

The Fig Tree

"Nurturing the seed of faith"



Lent

The forty days (not counting Sundays) before Easter are known as Lent. It is an opportunity for Christians, through prayer, reading the bible, and acts of service and devotion, to seek a more deeper relationship with Jesus. By doing so we hope to be people who not only receive new life, but share that life with others.

When does Lent begin?

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, the day after Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) and six and a half weeks before Easter Day. The last week of Lent begins with Palm Sunday, which celebrates the day Jesus entered Jerusalem and the people laid palms at his feet.

When does Lent end?

Lent lasts for 40 days. Sundays are not counted in the forty days. Lent officially ends at sundown on Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday).

Why does Lent last for 40 days?

The 40 days reflect the 40 years of the Israelites going through the desert and the traditional 40 days of Jesus fasting in the desert.

The aim is for our Lenten practices to become the "norm" of our daily lives, and continue beyond Lent as we come to find them as life giving (to us, and out families).



**KEEP
CALM
AND
LIVE
LENT**

Welcome to our sixth edition of “The Fig Tree”. It is hoped that parents, caregivers and grandparents will use this as a tool to build upon the faith of their family. We strongly believe that the home is the place where faith is best caught, taught, practised, nurtured and lived out. The role of the Church is to nurture and resource you in living this out, and be a place where we come together to share life with all its ups and downs.

Lent is often seen as a time of “Giving up” things, often known as fasting. More accurately, Lent is about “taking up” practices that seek to bring us life—allowing us to “feast”.

We hope you might find some ideas that will assist your family in finding deeper meaning, and new life.

Rev'd Michael Armstrong.

LENT
is for
LIFE



not just
for
chocolate.

Fast from judging others;

Feast on the Christ indwelling them.

Fast from emphasis on differences;

Feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness;

Feast on the reality of light.

Fast from thoughts of illness;

Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute;

Feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent;

Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;

Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;

Feast on optimism.

Fast from worry;

Feast on divine order.

Fast from complaining;

Feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives;

Feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures;

Feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility;

Feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness;

Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;

Feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety;

Feast on eternal Truth.

Fast from discouragement;

Feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress;

Feast on truths that uplift.

Fast from lethargy;

Feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion;

Feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken;

Feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow;

Feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip;

Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;

Feast on prayer that undergirds.

- William Arthur Ward

Fasting during Lent has always been a popular religious practice. The aim is to remove those things that take away life from us, and fill our lives with that which is life giving. You could: Fast from fast food. Fast from TV one day a week. Fast from electronic games one day a week. Fast from using the computer. Fast from buying anything that is unnecessary. Fast from bad habits. Fast from complaining. Fast from arguing. Fast so others may feast. As a family, discuss giving up some food this week – and perhaps give the ingredients you may have spent to a local food pantry.

Take Up some practices to replace those you have given up. Take up: Reading. Writing. Praying. Spending time playing with your family. Listening. Sharing stories. Quiet time. Prayers before bed. Grace at the table.

Plan a simple meal as a family. Ask everyone at the table to come up with one simple way that you might help someone in need? Ask God to help you carry out one of these ideas. Read 1 Timothy 6:18-19.

Schedule a Family Night. Plan time together to enrich your family life. You don't need to go anywhere—think about what you can do together at home!

Practise the 3 C's. Give 3 compliments a day to your spouse, your child or to someone else.

Blessing your children before you depart, or before bed time. You could say a short prayer, such as "The Lord bless you this day". You could even make a small cross on their forehead.

Pretzels had their origin in early Christian Lenten practices because fat, eggs, and milk were forbidden during Lent, a special bread was made with dough consisting of only flour, salt, and water. These little breads were shaped in the form of arms crossed in prayer. Choose one night in Lent to make pretzels, or pop some in your children's lunch-box to remind them that you have prayed for them.



Prayer is not something that often comes naturally,
and often requires some discipline and practice.
Even Jesus' disciples asked him "how do we pray", and he gave them the
Lord's Prayer (Our Father).

There is no set way to pray, but there are many methods that may assist to make
your prayer life giving.

PATCANA is one way that your family might find helpful?

PA (Thumb) - Praise & Adoration

Awesome Lord and Creator,
The earth is yours and all that is in it.
You are our God and we are your people;

T (Pointer Finger) - Thanksgiving

Thank you for life and love,
For a home to live in and a family to love.

C (Middle Finger) - Confession

Forgive us when we hurt others,
And when we hurt you.
Help us to love others like you love us.
I am especially sorry for ...

AN (Ring Finger) - Asking for Others

We pray for...
And my family and friends...
For those who need...

A (Little Finger) - Asking for Ourselves

And lastly for me...
I place myself into your loving care. Amen.

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