

First Sunday of Lent Year A –26th Feb 2023

Introduction

Today is the first Sunday of Lent – a time of forty days of preparation for Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday. (Ask what happened on Ash Wednesday and why? We all received ashes as a symbol of repentance and that we want to come closer to God). We read in the Gospel today about the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert in prayer and fasting. In Lent we do three things to bring us closer to God, so that we may truly celebrate the joy of Easter. During Lent we **PRAY** more, we **FAST** (give up something we like), and we show love or **CHARITY** to those around us by being generous and sharing and not being selfish. The most important of these three actions is prayer and we will discuss this more later on.

Make the Sign of the Cross – a sign of the love God has for us. (This is optional, as we have already done this at the start of Holy Mass, but for young children it helps to demonstrate and practice how to do this correctly.)

Light the candles on the table next to the Lectionary. An adult lights the candles).

Penitential Act

Ask the children to think about how they have behaved in the past week. Ask them if they have always been kind and helpful to others, obedient to their parents, listened to their teachers etc.

Lead the children in singing the “Sorry Song”.

We are sorry,
Truly sorry,
Heal us Lord,
In Your love,
Help us to do better, (sung to tune of Frere Jacques)
Forgive us,
Forgive us.

NO Gloria DURING LENT

All stand to welcome the Gospel singing the **Gospel Acclamation:**

Praise to You Lord,
Praise we give You,
Christ Our King,
You have said, (same tune)
“If you live by my Word,
God’s Good News is for You”
Praise to You,
Christ our King.

Gospel

Select the correct Gospel from the Children’s Lectionary. This week it’s on page 23, First Sunday of Lent, in the Book of Readings. The Lectionary Adapted for Children.” (Year A)

Matthew 4:1-11

“A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew”.

Explain and demonstrate – make three crosses: one on your forehead, one on your lips and one on your heart (in this way we think God’s word, speak God’s word and keep God’s word in our hearts) **as we say together “Glory to You, O Lord.”**

Read the Gospel aloud to the children. At the end say: **“The Gospel of the Lord”**.

All reply: **“Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ”**. Ask everyone to be seated.

Lead a Discussion on the Gospel

Where did Jesus spend 40 days? (The desert)

What did Jesus do in the desert? (He prayed and fasted)

How do you think Jesus felt after the 40 days? (tired, hungry)

What three things did the devil try to tempt Jesus with?

The devil knew Jesus was very hungry and tried to tempt Him to turn a stone in to bread to eat.

The devil tried to tempt Jesus with power saying that if Jesus worshipped him he would give Jesus all the kingdoms on earth.

What did Jesus say to this?(He said we must only worship God)

The devil then told Jesus to jump from the top of the temple in Jerusalem to test that God would save Him from coming to any harm.

What did Jesus say to this? (He said that you must not test God).

Jesus did not give in to any temptation. Though he was hungry He knew that His Heavenly Father would provide for all His needs. He knew also that God already is King of Heaven and earth, which He created and that God alone is to be worshipped.

We won't be spending our 40 days of Lent in the desert, but we can be like Jesus and spend time in **PRAYER**

What extra prayers/devotions can we make in Lent?

- The Stations of the Cross (when we remember in a special way how Jesus loves us so much that He suffered and died on the cross to take away our sins so that we can get to Heaven),or
- Go to Mass on another day as well as Sunday (Holy Mass is the best prayer we can make),or
- Pray the Rosary at home with our family, or
- Talk to God from our heart and tell Him that we love Him and that we are sorry we have hurt Him when we did not behave as we should.

We won't be **FASTING** from food for 40 days, but we can give up something we like, for example? (chocolate, TV etc.)

We can show love or **CHARITY** for others by? (being kind to others and not selfish, sharing, being generous etc).

We will be tempted to give up in Lent, but we know that God will always help us when we pray -to keep trying our best.

Prayers of the Faithful (optional/ time dependent)

You may wish to prepare some of these yourselves or ask the children for their prayers. Here are some suggestions for today:

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to come closer to You by **praying** to You - remembering to tell You that we love You, that we are sorry for our faults and also to thank You for all the love that You show us.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: "**Hear our prayer.**"

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to **fast** by giving up something that we like and to show **charity** by not being selfish and being kind and generous to others especially those who have less than we have.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: "**Hear our prayer.**"

Closing Prayer

Hail Mary, full of grace.....

Amen.

Now (if required) ask for volunteers for the Offertory Procession. After the procession, children return quietly to sit with their families in church.