



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

Almsgiving

The Annunciation

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF ALMSGIVING?

The Catholic Church considers almsgiving "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2462).

Almsgiving is the act of donating money or goods to the poor or performing other acts of charity. However, when defining almsgiving, it helps to understand the meaning behind the word itself.

The roots of the word "alms" can be found in ancient Latin and Greek words meaning mercy and pity. Similarly, the root of the word "charity" comes from the Latin "caritas," meaning love.

Charity, or almsgiving, is an outward sign of Christian love for others. Generally, it involves some type of sacrifice on behalf of the giver in order to provide for the needs of the other. In doing this, bonds of community are formed.

Giving alms can, and should, be a year-round spiritual exercise for all Catholics and Christians.

Giving alms is essential to fostering a deep spiritual life because it allows us to step outside of ourselves and focus on the needs of others.

More than simply giving money, almsgiving is an act of love that can deepen our prayer life and bring a greater sense of meaning to fasting.

It can also prompt important questions: Do I really need this?

Am I consuming too much?

adapted from

<https://missionimpact.svdmis.org/what-is-almgiving>

On March 25, nine months before the date of Christmas, we celebrate the annunciation - when Gabriel asked Mary to be the mother of Jesus. As we know, Mary said yes. Mary's yes is important to us because through her yes, her willingness to collaborate with God and follow His plan, we are all able to receive the gift of Jesus' presence. Mary's yes is a model for us - God has a plan for each of our lives, something unique that He created each person to be a part of, but we each need to say yes to God's invitation. Often, this yes requires trust, even when we don't fully understand what God is asking us to do or where it will lead.

Discussion

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

- How has the last week of Lent been? What has been challenging? How has your relationship with God grown?
- Have you ever given someone something? How did giving help you grow?
- What are some ways you can think of that you or your family can give alms?
- How do you think Mary felt when God asked her to be the mother of Jesus? Why do you think she said yes?
- God has the power to give people what they need and Jesus could have become man without the help of Mary - why do you think God chooses to ask us to help him?

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]

Take the images provided in the packet and tape them to a box or two in your home. Have each person go find one item to donate and place it in the box, and then try to fill up the box(es) by the end of Lent. Look through the almsgiving ideas list provided (or add your own ideas) and see if there are any other charitable things you might do as a family this Lent.

The greatest thing we can give is our "yes" to God each day. Follow the attached handout to ponder Mary's annunciation through an experiment, game, and/or making prayer card that will remind you to say yes to God every day, just like Mary did.

End by praying Mary's words together:

Behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word.

Extras

3 Minute Video on the Annunciation (*family friendly but might be hard for very young ones to understand*)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of-NylrkPv4&t=165s>

Read scripture verses about almsgiving from the Old and New Testaments:
<https://missionimpact.svdmis.org/what-is-almgiving>

A talk on the Annunciation and its deep meaning
<https://watch.formed.org/videos/a-bible-study-on-the-annunciation>

Ponder the symbolism of the Annunciation through art:
<https://watch.formed.org/videos/sacred-art-the-annunciation>

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion: At the "Offering" of the Mass, we are invited to offer our hearts and lives to God. What can you offer or sacrifice to God?

This week's confirmation work is: Preparing for Confirmation. Follow the directions on the website to schedule a time to meet with Father Steffes for your Confirmation Interview. In your journal, write down questions you have about confirmation and your faith life. Reflect on how you are preparing yourself for confirmation.

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, March 29:

- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages

Upcoming:

- Vigil Mass of the Annunciation on Friday, March 24 at 5:00pm at St. Augustine.
- Confirmation AND First Communion students/families attend on April 12 6-7:30 pm at St. Augustine

Contact our parish office at:
staugustinedward@gmail.com
507-437-4537



St. Augustine &
St. Edward

staugustinedward.org