

St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows
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Home Study Lesson 7

LENT

GOAL

The goal of this Life Night gives both teens an opportunity to break open the season of Lent, specifically the theme of sacrifice.

TEACHING

SACRIFICE

This lesson will talk about the season of Lent and what the season means for us. Although we might understand the basic themes of Lent, we are called, each year to dive deeper into what God has to tell us. In this lesson, we want to focus on one of the themes of Lent—sacrifice.

Lent is the perfect time to focus not only on Christ's sacrifice on the cross but also on our need to sacrifice things – big and small – for God. The very notion of sacrifice is misunderstood by many in modern culture; the pervading mindset is to “get as much as I can to be secure and comfortable.” That being said, a faith founded on sacrifice, a weekly Mass experience which is a timeless sacrifice, and a religion guided by a Pope and priests who are living sacrifices can be confusing to say the least.

During Lent the Church encourages us to embrace, even more deeply, the invitation to sacrifice our lives (**Romans 12:1-2**) and to live entirely for Christ (**Galatians 2:20**). Lent is a liturgical season in which we are challenged to “get comfortable with being uncomfortable.” This “discomfort” might be experienced in greater prayer time with our family members, but it's a discomfort that is well worth it.

“What are you giving up?”

The hot question among Catholics is usually “What are you giving up?” Then debates ensue over whether or not - on Sundays - you can enjoy what you gave up, etc. Do we fully understand the purpose of the sacrifice to begin with? The key to understanding the true importance of sacrifice (and the heights of holiness that can be achieved through the humble practice), is to first realize that the possible displeasure or discomfort that may accompany physical sacrifice is, also, a form of prayer.

Sacrifice might not be comfortable or pleasant, but it is primal and natural. God is the Creator. We are His creation. Whenever the creatures offer creation back to the Creator, it not only honors God as God, it reaffirms to God, our family, our neighbor(s) and ourselves that God is God and we are not. In this way, sacrifice is the most important and most natural thing that we do.

Sacrifice of food or drink, for instance – either voluntary sacrifice of something we enjoy or the prayerful act of fasting – flow out of the virtue of temperance.

Abstaining from meat on Friday, therefore, is an act that not only helps us grow in discipline but in virtue. This is not just an act of penance for our sins, but an act of self-sacrifice on our way to greater self-mastery (**2 Timothy 1:7**).

Probably all cradle Catholics know not to eat meat on Fridays, or to give something up during Lent, but odds are that very few truly appreciate the penitential reasoning why they do what they do for forty days, (much less the significance of walking around with charred palm remains a-front their foreheads at the onset).

The season of Lent is penitential and the action of repentance is not only turning away from something bad (90 degrees) but also turning toward something good (another 90 degrees)...literally, turning away from the occasion of sin and turning to the light that is Christ.

Close with a reflection on the Stations of the Cross: You may use the reflection below, written by ACE Advocates for Catholic Schools, or your favorite Stations of the cross reflection

<https://ace.nd.edu/files/resources/StationsoftheCrossReflections-ACEAdvocates.pdf>

QUESTIONS

1. What does giving up candy, or soda, or swearing do for my spiritual life?
2. How does our sacrificing during Lent prepare us for heaven?
3. How can we use our fasting as an act of prayer?

