

FIRST TEACHERS

YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS IN YOUR CHILDRENS LIVES!
JANUARY 2023

Dear parents and guardians, Happy New Year and welcome back from the Diocesan Family Life Commission! This newsletter aims to share some of how our Catholic faith is being taught and practised in school, and hopes to provide some help as you teach your children to grow in faith at home. Last year, during his general audience, Pope Francis said, *"To be a mother or father is not simply a matter of biology; more profoundly, it entails caring for the life of a family."* As parents, grandparents and guardians, we care for our families by teaching our children through example, practicing faith together, loving one another and praying together as a family, some of the very best gifts we can give them!

Carlo Acutis Exhibition and Encounter



Over the coming months, many of our school children will have the opportunity to witness the Blessed Carlo Acutis Exhibition and Encounter (including exposition to the Blessed Sacrament) in the school environment. Carlo was a young man who grew up with a love of the Eucharist and by the age of fourteen he had created a display on Eucharistic miracles that would tour the world, along with a website. He died in 2006 at the age of 15 from leukaemia and was Beatified in

October 2020 leaving his legacy of love to the Eucharist to be shown around the world. His story is a great example to our young people of a teen who was a strong defender of his Catholic faith and treated his peers with dignity and respect.

Explore his life and the Eucharistic Miracles which he wanted to share with the world by looking at the links below with your children at home. Dates for each school cluster to experience the exhibition will be coming soon, so having a bit of background first might be helpful for children.

[MIRACOLI EUCARISTICI - Mostra Internazionale Ideata e Realizzata da Carlo Acutis e Nicola Gori](#)

[The Life of Blessed Carlo Acutis - YouTube](#)

[Who is Carlo Acutis? 10 things you should know about him – EWTN Global Catholic Television Network](#)

February/March - Lent

This year Lent begins on the 22nd February with Ash Wednesday and brings into our focus prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In our family homes, we can explore each one in the upcoming season.

There are many ways we can encourage prayer in our homes this lent and it can be a wonderful experience. Some of us may not be used to praying together as a family or might be looking to enrich our prayer lives further. Young children, especially, love the chance to come together and spend time with their families. There is no 'right' way to start! One way you can begin is with the sign of the cross. This action focuses us on the journey Jesus took and Good Friday. When we bless ourselves, we are reminded of His love, the hope that brings and the faith we have. Another way to focus prayer during Lent is to explore the Stations of the Cross, looking at all the stations or simply one or two at a time. There are plenty of images available online to focus on each station, or involving children in making their own stations is a wonderful way to include them. They could make their own pictures or even 3D stations with found objects; it doesn't have to cost any money. Some further ideas and resources can be found here:



[Doing the Stations of the Cross with your kids - Teaching Catholic Kids](#)
[Children's Stations of the Cross \(cathfamily.org\)](#)
[Share the Journey Stations of the Cross original.pdf \(sciaf.org.uk\)](#)

The famous question, 'What are you giving up for Lent?' often immediately brings food to mind. Of course, fasting CAN be food but it can be many other things. Coming together as a family to think about what we can fast from can be an eye-opening experience. Children often see places where, as a family, we give too much of our energy, more clearly than the adults. We may choose to cut down tv or screen time, bad habits or pursuits that we spend too much time/money on. [101 Practical Fasting Ideas for Lent - Catholic School Chronicle \(nicksenger.com\)](#) In our society of excess, fasting of any kind can be difficult, but introducing our children and teens to sacrifice encourages a deeper gratitude and can bring us closer to God, especially when we use that extra energy towards almsgiving.

In the Book of Tobit, Tobias stated: "Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness ... It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life" (Tob 12:8-9). Encouraging and practising generosity, both practical and of spirit is a wonderful example we can give them. Fundraising together for some of our wonderful Catholic charities or on a smaller scale (perhaps saving and donating the money that you would have spent on those chocolate bars you have given up!) is a wonderful extension of fasting. Of course, we can also sacrifice our time in prayers, or perhaps volunteering help and skills to others in need. Here are links to Missio, Sciaf and Mary's Meals, wonderful charities who look to serve and bless others.

[Homepage | Mary's Meals \(marysmeals.org\)](#)

[Home - Missio](#)

[SCIAF - Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund](#)

From all of us here at the Family Life commission may your Lent be blessed and holy and your Easter be a wonderful celebration of God's sacrifice for us!

[Diocese of Paisley | Marriage & Family | Paisley, UK \(rcdop.org.uk\)](#)