

6th & 7th Grade Homestudy Lesson #17

Lent

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is to help you develop a deeper awareness of the season of Lent; its traditions and significance to the spiritual life of a Christian.

TEACHING

DYING TO SELF

Sacrifice is a word you hear a lot in the Catholic Church. In the Old Testament we read about Abraham and many others making sacrifices to God. We know that Jesus sacrificed His life for us on the cross.

At Mass we offer up the bread, wine and ourselves as a sacrifice to God. The word sacrifice comes from two Latin words, “sacer,” which means “sacred or holy” and “facere,” which means “to do or to make.” **So you could say that when we make sacrifices, we are doing something holy, or making ourselves more holy.** When we make sacrifices, we choose to die to ourselves. This means that we say what we want is less important than what someone else wants, or what God wants. We are being selfless, which is the opposite of selfish, and is sacred and holy in the eyes of God. This is exactly what Jesus did when He was crucified for us and exactly how He calls us to live our lives. The season of Lent reminds us of the temptations Jesus faced in the desert and takes us through Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, which eventually led to his crucifixion and death. It sounds like a sad time, but the Church gives us many things to pray about during this time and to grow personally by learning from Jesus’ example. The Church challenges us to focus on three main things during Lent: **fasting, almsgiving and prayer.** Most of us probably have given, or tried to give, something up for Lent. It is one of those traditions that has been passed down over the years but we don’t really know why we do it. How does not eating chocolate for forty days help us grow closer to God? It helps us because it is a sacrifice. We are giving something up that we love, and we’re doing it for God. When Jesus died for us on the cross, He did it to show us that He loved us more than anything. When we give up chocolate or soda or TV, we are telling God that even though we love the chocolate or the soda or TV, we love Him so much more. You can see why the more you love the thing that you give up for Lent, the bigger the sacrifice it will be, and the more you’ll grow during the Lenten season.

In addition to making sacrifices to God, we are called to make sacrifices for others.

Almsgiving is when we give to the poor and less fortunate. This is a great thing to do all the time, but especially during Lent. It would be great to keep the money you save

from not buying soda, or to save up your allowance, and donate it to a charity. It would also be good to volunteer at a senior center or soup kitchen. We can also practice acts of charity in our own homes and schools, by being kind and loving toward our parents, siblings and friends. **Remember, you are making a sacrifice any time you think of someone else ahead of yourself.** Finally, the Church teaches us that sacrifice doesn't always just have to mean giving something up, but it can mean that we do something extra. **We are also asked to improve our prayer lives during Lent.** Maybe you could wake up ten minutes earlier and make sure you pray before you start your day, ask your parents if they could take you to one daily mass during the week, or even read the Bible for 15 minutes a day. All of these things will help make your Lenten experience one that will help you grow closer to God and strive for holiness in your life.

QUESTIONS

1. What is sacrifice?
2. What is the purpose of the liturgical season of lent?
3. How does giving something up for lent help you to grow closer to God and become a better person?

4. What will you give up for lent this year? What will you do to pray more this lenten season?

5. What is almsgiving? What can you do to practice almsgiving during lent?

SEND

Watch the following videos about lent and answer the question.

[What's the Purpose of Lent by Fr. Mike Schmitz](#)

[Picking a Thing for Lent by Fr. Mike Schmitz](#)

What is something that is necessary for you to give up this lent? Why is it necessary?