



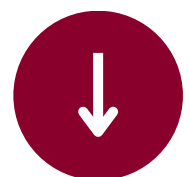
Catholic
Apostolate
Center

Lent Activities

*For Youth and
Young Adults*



A guide to
catechetical
activities
according to age
and learning
ability for
children, youth,
and young
adults.



What to expect:

Ages 3-11



- From ages three to seven, children are in the pre-operational stage of development and can understand symbols and imaginative thought, but not others' points of view.
 - Children can begin to understand and imagine what it was like for Jesus to walk with the heavy cross, even if they do not comprehend the full depth of his sacrifice.
- From ages seven to eleven, children move into what is known as the concrete operational stage, which helps children think more logically, systematically, and deeply.

Catechetical Tips

- Ask children questions that allow them to think about others' perspectives
- Ask hard questions like "What was Jesus' relationship to God the Father?" and answer children's questions when they ask things like "does God forgive me always?"

This allows children to begin to tease out more complex theological and pastoral questions that will come up in pre-adolescence and can be understood more fully in adolescence and young adulthood





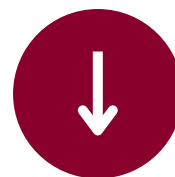
What to expect:

Ages 12-19

- Middle and high school students are in what is known as the formal operational stage of cognitive development.
- In this stage, pre-teen and teenage thinking becomes more abstract, complex, and organized, drawing from multiple points of view. These are all critical in faith development.
- This stage allows for deeper self-reflection, helping adolescents understand their faith journey, where it is, and where they would like it to go.
- Despite their ability to have a more complex understanding of faith, experiences like direct service also profoundly resonate with adolescents because they can connect human experiences to abstract thoughtful concepts.

Catechetical Tips

- Adolescents are able to put themselves directly into the Bible and with their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. Symbolic thought helps strengthen the previous understandings of Church signs and symbols.
- Ministers must accompany teens individually and communally to help them cope with the stresses of adolescent life while also growing closer to Christ and the Church.



What to expect:

Ages 18-35



- Some teens can cognitively develop more quickly than others, but most teens are closer to full development by the time they are nineteen or twenty.
- Some master formal operational skills by the time they graduate high school, but most do not.
- We must account for those who need further faith development and guide them in their faith journey while also inviting those who have already begun the process to go deeper into the complexity of their faith life.
- We must be centered on the encounter with Christ and reflecting with peers to experience community to come to know Christ and the Church more.

"Whenever you are enthused about life in common, you are capable of great sacrifices for others and for the community. Isolation, on the other hand, saps our strength and exposes us to the worst evils of our time"

-Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, #110

Activities

Ages 3-11



- **Lent Promise Poster**
 - Each child and adult decorates a poster to remind themselves of their Lenten practices.
 - This can also have a component of keeping track of if you did it. For example, use check marks for each week of Lent
- **Lent Prayer Bowl**
 - Every morning, have a routine of where children write down their prayer intentions (not for themselves) and place them in a designated bowl. Each week, have the child bring those intentions to Mass and on Easter.
 - This encourages prayer for others and nurtures children in actions oriented to helping others, and empathy.





Activities

Ages 12-19

- **Prayer Buddies / Partners**
 - Teens will pray for each-other and regularly check-in over text, call, and in-person conversations throughout Lent.
- **Direct Service**
 - Engage in some form of direct service with a theological reflection about giving of one's self with almsgiving of materials and time.
 - Example: volunteering at soup kitchen, assisting with clothing/food pickup, or delivering food to the homeless.
- **Family Examen**
 - Have a family examen once or twice a week to gather in prayer as a family and consider how one's daily actions affect themselves and others around them.
 - This strengthens the domestic Church.



Activities

Ages 18-35



- Confession Prayer Service or Healing Mass
 - This can go across age groups, but a confession prayer service with readings on mercy and forgiveness with priests to hear confessions can be helpful for adolescents and young adults.
- Lent Book Club
 - Any book can be chosen, but the themes of Lent can inform which book is selected.
 - Young adults can meet in small groups to pray and discuss.
- Reaching Out
 - Young adults can connect to members on the fringes of the parish, like the elderly, and invite them to events and prayer groups to help others come closer to Christ as a form of service.

