sliced diagonally into 1/4-inch thick slices
2 broccoli stalks, cut into small florets AND stalks sliced 1/2-inch thick
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup raw tahini
1/2 cup hot water
2-1/4 tablespoons brown rice miso
3 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Bring 3 cups of water to a boil, add the millet and cook, covered, 20-30 minutes

Meanwhile, cook the vegetables in the remaining 1/2 cup water until they're crisp-tender; drain. Mix the tahini, hot water and miso together to make the sauce. Pour onto the vegetables and mix well.

Put the cooked millet into a 1-1/2 quart baking dish. Pour the tahini-vegetable mixture over and sprinkle the sesame seeds on top. Bake, uncovered, until heated through, about 15 minutes.

Karen in Bethel, CT

Potato Soup for sure! For a quickie meal, I boil water and stir in potato flakes to the right consistency. Season as desired (onion powder, seasoned salt, and pepper) and add butter. Stir in a little milk to thin if needed. Top with grated cheese and you're set.

Savanna in Sweetwater, TX

Salad! But not just lettuce, and more lettuce - this is the time of year that I research new ways to make salads tasty and interesting, e.g. trying new salad foods that I haven't tried before in a salad (e.g. whitlof, raddichio, purple carrots, etc), and also concocting new salad dressings. The goal is to make a salad that even the children like.

Marina in Kapunda, South Australia

Butter a casserole dish. Place fish fillets or steaks in dish and dab the fish with butter pats. (Halibut is recommended; any firm fish will do). Season to taste (salt, lemon pepper, garlic powder, and dill).

Mix mayonnaise (2 cups), sour cream (1 cup), and dry mustard (1-1/2 Tbsp); slather over halibut. Don't be stingy with the mayo mixture; liberally coating all the pieces of fish will keep them tender (and it bakes into a yummy sauce).

Sprinkle chopped green onions, sliced fresh mushrooms, and grated cheese over entire dish.

Cover and bake at 350, about 35–45 minutes (depending on thickness of fillets). Use a fork to check the halibut . . . you want the meat tender and flaky, not rubbery (overcooked) or translucent (undercooked).

Michele in Coal Township, PA

The kids really just like shrimp sautéed in the skillet & my husband & I enjoy salmon broiled in the oven. Another favorite is corn chowder for our lunchtime meal. Very simple to make & fills everyone up quickly without a lot of work.

1 10oz package of frozen sweet corn
1 potato, peeled & cubed
1 carrot, peeled & diced
1/2 cup onion
1/2 cup water
1 can vegetable broth
salt & pepper
1 3/4 cup milk
1 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. flour

In a saucepan, combine the corn, potato, onion, carrot, water, broth, salt & pepper. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Stir in 1 1/2 cups milk & butter. Mix remaining milk with flour and add to chowder. Cook & stir until thickened. I have even added sweet potato & celery to this as well for added flavor. I also give the children grated cheese to put in it if they wish.

Jodi in Stewartville, MO

SALADE NICOISE

salad greens
green beans
boiled eggs
small, boiled potatoes
sliced onions
sliced tomatoes
canned tuna
dressing made from olive oil, wine vinegar, and Dijon mustard

The “restaurant way” is to have the greens as a base and arrange everything artistically on top, with the tuna in the middle and everything else around it. In my family, everyone prefers to have all the ingredients on one plate, but in their own space! The dressing is drizzled over the top of everything.

Lenora in Carlisle, PA

MINESTRONE SOUP

1 onion diced 2-3 carrots peeled and chopped
3-6 red potatoes chopped 1 cup of frozen peas
1 cup frozen corn 1 can of green beans
1 cup diced celery 1/2 garlic bulb peeled, and diced
1-2 tbl olive oil 1 diced zucchini
Sauté veggies in pan until just soft. During this time pre cook some whole wheat shell pasta about 1 cup.
Add:
1 can spaghetti sauce or 1 can tomato sauce
1 box veggie broth
2-3 bay leaves
2-3 tbl Italian seasoning
1-2 tbl garlic powder
1 cup kidney beans or navy beans (they are much better if you can cook with the soup in a pressure cooker, other wise used precooked)
1-2 tsp Bragg's liquid aminos
dash cayenne powder

Again I use my pressure cooker and I cook for about 1 1/2 to 2 ours so this could easily be a Crockpot recipe, it gets its flavor from cooking a long time. Once the soup is done (maybe 3-4 hours?) add 1 to 1 1/2 cups of fresh spinach and pre cooked pasta. Salt and pepper to taste. Goes great with To Die For French Bread Rolls here <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/French-Bread-Rolls-to-Die-For/Detail.aspx> and a green salad.

CeAnne in Aumsville, OR

Which Lenten activity has been the most helpful in teaching your children about the Lenten Season of love and sacrifice?

Why is this activity your favorite?

We attend Mass daily from Ash Wednesday to Easter. We also make a special effort to say the Rosary every day. It is very early morning Mass and an appropriate way for them to understand giving of our time for God. Also by sacrificing my time for God it helps to remind me that I am also here on earth to do God's will.

Sarah in Corpus Christi, TX

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My children are little (6,4,2) we color the stations of the cross and hang them down our hallway. We can walk and discuss them and also pray the stations. It gives them a picture and story to see, remember and participate in.

Jeannette in Washington, LA

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1. Stations of the Cross at church and home. We have two candle holders with seven candles each. The children take turns lighting the candle and reading the station.

2. We make a bread dough crown of thorns with tooth picks sticking out. When a kind deed is done, a tooth pick is removed.

Anne in Barron, WI

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Live stations of the cross shows our family up close what Jesus went through for us.

Tammy in Sulphur LA

For Lent and Easter, we try to keep our time together simple since everyone is encouraged to also think of and offer their own sacrifices. Last year we participated in Holy Heroes Advent adventure, which was perfect for us! This activity was my favorite because it reinforced the meaning of Lent along with the sacrifice portion of Lent.

Molly in Ridgway, PA

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*I use a purple tablecloth for Lent

*I use a child's big sized rosary as the centerpiece

*We pray one decade every morning (he is 2 years old)

*We give up TV in the mornings during Lent

*Every day is a different prayer intention - Priests, Grandparents, School Teachers, etc. I personally like the purple tablecloth. It's a small thing but the color really serves as a strong reminder.

Stephanie in Broussard, LA

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We're fairly new to our faith, but we've found the Stations of the Cross to be beneficial to teaching about the Lenten Season. My children connect with the ideas by seeing the pictures and walking through the prayers.

Pamela in Indianapolis, IN

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On Fridays, we meet families and friends at our fish fry, and then go in to church for Stations. It means so much to all of us we never want to miss it, and the kids feel the same way. It really brings the kids closer to Jesus to understand his suffering and sacrifice for us. It makes Eucharistic Adoration much more meaningful to them as well.

Marta in Cincinnati, OH

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Our family does a couple of different things during Lent to prepare for Jesus. The one that our family seems to enjoy the most is the “Jelly Bean Prayer”. Everyone gets a jar to fill with jelly beans with different colors to represent doing things that were Christ-like each day i.e. being kind, forgiving, being sorry when we hurt someone, saying prayers, sacrificing, doing a good deed, etc. The only color they couldn’t earn is white (God’s grace). And on Easter morning the jars would be filled the rest of the way with white jelly beans. I really enjoyed this activity because the kids were more conscious about being kind and would speak up for the others if each other wasn’t being kind. Also, they would ask about outside people’s actions and we had a chance to discuss those. How would they act in those situation. I also liked that it was a visual reminder of doing Christ-like deeds. They could see which areas they did more deeds because of them being color-coded.

Tiffany in Disputanta, VA

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In years past, I have written out the words to the Stations of the Cross and let each child illustrate one for themselves. It was very interesting to see the different illustrations, as in a way, they were “putting it in their own words”, except by pictures rather than words.

This then became their prayer book for our weekly praying of the Stations. I liked this activity because it really got the children to think about what they thought that each Station must look like; the time spent in contemplating that will hopefully become a deeper prayer later on.

Lu in Spring Lake, MI

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When Lent begins, I put up a simple hand-drawn poster with forty footsteps or a path with forty paving stones, leading to the Cross. Each day has either a scripture reading or a simple act of mercy to be performed. When my son completes whatever the task may be, he puts a sticker on the space. It’s easy for us all to see that we’re coming closer to Our Lord (both in time - closer to Easter- and in our hearts!!). Sometime during the night before Easter (while my son is asleep), I replace the Cross with a beautiful, glittering image of the Resurrected Christ, or His empty tomb, for a special surprise when we wake up. I love how this activity demonstrates that small acts of kindness or devotion lead us, step by step, closer to Our Lord. We can choose to follow Jesus in the Way of the Cross each day.

Karen in Bethel, CT

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I joined in on a “Lent Link-Up” and posted about some of the activities we do for Lent. One of our favorites from CHC is the Stations of the Cross, pictured in the post: <http://makemeasaint.blogspot.com/2010/02/lent-link-up.html>. I think the Stations of the Cross and the beautiful pictures bring the children to the true meaning of Lent, the sacrifice of Jesus for us. I find it teaches them to also sacrifice for Him.

Jamie in St Cloud, MN

We have participated in Family Stations of the Cross services in a variety of ways over the years (in our parish, with our home-school group on outdoor walks, and on our own). One of my favorites was when my kids were very little and we went to our church on our own with a Stations coloring book. At each Station we read from the coloring book and worked on the picture. It's been important to bring the Stations to their age level. The outdoor walks are great for the ages my boys are now because they have so much energy. :)

Cathy in Louisville, KY

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My children are still very young (4, 2), so we haven't had a lot of opportunity to make any lasting traditions. In just the last year, as my four year old is growing up and understanding more, we're finally able to implement some of the "ideas" that we've wanted to do. Our plan for Lent this year is to attend one daily Mass a week, to practice the Stations of the Cross on Friday, and to really try to teach the children the importance of self sacrifice for the conversion of sinners. I am most excited to do Stations of the Cross with the children. My son loves Bible stories anyway, and I know his child-like insights into the suffering of Jesus will be humbling for the whole family.

Mallory in Bemidji, MN

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We like the salt dough crown of thorns where the kids have to do good deeds to remove thorns (toothpicks) and then on Holy Saturday once all the thorns are gone we replace them with flowers or jewels to make a beautiful crown.

We also collect money all lent in a jar that says "To whom much is give, much is expected" and we use the money the week before Easter to help the less fortunate with Easter treats.

And we try to do the 40 bags of stuff to donate using paper shopping bags which are more manageable.

The salt dough crown of thorns is a hands on experience. They make it, paint it, put in the thorns and then get to take them all back out. It's presence in a prominent place in our home is a reminder to try and sacrifice during the day. And the delight of taking that terrible thorny crown and turning it into something beautiful at the end of lent is wonderful.

Remembering how blessed we are by giving to the less fortunate is also good for all of us. And putting together Easter baskets for the less fortunate is a good hands on way to have the little ones remember the importance of giving.

Cathy in St. Louis

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My children give up their dessert two nights a week. They get to go to the grocery store and chose the treat they would have had for a dessert, and then they bring it to the food box at St. Vincent de Paul. I think this shows my children that sacrifice can be more meaningful when accompanied by action.

Melissa in Albuquerque, NM

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I feel that reading to my boys from the Bible and prayer are the best examples I can give them. My boys love to talk about Jesus,

especially at mealtime. I reinforce what we have discussed through different activities and always demonstrate that people are more important than things! I like that they are very kind, thoughtful and giving to people.

Ann-Marie in Rome, NY

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We make a salt dough crown of thorns, the “thorns “ being toothpicks. With each good deed, they may pull off a thorn. Easter morning, the crown has magically (read: I spray paint in the yard late at night) turned gold, with beautiful flowers adorning it! The kids love to secretly do good deeds for each other and us. Somehow, the secrecy makes it more attractive, and they talk a lot about how these good deeds make Jesus happy.

E. in Sanford, NC

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We have a jar filled with “lent fortunes” (small strips of purple paper with daily tasks such as praying for a certain intention or doing some small good deed). Each morning we all (even mom) choose a fortune from the jar. This has turned out to be very meaningful activity for my children. It is so simple and doable, yet meaningful. So often activities we choose can become overwhelming. This is not, and it is nice for the children that there is a new sacrifice focus each day.

Laura in Campbell, CA

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Stations of the Cross. We light 14 candles, dim the lights, and let our little ones blow out a candle after every station. At the end, the room is quite dark and appropriately solemn. Our children are all quite young, so

sitting them all down for Stations is in itself a sacrifice! There are so many other things to get done, and the kids don’t always behave. But we keep at it and now even the 4-year-old can see the Stations plaques in a church and identify the name of the Station, which tells me she is actually tuning in!

Anne Marie in Saint Paul, MN

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My children are very small, so we do a Lenten Prayer Tree-very heavy on the arts and crafts. This helps them “see” an abstract concept and visually reminds us all to pray without ceasing.

Hilary in Leeds, AL

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My daughter loves the Stations of the Cross. I think that walking the path along with Christ really resonates with her. About halfway through the Stations, she begins to tear up. I think the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice begins to overwhelm her and as we finish she is filled with gratitude.

Bridget in Los Gatos, CA

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The Stations of the Cross and modeling sacrifice- fasting. We also run a Lenten prayer group every week in Lent. The Stations of the Cross are Our Lords Passion, so the words read aloud resonate with each of us. He died so we must do his will and spread the Gospel and try to be his disciples.

Leanne in Medowie NSW Australia

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Our family prayer time to begin the day consists of our "Stations of the Cross box" on Fridays during Lent. The box is a simple shoe box covered with purple construction paper and decorated with a drawing of the crown of thorns. Inside is a small object corresponding to each station, for example a small crucifix for the Crucifixion. As we pray each Station, the children can look at and hold the object and it helps them focus and, I hope, more deeply understand our prayer. It's hands-on activity that has become a tradition that the children look forward to.

Kiera in Tallahassee, FL

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The Lenten activity that has been most helpful is the Way of the Cross, daily in our home... I taped the stations up all around our living room and we prayed from station to station as a family. This was so helpful in forming a true sense of compassion for the sufferings of Our Lord.

Robin in Hickory, NC

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Stations of the Cross and the alms jar where they add the purple beans. It is something visible the children can see and brings concrete substance to their Lenten season.

Helen in Wingello NSW Australia

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We adapted an idea found in a book some years back, which calls for counting a different object around the home each day, and then adding that many pennies to the rice bowl that day. It's amazing how many plates in the cupboard, barrettes in the drawer, shoes in the closet, stuffed animals on the bed, etc. we have! This activity has opened

everyone's eyes to the fact that we truly do have an abundance of blessings... more than we need, much more than many others have. It has prompted donations of some items to places like the St. Vincent de Paul store, and of course, it spurs a greater attitude of gratitude in our family.

Polly in Grand Rapids, MI

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Attending a Living Stations of the Cross.

Studying the St. Francis Prayer "Lord Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace". We went through the St. Francis prayer line by line, each day studying the next line and discussing what it means.

This really brought the passion and death of Jesus *alive* to my younger children especially. We also have prayed the Stations of the Cross along with our parish, but I think the younger children just didn't understand and really engage in the prayers until they *saw* it.

St. Francis is a special family saint for us and we felt studying the prayer was an important spiritual exercise for Lent for the entire family. The discussions we had with this were amazingly in depth with participation from all of our children (who at the time were 14 years old on down).

Karla in Fargo, ND

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We honor Jesus through the making of the crown of thorns and everytime we do something especially nice or sacrificial for the sake of someone else we remove a thorn from the crown. And vice versa for an unkind act. We also limit our tv time to only Spiritually Edu-

cational shows. We can see Love in action and how our bad choices not only hurt us but Jesus who loved us so much that he died for us.

Kim in St. Augustine, FL

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Each of our children traditionally makes a “Lenten Journey” poster. We figure out how many Sundays are in Lent, and then create a stepping-stone path, with one gray stone for each day and one purple stone for each Sunday. Holy Thursday is white, Good Friday is red, Holy Saturday is white, and the destination, Easter Sunday, is a drawing of an empty tomb. We also create a little cut-out from an index card (a drawing of Jesus, a cross, a lamb, or something along those lines), and move the cutout stone-by-stone as Lent progresses. I like this activity because, like an Advent calendar, it gives the kids a tangible picture of how long Lent lasts, and as the kids move along their journey, we remind them that we are supposed to be uniting ourselves, and our sufferings, with Christ’s.

Michele in Coal Township, PA

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Serving dinner at the Fish Fry and then staying on for Stations of the Cross. Saving all of the money from no Friday dinners out and donating it to the food pantry to feed others. It helps the children understand what Jesus did for us and the importance of giving of their time and what they have.

Diane in Dearborn Heights, MI

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Our favorite Lenten activity has been making “crowns” out of white modeling clay. We stick toothpicks in them to represent Jesus’ crown of thorns. Each time that one of my sons makes a sacrifice, they get to remove a “thorn” from the crown. At Easter, the crown is bare, and we add flowers to it, to show the children the real crown of glory that Christ wears now! This activity is a tangible way to show my young children how all of our actions, good or bad, affect everyone. It is an illustration of the Church as the Body of Christ. We also talk about how each of our sins is a thorn in Christ’s crown, and how our sufferings and sacrifices help to ease His pain.

Megan in Pearland, TX

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Working at a homeless shelter and soup kitchen. It brings in perspective how other people live and we have so much.

Barbara in Rossville, IN

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We love our Resurrection eggs! We usually also do an alms jar, but I’d like to do more. My children are still small and I’d love to find some great ideas to help teach them more about Lent. I’m a convert and so is my husband, so we didn’t grow up with this and I’d like to make it more meaningful for my children. We made our own set and really enjoyed the process of putting them together and continue to enjoy them. They really help my small children better understand Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

Erika in Clarkrange, TN