



[If you haven't already, begin your meal with meal prayer, then take turns reading these boxes aloud, following the directions where applicable]

Why Fasting?

Lent is a time when we make special efforts to do acts of penance. Penance helps show our sorrow for our sins. One of the main ways that we do penance in Lent is through fasting.

Fasting is choosing to give up or go without something. We can (and are encouraged to) choose to give up something that we enjoy, like treats, TV shows, etc. during Lent. The Church also asks all people to fast from food on certain days of the year.

The purpose of our fast is to not become physically weak or to go on a diet but to create a hunger, a spiritual space that only Christ can fill. When we are thoughtful about our fasting, we express our love of God and acknowledge our sinfulness.

These acts of self-denial help us to be free from worldly distractions, to express our longing for Jesus, and to imitate his suffering in a small way.

Fasting & Abstinence

While abstinence refers to the kind or quality of food we eat, fasting refers to the amount or quantity of food consumed.

Fasting -- one full meal is allowed along with two other smaller meals. Abstinence -- prohibits eating such animals and birds that are considered meat.

Catholics bound by the law of abstinence include everyone age 14 and over; the law of fasting includes individuals age 18 through the beginning of their 60th year. Those excused from fasting and abstinence are the physically or mentally ill (including chronic illnesses), and pregnant and nursing women. In all cases, common sense should prevail, and ill persons should not further jeopardize their health by fasting.

Abstinence and fasting are required on both Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence. In addition to Friday abstinence during Lent, every Friday is a required day of penance. The bishops have given U.S. Catholics the option of doing another form of penance on Fridays outside of Lent rather than abstaining from meat, if they choose.

Discussion

[These questions are a spark for conversation, not a strict outline.]

- How has your first week of Lent been? What has been challenging? How has your relationship with God grown?
- Have you ever fasted from anything before? Describe the experience and how it helped you grow.
- What are you giving up during Lent? How will you practice fasting?

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the additional resource provided by the parish. If you don't have it, you can download it on our website]

If you have not yet had time to review the Lenten practices sheet from last time, take time now to review it and choose one or two to practice as a family this Lent (included in the handouts this week).

Then, try the fasting object lesson and the two cups activity in the handout for this week.

Write a prayer that you will pray during Lent when you are giving something up, or choose one of the ones on the handout. Post it somewhere your family can see and use it, or have each person make their own copy for their room, desk, etc.

Extras

A deeper look into the practice of fasting:
<https://catholicgentleman.com/2014/04/spiritual-weapons-fasting>

"Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, kindles the true light of chastity."

– ST. AUGUSTINE

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion:
We talked about how Jesus is the vine and we are the branches - what does your branch look like? What are the green healthy parts of your relationship with God? What are the brown spots where you need to ask forgiveness and reconnect with God? Consider making notes that you might use when you attend your first reconciliation this month.

This week's confirmation work is: **Sacrament of Confirmation**
Watch Decision Point 10.2
If education prepares you for career and exercise prepares you to compete in athletics, what does Confirmation prepare you for?

Complete your Confirmation sponsor form and return to the parish office

Links & information found at
<https://staugustinedward.org/confirmation-preparation/>

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, March 8:

- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages
- Confirmation AND First Reconciliation/Communion Students - your whole family should plan to attend on March 8 6-7:30 pm at St Augustine for a formation night.

