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from St. Hilary Parish,
Fairlawn, Ohio—*Family
Spirituality Through the
Seasons*

Does your family pray together? Do you have family rituals for particular Feast Days, Holy Days of Obligation, Advent, Ash Wednesday, and Lent? In this, the first of a series of upcoming articles in both *St. Hilary Live!* and the weekly bulletin, we will be offering ideas for creating your own family rituals. Our hope is that these ideas could very well teach both you and your children about our Catholic faith, The Trinity and our Saints.

Disciples at Home

Kid-friendly ideas for Lent and St. Patrick's Day!

ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT

The season of Lent presents families with an opportunity to examine their family life and to re-commit to the Christian practices of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Each Catholic is invited to do these things as individuals, but you can also do one or more as a family. Ash Wednesday, is a good time for families to pray together and to plan the family's Lenten practices. (Masses on Ash Wednesday will be at 7:00 am, 9:30 am, 12:10 pm and 6:30 pm.)

Try gathering as a family on Ash Wednesday to read the Gospel of the day, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18. Remind yourselves that Jesus expected that his disciples would give alms, pray, and fast and that he gave instructions that when we do those things, they should not be done for show. Determine one way your family will give alms during Lent to share what you have with

people in need. Decide on one way your family will pray together during Lent, and choose one thing your entire family will give up during Lent as a reminder of your love for God. Agree to encourage one another in whatever Lenten promises each has made individually. Pray together that God will bless your family's Lenten promises by praying together the psalm for Ash Wednesday, Psalm 51, and/or praying the Lord's Prayer.

Here are some ways you and your family can focus on Christ during the Lenten season:

- **Attend** Ash Wednesday and Communal Penance services as a family.
- **Print out Stations of the Cross** coloring pages, color them and post them around a room, like a border, and on Friday's pray them as a family. When Easter arrives add a colored

picture of the Resurrection and view Christ's triumph during Easter Week.

- **Plant an amaryllis bulb** during Lent and compare what happens to the bulb with what happens to each one of us as we increase our good deeds, sacrifices and reception of the sacraments. Point out there is much going on under the dirt that the children can't see. In our souls much is going on during Lent—things that we cannot see.

- **Pray the Jellybean Prayer**—Assign each color of jellybean to have its own meaning for a good deed. Decorate jars for the children to collect the jellybeans they earn. (Never white ones though; those are for God's grace, which we cannot earn!) For a detailed description of the prayer, go to: www.catholicmom.com/Lent_jelly.htm

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Although St. Patrick's Day is best known as a day for parties and wearing green, we should remember to celebrate the real reason for the day: St. Patrick and his life of service in Ireland. Here are some ways you and your family can celebrate St. Patrick's Day:

- **Fact or fiction?** St. Patrick's life is full of stories—some are true, others are legends. Find a biography of St. Patrick and quiz your family members on what's fact or fiction in the life of St. Patrick. (Did he really drive certain creatures out of Ireland??)
- **According to legend**, St. Patrick used the shamrock—with its three leaves—to teach about the Trinity. Have the children create their own shamrock. Cut three hearts and a stem out of green construction paper. (Decorate the hearts by drawing pictures, adding stickers or

gluing on other craft items.) Glue the bottoms of the hearts together and attach the stem.

- **Wear as much green as possible** on St. Patrick's Day. Not Irish? Don't worry. On St. Patrick's Day, everyone's Irish—at least for the day.
- **Pray together** the St. Patrick Breastplate prayer as a family. (There are several versions of this verse of the prayer. See one version below.

St. Patrick Breastplate Prayer

Christ be with me,
Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ
above me.
Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie down, Christ where I sit down,
Christ where I arise.

**There are many
Catholic websites just
teeming with ideas
and projects for you
and your family.**

Some suggested sites
to get you started:

www.catholicmom.com

www.domestic-church.com

February/March: Growing Disciples at Home