



Ignite the F.I.R.E.



Families Involved in Religious Education

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LENTEN PREPARATION

This Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) marks the beginning of the Lent season, the 40 days (not counting Sundays) before Easter Sunday. Lent is a time that helps us to wean ourselves away from the distractions of the world and take a good look at our hearts. Here are some questions and words of wisdom from the book, “The Catholic Home”, by Meredith Gould, that one can reflect on.

- Am I loving, honest, tolerant, generous, patient kind and trustworthy?
- In what ways do I represent the love of Christ? Do I live my faith?
- When, how, and why am I angry, mean-spirited, stingy, envious, hostile?
- What actions of mine have hurt others?
- For what do I want forgiveness? From whom do I need to ask forgiveness?
- How have I hurt others by not taking appropriate action?
- Whom do I need to forgive?
- What do I allow to separate me from the love of Christ?
- How can I open my heart, cleanse my soul, and deepen my faith?

Conventional wisdom has it that deprivation in the name of sacrifice--swearing off life's pleasures for 40 days--will somehow intimately connect us with the crucifixion. Maybe. For kids, probably. Adults have more sophisticated and spiritually challenging options.

Is God calling us to sacrifice? Or are we being called to cultivate a supercharged awareness of the times and ways we separate ourselves from God because of the things we want--or the stuff we do?

When it comes to pleasing God, sacrifice may *not* be the way to go. Instead, we're called “to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.”

What would you have to stop, surrender, or abandon to live like this during Lent? What would Lent be like if you gave up vengeance, gossip, sarcasm, or stinginess instead of chocolate? What would *you* be like?

“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire!” ~ St. Catherine of Siena