

March 2023

Have you ever noticed how we like to characterise different months and seasons? For example, January is painted as the longest, bluest month of the year – so much so that ‘Blue Monday’ is a term coined to refer to the third Monday in January. Other months and seasons similarly characterised include February – romance and playfulness due to Valentine’s Day and being the shortest, quirkiest month; and October – pumpkin-spice and all things nice! But these characterisations don’t leave much room for nuance. Even the bluest Januarys will have some light, and the most playful of Februarys will have harder moments. And for most people, October doesn’t consist of endless pumpkin-spice lattes!

This year, the month of March is taken up wholly with the Liturgical Season of Lent. In the Church, Lent is represented by the colour purple, worn by priests and seen on the altar. Purple, like the season of Lent, symbolises a time of prayer, penance and preparation for Jesus’ death on the cross and Resurrection at Easter. It offers a chance for us to reflect on our relationship with God and make a fresh start as the Church focuses on the three pillars of Lent, almsgiving, fasting and prayer – or as children in school will know them, GIVE, ACT, PRAY:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

But even in this somewhat austere season, there is room for nuance! On the fourth Sunday of Lent, called Laetare Sunday, Catholics are invited to celebrate! ‘Laetare’ is the Latin word for ‘rejoice’ and on this day only, the purple of Lent is swapped for rose pink, symbolising hope and a reminder of what is to come on Easter Sunday. This Sunday is also Mothering Sunday, where historically believers would return to the mother church where they received the Sacrament of Baptism.

This newsletter shares some of the content children will experience in school throughout March and suggests ways for you to engage with them about it. We hope and pray that your Lent will be a time of prayer, penance and preparation, but with lots of opportunities for rejoicing too!

Jesus, Be The Centre

The song '**Jesus, Be The Centre**' by Michael Frye (<https://vineyardsongs.com/songs/be-the-centre/>) is the theme for the assemblies throughout Lent. Why not watch our lyric video with your child here:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

Jesus, Be The Reason That I Live

As part of our Lent series, we are pleased to welcome Fr Paschal Uche, who will share some thoughts on the theme for each week. Take a look below at his final message, for the 'Jesus, Be The Reason That I Live' assembly:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

Read on for more details about our Lent series!

The Shape of Lent

Each week, assemblies focus on a different line from the Lent song (see our lyric video above) and explore the Sunday Gospel in relation to it. To gain an idea of the shape of Lent (including 2 weeks of February), we have provided some more information about each assembly, a link to where you can read the Gospel and some prompt questions which you might like to explore further with your child/ren:

Jesus, Be The Centre

w/c 20th February

In the first of our Lent assembly series, a game about spring cleaning helps children to learn that now is the time for a fresh start in their relationship with God. We can look towards Jesus, our hope, and invite Him to be at the centre of our lives and our Lenten journey by making time to GIVE, ACT and PRAY.

Matthew 6:1-6,16-18:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A1-18&version=NRSVACE>

- What will you do to GIVE, *ACT, PRAY this Lent?
- What did Jesus say about our behaviour when we GIVE, ACT and PRAY?
(Be careful not to show off; don't look miserable and tell everyone how fed up you are, instead, be like God's secret helper!)

** Note that children are not asked to 'fast' from food during Lent, so any discussion of this needs to be sensitively articulated.*

Jesus, Be My Path

w/c 27th February

The Gospel this week shows Jesus in the wilderness, resisting temptation and putting God's way above all things. Through a quiz involving resisting temptation and making good choices, this assembly helps children learn that we can trust in Jesus to be our path and the Holy Spirit to be our guide, leading us to God the Father.

Matthew 4:1-11:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4%3A1-11&version=NRSVACE>

- How did Jesus resist temptation?
(He trusted God to give Him what He needed and to look after Him.)
- What should we do when we are tempted to do things we know are wrong?
(Like Jesus, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us make good choices.)

Jesus, Be My Light

w/c 6th March

The Gospel this week describes the Transfiguration, when the disciples had a mountain-top revelation of Jesus as the Son of God. Through a party game which children won't want to end, they will realise that they can have their own revelation as they read God's Word: God tells us to listen to Jesus and wants us to shine with His light.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+17%3A1-9&version=NRSVACE>

- On the mountain-top, the disciples saw Jesus in a completely new way, but why did they offer to build tents for Him, Elijah and Moses?
(Perhaps they wanted to contain the glory of God so they could keep hold of it, just like we might try to keep hold of the feeling after a party!)
- How can we shine with the light of God's love during Lent?
(When we know that God loves us, we can shine with His love for others as we GIVE, ACT, and PRAY.)

Jesus, Be My Source

w/c 13th March

Through the Gospel where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman, this assembly helps children to learn that just like our bodies are thirsty for water, our souls are thirsty for God! They will learn to invite Jesus to be their source, who sends them the 'living water' of the Holy Spirit.

John 4:5-16,19-26,39-42:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4%3A5-42&version=NRSVACE>

- What are our 'souls'?

(Our souls are a gift from God, the innermost part of who we are; the part that communicates with God.)

- What can our thirsty souls drink?
(Jesus described the Holy Spirit as 'living water' because the Holy Spirit is like water for our souls, and helps us grow closer to God.)

Jesus, Be My Vision

w/c 20th March

There is more than one way of seeing! Through the Gospel account of Jesus healing a man born blind, children learn that with Jesus as our vision, we can see the world through Jesus' eyes of love and faith as we grow in friendship with God.

John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+9%3A1-38&version=NRSVACE>

- Jesus healed the blind man so he could see with his eyes, but what was the other way in which the blind man began to see?
(When Jesus revealed Himself as the 'Son of Man' – the Saviour who had been promised – the man's eyes were opened to the truth and became eyes of faith. He believed straight away and worshipped Jesus.)
- How can Jesus help us to see in a new way?
(As we grow in friendship with God and invite Jesus to become our vision, we start to see the world through His eyes of love and faith. He helps us look for opportunities to GIVE, ACT, PRAY!)

Jesus, Be The Reason That I Live

w/c 27th March

The final assembly of Lent shares the dramatic account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Through this, and discussions about reasons, children will learn that Jesus wants to be the reason that we live: He knows that putting Him at the centre is how we can truly live life to the full!

John 11:1,6-9,13-17,20-27,33-45:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+11%3A1-45&version=NRSVACE>

- Why does Jesus want to be the reason that we live?
(He knows that putting Him at the centre is how we can truly live life to the full!)

- How can we keep on with our Lenten preparations into the holidays?
(Keeping on giving, acting, and praying - even beyond the end of Lent! Because when Jesus is the reason that we live, we want to GIVE, ACT, PRAY not just during Lent but all year round!)

Prayer

*Jesus said to the man, "Do you believe...?"
...The man said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him.
John 9:37-38*

Inspired by the man's confident statement of belief in the Gospel, the daily classroom prayers for the week commencing 20th March help children to explore some 'I believe' statements from the Apostles' Creed.

Here are some ideas from the prayers to help inspire your home prayer times:

'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us and everything you created in your loving care.
Thank you for our beautiful earth, which we need to take care of.
Help us to care for our planet in small ways each day.
Amen*

'I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
You gave us Jesus, your Son, to be the Light of the World and to set an
example for us to follow.
Help us to be like Jesus and bring joy and peace to others.
Amen*

'I believe in the Holy Spirit.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to guide us.
Holy Spirit, we ask that you fill us with hope and joy so that we can live life to
the full.
Amen*

'I believe in the holy Catholic Church.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
We ask for your blessing on the Catholic communities we belong to.
Help us to share our belief with others by talking about Jesus and shining with
the light of your love.
Amen*

'I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.'

Dear God,

We believe that you hold us in your loving care.

Thank you for sending your Son Jesus, who died and rose again to give us life everlasting.

Holy Spirit, help us to live as Jesus lived, showing love and care for everyone we meet.

Amen

Another prayer that you might like to use in family prayer times during Lent is below. It includes the Lenten practices **GIVE, ACT, and PRAY** and encourages us to remember to place Jesus at the centre of all we say and do:

**Jesus,
Be the centre.
As I continue my journey through Lent,
I welcome you into my heart.
Be my guide as I GIVE to others.
Be my strength as I ACT by making good choices.
Be my friend as I PRAY and get to know you more.
Amen**