

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 4 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 20

WE CELEBRATE LENT: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Objectives

- Relate discipline to Lent.
- Explore Lenten fasting and almsgiving.
- Express sorrow for sin, and ask for God's mercy.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experiences), page 152

Ask your child if he or she has ever seen bushes pruned into the shape of animals (possibly at a theme park). Point out to your child that this chapter will talk about the spiritual discipline we need to “keep in shape” and follow Jesus. With your child pray the opening **Prayer** on page 152.

Read the opening page of the chapter on **Spiritual Discipline** and use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to further clarify the meaning of the word *Lent*. The word *Lent* literally means “springtime.” Help your child understand the purpose of the Season of Lent. In the Christian calendar Lent is a time of spiritual preparation for Easter, the celebration of Jesus’ victory over the power of sin and everlasting death. We observe Lent for about forty days as a reminder of the forty days Jesus spent praying and fasting in the desert. The observance of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. We receive ashes on our foreheads as a reminder of our need to repent and refocus our lives on living our baptismal promises.

Ask your child to share some ways he or she knows to make Lent a special time to grow closer to God. In the discussion, use the words *purify* and *discipline*, making sure that your child understands these terms.

Have your child study the photograph and ask: What is this woman doing? (pruning a tree) What might happen to the tree if it isn’t pruned? (Possible responses: Branches might grow wild; fruit might be small and weak.)

Read the **Activity** on page 152 and help your child to create the list mentioned there. Review the page by asking: What are the three most important types of spiritual discipline we practice during Lent? (fasting, prayer, almsgiving)

Step 2: We Build (Doctrine), page 153

Draw your child's attention to the photograph of the stained glass window on page 153, which depicts Jesus praying in the desert. Read the caption aloud. Ask: How do you think Jesus' fasting and praying before the beginning of his public ministry prepared him for what was to come? (Possible answers: He better understood God's will for him; he was more focused on what he was called to do; he put aside everything that might distract him from his mission.)

Read **Lenten Practices** and refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify further the meaning of the highlighted terms.

Read aloud **Catholics Believe** to help your child understand why spiritual discipline is important.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Daily Life), page 154

Review the material taught in this lesson by discussing **Recall, Think and Share**, and **Continue the Journey**. Have your child complete the activity.

Read **We Live Our Faith: At Home and In the Parish**. Try to follow through on the suggestions found there. (Check your parish bulletin for any Lenten devotions, such as Stations of the Cross, and consider participating in one of these devotions.)

Refer to the **Language of Faith** section in the back of the textbook for clarification and review of all highlighted terms.

Complete the **Faith Journal**, pages 39–40.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 155

Remind your child that God's love is stronger than sin and death. No sin is "too big" for God to forgive.

Turn to page 155, and point out the background photograph of the trees in bloom. Ask: How does this picture remind you of Lent? (Possible responses: The flowers are the result of good pruning; they are plentiful like God's love and mercy; the blossoms are signs that the tree has "come back to life," just as we "come back to life" in God during Lent.)

Read **Have Mercy on Me** and explain that the word *Miserere* comes from the Latin Mass and from the beginning of Psalm 51, a penitential psalm written by King David to express sorrow for his wrongdoing. He prays that God will restore him to his good favor and grant him a renewed heart and purified spirit.

Draw attention to the photograph of students praying in a Lenten setting. Ask: How does this photograph remind you of Lent? (Possible response: Prayer is one of the ways we can practice spiritual discipline during Lent.)

Close the lesson praying the **Prayer** (an excerpt from Psalm 51). Then invite your child to take a moment to pray silently, reflecting on the ways he or she hopes to be a better Christian. Pray the closing **Prayer** again. End with either a favorite Lenten hymn or the Sign of the Cross.