



## Christian Education Bulletin Insert

### March 2003

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**Ash Wednesday, March 5**, marks the beginning of Lent. This is a season when we consider once more the sacrifice Christ made for us. We come to him being truly sorry for our sin and yet knowing we are assured of forgiveness and new life through his goodness to us. We endeavour to respond to this amazing grace by living our lives for him.

Make a crown of thorns wreath using a grapevine wreath available from most craft and dollar stores. It will not have thorns, but will look similar to an authentic one, while being much safer. Point out the difference to the children. Use small candle holders or wire to hold 7 purple candles around the wreath. Put a large white one in the centre. As you may have done for Advent, light one candle on Ash Wednesday, two candles one week later, three for the third week of Lent and so on. In Holy Week, start with all the candles lit and extinguish one each day so that on Easter Saturday you will have no lit candles. Light the white candle on Easter Day to celebrate the resurrection.

Although children might give up chocolate, candy or chips for Lent, fasting is not likely to be a good idea for them. You might, though, talk about what fasting is and why people often do it on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and possibly on all the Fridays of Lent, i.e. to help them to concentrate better on prayer and coming close to God. It also helps us to remember that we usually have plenty of food, while others cannot survive on what they are able to get to eat. Instead of fasting, older children might be encouraged to think about these lines and 'feast' instead . . .

Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.

Fast from gossip; feast on remaining silent.

Fast from jealousy; feast on hope.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.

Fast from selfishness; feast on service.

Fast from anger; feast on patience.

(Explain the words where necessary)

## The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary, March 25

Explain that annunciation means telling or announcing - this is when we celebrate the time when the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would have the Baby Jesus and she said yes to God. It is 9 months before Christmas. You might like to make an angel cake to celebrate this day. As you eat it talk about people who have said 'yes' to God. The stories of many of them are in the Bible, but you may be able to think of some modern people, maybe some in your own neighbourhood as well. What could it mean to say 'yes' to him at school, with our friends, at home? Younger children might make a jigsaw puzzle from an old Christmas card. You might be able to find one of the annunciation, or maybe you have one showing an angel. Glue the picture onto thin card and, when it dries, cut it into jigsaw shapes. Mail it to a friend or relative with a greeting.

### Start to make a Lenten Tree.

Use a bare branch with several offshoots. Put it in a small pail or large flower pot Draw and colour some of the following Lenten symbols on circles of card. Hang them from the branches. In April you can add some Easter Symbols and turn your tree into an Easter decoration.

The number 40 (this number is used often in the Bible. It represents a period of transformation or change. E.g. 40 days of Lent, Jesus fasted and was tempted for 40 days in the desert before he began his ministry)

A chalice (this symbolises the wine Jesus shared with his disciples during the Last Supper)

A loaf of bread (see above)

A rooster to symbolize Peter's denial of Jesus.

Nails to represent Jesus being nailed to the cross.

### Try this tongue-twister for some light hearted relief

Swan swam over the sea

Swim, swan, swim.

Swan swam back again,

Well swum swan!