

ASH WEDNESDAY

“Prayer begins by listening, God speaks in the silence of your hearts and we speak from the fullness of our hearts. I listen, God speaks. I speak, God listens. This listening, speaking is prayer.”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection for Parents

As you gather your family today, explain to the children that during Lent we try to do three things each day. First, we give up something. This is called fasting. Second, we give something to others. This may be things we do to help others, or possessions or money we share with others. This is called almsgiving. And we pray more. While prayer, fasting, and almsgiving should be a part of our lives every day, Lent is a season for doing these things more intensely.

Mother Teresa’s words remind us that God actually listens to us. This Lent, let us try to put her words into practice. Although our lives are busy, we can still seek a time of silence each day to pause, ponder, and pray.

Family Prayer

All make the sign of the cross.

Parent: Dear Jesus, as we begin the season of Lent, we thank you for the example of Mother Teresa. Help us to learn from her and imitate her faith, hope, and love each day of this holy season. Now let us listen to these words of Blessed Mother Teresa.

A parent or child now reads the opening quotation aloud.

All: Blessed Mother Mary, bring us closer to your Son, Jesus. Blessed Mother Teresa, please pray for us.
Amen.

A Story from Mother Teresa's Life

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje, in what is now the Republic of Macedonia, on August 26, 1910. Even as a little girl, Mother Teresa was very aware of Jesus' love for her. She longed to love and serve him with her life in return, so she became a nun at the age of eighteen. Sister Teresa spent eighteen years as a teacher and later as headmistress (or principal) at the Loreto School in Calcutta, India.

Fasting

Discuss with your children what you as a family can offer to God as a sacrifice during Lent. Can you and the kids give up a TV show, a video game, or the Internet at times? Decide what you will all do today.

Almsgiving

Mother Teresa's words for today remind us of the importance of listening. Ask the children how they can be better listeners. Is there someone they could listen to today?

Prayer

Parent: Dear Lord, Jesus, inspire our hearts to pray more this Lent. Help us to search for the quiet moments each day.

All Pray: Blessed Mother Mary, you know the perfect way to your Son, Jesus. Teach us the way. Blessed Mother Teresa, please pray for us.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

All Through the Day

I will strive to find moments of silence in which to immerse my heart in prayer.

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

“Today . . . just allow Jesus to love you. We always want to say, ‘Jesus, I love you,’ but we don’t allow Jesus to love us. Today say often, ‘Jesus, I am here, love me.’”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection for Parents

Love, love, love! We will never fully understand Our Lord’s tremendous love for us until we meet him face to face. As parents, we feel that our love for our children is immense, unconditional, and never-ending—incomparable. But, multiply that love by infinity and that will be a tiny fraction of God’s love for us and our children.

Family Prayer

All make the sign of the cross.

Parent: Dear Jesus, during this season of Lent, please visit us here in our home. Help us to open our hearts to the graces you wish to give us throughout this special season. Now let us listen to these words of Blessed Mother Teresa.

A parent or child now reads the opening quotation aloud.

All: Blessed Mother Mary, bring us closer to your Son, Jesus. Blessed Mother Teresa, pray for us. Amen.

A Story from Mother Teresa’s Life

On September 10, 1946, when Sister Teresa was en route to her annual retreat, she distinctly heard Jesus calling her to much more—to serve the poorest of the poor all over the world, beginning in the slums of Calcutta, India. She continued to hear the voice of Jesus calling her in her heart to leave her work at the Loreto School

behind and cross the threshold to the slums of Calcutta. After consulting with her spiritual director she submitted her calling to the Church. Her proposal was approved, and on August 17, 1948, she left the Loreto convent wearing her new simple white and blue cotton Indian sari as her new religious habit. She took a medical course and on December 21, 1948, officially began her work to care for God's poor and destitute.

Fasting

What little comfort might you or the children give up today—a second serving, a dessert, a long shower?

Almsgiving

Ask the children to think of someone who is in need of love and what they could do to show love for this person. Encourage them to do this.

Prayer

Let's pray to learn to hear the voice of Jesus when he speaks within us.

Parent: Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me! Mother Teresa lived each day so much in love with you, adoring you in the Eucharist and serving you in the poor. Teach me to open my heart fully to your love and hear you when you call me to love as Mother Teresa did.

All Pray: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

All Through the Day

Jesus, I am here, love me.