

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

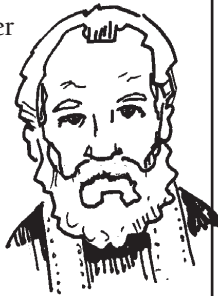
February 2015



## Thoughtful Moments

### St. Peter Damian

Born in 1072, Peter was orphaned as a young child only to be mistreated by an older brother charged with his care. Another brother rescued him and took him away to school where he trained to become a professor.



Dedicated to strict penance, Peter soon left teaching to become a Benedictine. Made a cardinal by Pope Stephen IX, Peter instituted reforms and ended questionable practices in the Church. His extensive writings earned him the title, Doctor of the Church.

### Penance vs. punishment

Penance isn't punishment. Real penance helps us undergo a change of heart that helps us become better people who positively affect others. Our sin affects others, and our penance and reparation can, too.

### As God loves

"Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things. Love makes us similar, it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us."  
Pope Francis



## Give up and take up for Lent

Throughout the year, we can get caught up in behaviors that lead us away from God. Lent is a gift from the Church to help us find our way back.

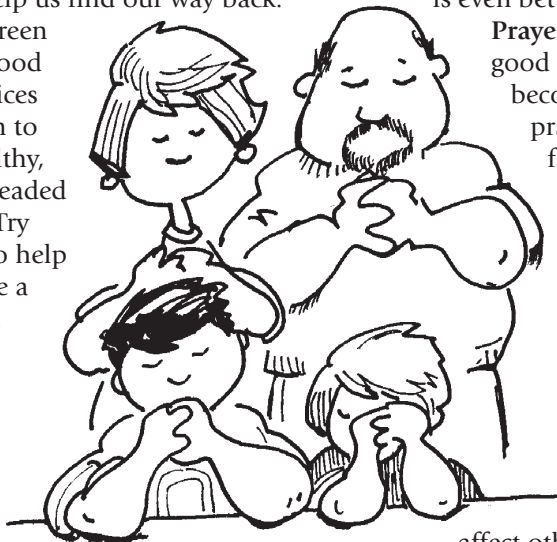
Like eating green vegetables, good Lenten practices help children to grow up healthy, strong and headed for Heaven. Try these ideas to help children have a positive Lent experience:

**Penance.** Even young children understand that if we make a mess, we have to clean it up and try not to do it again. That's the basic idea behind Lenten penance. When we disobey God, we need to apologize to him, fix things if we can and try not to do it again. Giving up a favorite toy,

game, or pastime is a start but replacing it with something sacrificial – such as good deeds or extra chores – is even better.

**Prayer.** Children with good prayer habits become adults who pray. Refresh your family prayer habits and encourage children to start and end the day in prayer. Together pick a morning and evening offering and say it together during Lent.

**Acts of kindness.** Our sins affect others, so offering kindness is a good way to compensate. Some solid Lenten acts for children include sweeping a neighbor's walk, doing an extra chore without being asked, or showing friendship to another child at school.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do we fast?

Fasting is a traditional form of penance to show sorrow for our sins. By creating hunger and a desire for that which is denied, we are reminded of the reason why we are fasting. During Lent, we fast because Jesus fasted during his

time in the desert before he began his public ministry.

We also fast to sympathize with those who are hungry or poor and don't have the blessings we enjoy.

Fasting helps to be more loving and compassionate.

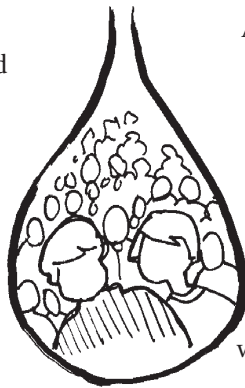


## The baptized are never alone

At Easter we renew our baptismal promises to renounce Satan and sin, but we are also reminded of promises God made to us when he chose us as his own.

**The Baptized are never alone.** Remind children that even when we aren't with them, God is. Baptism means they were chosen by God and set apart for him. They become part of his family and he never forgets his own.

**The Baptized are never without help.** When life doesn't go our way, God is ready to help.



All we have to do is asked.

**The Baptized can accomplish anything.** Alone, we are weak. With God's help, all things are possible. God can work wonders with ordinary people if we open our hearts to him.

**The Baptized are destined for Heaven.** It is the desire of God's heart to gather all the Baptized to him. That is possible when we renounce Satan, his empty promises, and sin. If we open our hearts to God, we are never alone and never without hope.

### Scripture LESSON

### Mark 1:12-15, Triumph in the desert

Before beginning his public ministry, Jesus spent 40 days in the desert fasting and praying. This was to strengthen him for the important work ahead. Knowing that Jesus intended to loosen his evil grip on the world, Satan visited him when he knew Jesus would be weakest. Satan tried to turn Jesus away from God, but spending time with God strengthened Jesus' connection to God.

The combination of prayer, Scripture, and grace helped Jesus resist evil and temptation. For example, in response to each of Satan's temptations, Jesus

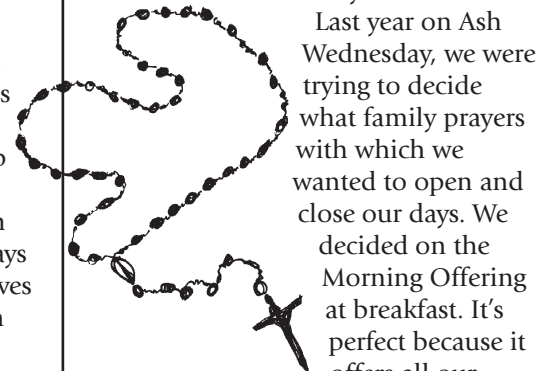


referred to Scripture – God's word – for his instructions and acted upon them. When Satan quoted Psalm 91 for his own evil purpose, Jesus knew, understood, and acted on God's real message. Staying in prayerful contact with God, acting on his instructions in Scripture, and seeking his grace will help us resist evil, too.

**What can a parent do?** Help your child to identify a couple of temptations that continuously turn her away from God. Brainstorm ways she can resist them. Arming ourselves ahead of time makes us stronger in the face of temptation.

### Parent TALK

I have always thought of the Rosary as a private prayer. I guess I thought the kids would think it too tedious to pray it together. I had no idea that my children felt deprived without a family Rosary.



Last year on Ash Wednesday, we were trying to decide what family prayers with which we wanted to open and close our days. We decided on the Morning Offering at breakfast. It's perfect because it offers all our

efforts of the day to God. For the evening, I suggested the Guardian Angel prayer but that idea was greeted with silence.

"The Rochas say the Rosary at night together," said Kara. "How come we never say the Rosary together?" said Tessa. "You only ever say it by yourself." They looked at me like I was keeping a great treasure to myself.

Who knew? Now we pray the Rosary together every night.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**February 8 – St. Jerome Emiliani (1537).** While serving as a militia officer for Venice, St. Jerome Emiliani was imprisoned by the enemy. In prison he taught himself how to pray and was inspired to escape safely. In response, he became a priest and with his own resources opened orphanages, a homeless shelter, and a hospital.

**February 18 – Ash Wednesday.** The first day of the six-week season of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as

a sign of penance. Lent is our chance to amend our ways and become a "new creation" at Easter.

**February 23 – St. Polycarp (156).** Bishop of Smyrna, Asia-Minor, St. Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle St. John and a friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch. He faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by pagans and a government opposed to his religion. Before he was martyred, he thanked God for making him worthy of a martyr's death.



### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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