

# FIRST TEACHERS

YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS IN YOUR CHILDRENS LIVES!  
MARCH/APRIL 2025

Dear parents and guardians, we have hit mid term already and here at the Marriage and Family Life Commission we are preparing to enter the Lenten season! For this designated Holy Year of 2025, the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> March, where we focus on three main aspects of our spirituality: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We want to support the wonderful teaching our schools provide during Lent by encouraging you and your families in a walk of faith by offering easy and practical ideas which help bring our beliefs alive in our homes.



## Prayer

It can be a challenge to re-invigorate or introduce prayer into our daily family life. There is no 'right' way to start to pray, however an easy option could be to try one of the prayers created for use during the Jubilee Year. There is an official prayer from Pope Francis and two lovely prayers collated by the Diocesan education department for use across the Diocese and beyond. These simple prayers would be ideal to say together as a family to start or end the day with our Lord.



### Diocesan Jubilee Prayer for Children

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for loving me so much. Help me to remember that you are always with me and that your love for me will never end.

In this Jubilee Year, help me to be a Pilgrim of Hope to others, sharing your love and hope with my family, friends and everyone that I meet. I pray that I will be ready to follow your example of helping others by showing love, kindness and fairness to all and caring for the precious gift of our common home.

Fill my heart with your joy and peace and keep me close to you always.

Amen

Diocesan Jubilee Prayer for Young People

Father in Heaven,

Help us in this Jubilee Year, as Pilgrims of Hope,  
to increase our Faith in You  
to place our Hope in You and  
to Love You more.

We place our hope in You in the certainty  
that nothing and no one can ever separate us  
from Your love.

Help us in this Jubilee Year, as Pilgrims of Hope,  
to grow closer to You  
and to experience your merciful love.

May we be Signs of Hope for our world by:

being peacemakers;  
welcoming new life;  
praying for those deprived of their  
freedom;  
caring for the sick;  
welcoming migrants escaping  
danger and looking for safety;  
encouraging the young and valuing  
the elderly;  
reaching out to the poor at home  
and across the world;  
caring for Your Creation and working  
for justice in the developing world.

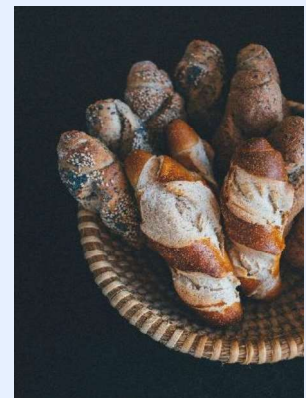
To you our God,  
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Journeying through the Stations of the Cross is another way prayer can be explored during Lent, here are further ideas and resources can be found here: [Doing the Stations of the Cross with your kids](#), [Children's Stations of the Cross](#), [Share the Journey Stations of the Cross original.pdf \(sciaf.org.uk\)](#)

## **Fasting**

Why are we called to fast during lent? To be more like Christ! Jesus spent 40 days in the desert fasting before embarking on his redemptive ministry and we are asked to imitate this before our Easter celebrations of Christ's triumph over death. 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 on junk food, tv or screen time, bad habits or pursuits that we spend too much time/money on. [101 Practical Fasting Ideas for Lent](#) 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.

### **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 an inspiring example we can give them, perhaps by going to Confession together as a family and making it a regular habit. Furthermore, 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. Mary's Meals suggest sharing the Mary's Meals prayer with children as well as encouraging them to get involved in their campaign [Move For Meals | Mary's Meals UK](#) which is a great opportunity for a class to get outdoors and support Mary's Meals.

#### ***Prayer for Mary's Meals***

##### ***Our Father,***

***Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us for the times when we take more than our share of the bread that belongs to all.***

***Let us help You fill the starving with good things, not with scraps from our table.***

***Teach us how to share what is not ours to keep.***

***Clothe us with Your love that we may complete each good work You created us to do.***

***Place in our hearts Your compassion for each starving child and use our little acts of love so that they starve no more. Amen.***

You could also choose to support SCIAF's Lenten Wee Box appeal which this year aims to offer practical support and build peace in active conflict zones in Colombia. [SCIAF 2025 WEE BOX Appeal | SCIAF](#) and some broader Lenten ideas can be found here, [Fasting, giving, praying: 25+ ideas for what kids & teens can do for Lent, RESOURCES | Missio Scotland](#)

Whichever ways you choose to observe and practise your faith this Lent all of us here at the Family Life commission hope that your Lenten season is blessed and holy and that your Easter be a wonderful celebration of Christ's sacrifice for us!

