

Life to the Full:

Living faith within our families

Monthly newsletter for parents: **March 2019**



Draw Me to Your Presence, O Lord

In the first week of March we celebrate Ash Wednesday, which starts the six-week journey of Lent. Just like Advent is a season of preparation for Christmas, Lent is a season of preparation for Easter. The Ten Ten assembly in the w/c 4th March, teaches children that Christians are called to a deeper commitment to prayer, fasting and giving during Lent. This is so that our faith is deepened and we are renewed ready to receive new life at Easter.

"...your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you." Matthew 6:19

In the scripture passage above, Jesus gives guidance about fasting, praying and giving: that they are about personal renewal, rather than acting for the sake of appearance. Children are encouraged to make commitments for Lent, but it is important to remember that fasting meals is not required by the Catholic church. However, often families and children will consider making small sacrifices during Lent, which you might like to discuss together.

Prayer, fasting and giving can be hard topics to understand – especially for children. Through

the analogy of a winter garden that requires work to ensure new life can blossom in spring, the assembly helps children understand what these three pillars of Lent really mean and how they can help them to prepare for the greatest feast of the Church's year. A version of the garden analogy is below, which you can refer back to with your child throughout Lent.

Our theme for Lent this year is 'Draw Me to Your Presence, O Lord.' As we begin the season of Lent, let that be our prayer for our children.

Prayer

Draw Me to Your Presence,
O Lord.
Please help the garden
of my soul to grow.
Amen

Into the Garden

Children were asked to imagine they were gardeners in winter - pruning back the dead wood, feeding the soil, watching and trusting God that new life would come. Lent gives the opportunity for the same process to take place in their souls.



Pruning is like fasting – just as the gardener needs to prune the flowers to help them grow, so Christians can

choose to fast: to give things up and make sacrifices, making room for God's love to grow.



Feeding the soil is like giving - just as the gardener puts food into the soil to help the roots grow, so

we can give from our resources e.g. money or time, to help others and to nourish our own soul.



Watching and trusting is like praying - just as the gardener watches the garden and waits,

so we can make time for silence and prayer – to allow God the space to grow in us and speak to us.