



This year, we will celebrate/observe Valentine's Day on Thursday, February 12th.

-On Thursday, 2/12, students may wear a red/pink/valentine shirt with their regular uniform bottoms. Valentine accessories may be worn, as well!

Our class will be celebrating with a valentine card exchange on **2/12/26**. Cards can be store bought or homemade. Cards can incorporate a "treat" like a sucker, tattoo, or eraser that is meant to go with the card. **Please note: NO extra treat bags, baked goods, gifts for students, etc. will be allowed.** If sent in, they will be returned back home.

If your child is participating in the card exchange, they must include every student in the class. Your student should only fill out the **from:** portion and **SHOULD NOT** write classmates' names on their cards. We will make something to collect our valentines together, so there is no need to bring something from home.

Our class counts are:

K-	<u>28</u>	students and	<u>2</u>	teachers/aides
1st-	<u>28</u>	students and	<u>2</u>	teachers/aides
2nd-	<u>20</u>	students and	<u>5</u>	teachers/aides
3rd-	<u>26</u>	students and	<u>2</u>	teachers/aides
4th-	<u>23</u>	students and	<u>1</u>	teachers/aides
5th-	<u>15</u>	students and	<u>1</u>	teachers/aides



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This year 6th, 7th, and 8th grade will be celebrating with various in-classroom and digital activities to incorporate the joy of Valentine's Day into our typical lessons. **If your student would like to bring in valentine cards, that is fine, but please be sure they have one for each child in the class.** The upper hall teachers will work to make this day special for our older students in the school building.

Please note: NO extra treat bags, baked goods, gifts for students, etc. will be allowed. If sent in, they will be returned back home.

Thank you,

Mrs. Kermes

Ms. Schwochow

Mrs. Overdorff

Class Counts: 6th- 16 students and 1 teachers

7th- 12 students and 1 teachers

8th- 18 students and 1 teachers

FATHERS OF ST. JOSEPH

St. Leonard Youth Retreat Center



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\$ 125 PER CHILD**



SCAN ME

After-school Activities February, March, April 2026

We have reached the time of year where after-school activities are ready to begin! In addition to Drama Club for grades 5-8, this year we will be having "drop-in" style activities each week for our students. *No signing up, no cost, no commitment.* All students can choose on a week-by-week basis if they would like to come and participate based on their availability and/or the type of activity being offered.

Grades K-4		Grades 5-8	
Day of the Week:	TUESDAYS	Day of the Week:	FRIDAYS
Time:	Dismissal until 3:00 (pickup is at Door D- the teachers will walk the students out)	Time:	Dismissal until 3:15 (pickup is at Door D)

Grades K-4 Dates and Topics:

2/10/26	Let's Build with Legos
2/17/26	Group Dance Fit Class with Mrs. Jenkins
2/24/26	Tinker and Build in the Makerspace
3/3/26	Directed Drawing
3/10/26	Games and Fun
3/17/26	Arts and Crafts
3/24/26	Let's Build with Legos
3/31/26	Tinker and Build in the Makerspace
4/14/26	Group Dance Fit Class with Mrs. Jenkins
4/21/26	Arts and Crafts
4/28/26	Directed Drawing

Grades 5-8 Dates and Topics:

Dates:	2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/20, 3/27, 4/17, 4/24
Topics:	The following offerings will be available each Friday of these sessions:
	Chess
	"Card Club"
	Escape Boxes/Escape Games
	Board Games/Card Games
	Technology Deconstruction
	Hand-sewing skills (stitches, buttons, hems, etc.)



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2026

St. Joseph School, Amherst
Mrs. Amy Makruski, Principal

Thoughtful Moments

St. Onesimus

Born in Phrygia and employed as a slave to Philemon of Colossae, Turkey. St. Onesimus met St. Paul while running from Philemon for robbing him. Something about St. Paul's preaching touched St. Onesimus and he converted immediately. St. Paul adopted him as a spiritual son, freeing Onesimus from slavery. After making amends, St. Onesimus became a companion and associate in St. Paul's mission to spread the Gospel — including delivering one of his epistles!



Symbols in the Mass

Ever notice how many symbols are used in the Mass? Kneeling, shaking hands, the blessing of the water and wine, the elevation of the host. Each is an action in itself, but also has another, deeper meaning. They not only help us to experience Jesus' Last Supper but also represent the many ways God is present in our lives.

"Purification! You and I certainly do need purification.

Atonement and, more than atonement, love."

St. Josemaria Escriva



Lent is a season of renewal that invites us to step back from distractions and return to the heart of our faith. It's a good time to help children see how prayer, the sacraments, charity, and service reveal God at work in our lives.

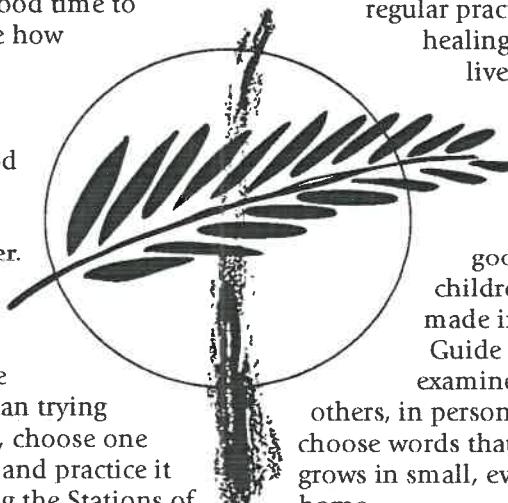
Embrace prayer. Lent is an ideal time to strengthen prayer within the family. Rather than trying to do everything, choose one shared devotion and practice it faithfully. Praying the Stations of the Cross, reading the Gospel of the day, or praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy together can anchor daily life in God, even when time is limited.

Prioritize the sacraments. The sacraments are living encounters with

Christ that restore and sustain us. Renewing our commitment to Sunday Mass and making Confession a regular practice brings clarity, healing, and grace to our lives. These habits quietly shape our hearts and choices.

Refresh charity. Lent is a good time to remind children that everyone is made in God's image. Guide youngsters to examine how they speak to others, in person and online, and choose words that build up. Charity grows in small, everyday moments at home.

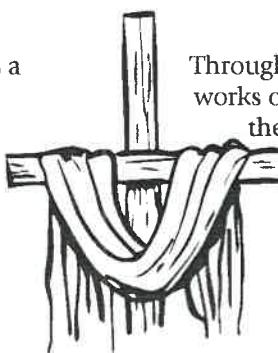
Encourage service. Holiness leads naturally to service. Children can learn this through simple acts: helping at home, being patient with siblings, or sharing their allowance. These small practices form generous hearts.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics use violet or purple in churches during Lent?

Similar to Advent, Lent is a season of preparation and hopeful expectation. Rather than anticipating Christ's birth, the Church prepares for the celebration of His Resurrection, when the saving promises announced at Christmas reach their fulfillment.

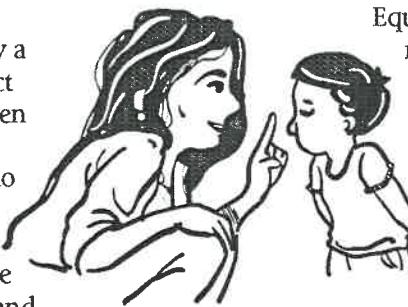


Through prayer, fasting, penance, and works of charity, the faithful unite themselves to Christ's forty days in the desert. The use of violet or purple during Lent reflects this spirit of repentance, sober reflection, and interior preparation, while also recalling Christ's kingship and sacrificial love.

Turn conflicts into teachable moments

Listening well is a foundational skill for healthy family life, especially during moments of disagreement or high emotion. Parents play a crucial role in teaching children that conflict does not have to result in hurt feelings. When family members feel respected and understood, conversations are more likely to lead to resolution rather than resentment.

One way to teach this skill is to frame listening as "playing detective." Children are encouraged to listen quietly, remain calm, and pay close attention in order to understand the full story before responding. When someone feels heard, they are far



more willing to listen in return.

Equally important is teaching children to confirm rather than assume. Misunderstandings often arise when we think we know what another person means or intends. Parents can model and encourage phrases such as, "Can you help me understand?" or "So what I'm hearing is..." These simple habits promote clarity, empathy, and respect.

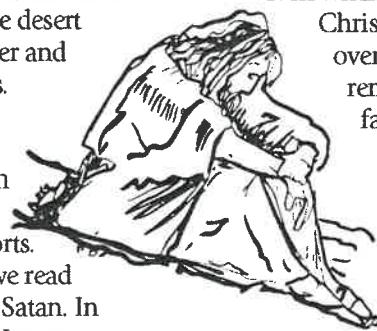
Over time, practicing attentive listening transforms everyday conflicts into opportunities for growth, deeper trust, and stronger family relationships.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 4:1-11, Following Christ in Lent

During the season of Lent, the Church accompanies Jesus into the desert through forty days of prayer and fasting, excluding Sundays. Over these weeks, we encounter temptation, particularly the temptation to grow weary or to abandon our spiritual efforts.

In this Gospel passage, we read of Jesus being tempted by Satan. In responding to these trials, Jesus confronted the temptations faced by every human heart and showed us how to resist them: choosing self-control over selfishness, serving God rather than demanding that God serve us, and remaining faithful to the Father's plan

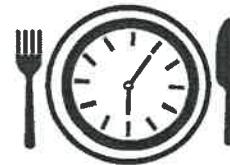


even when it is hard. In doing so, Christ offers a clear model for overcoming temptation and remaining steadfast in faith.

What can a parent do? Encourage children to make age-appropriate Lenten offerings that help them to think, act, and love like Jesus. Encourage them to say only kind words, save the last serving of dessert for someone else, and help around the house. When they feel tempted to misbehave, urge them to pray to be good. If they stay close to Jesus, He will lead them to victory.

Parent TALK

In our home, family dinner a priority. It is a daily opportunity to reconnect and be present to one another.



Our oldest daughter, Kara, often struggled to arrive at the table

on time, which became a frequent source of frustration.

Rather than turning the issue into a power struggle, I explained why family dinner matters and why I expected her to be there on time. Kara said that she felt overwhelmed by homework and found it difficult to stop once she had started working. I explained that learning to manage time well is an important part of growing up, and that breaking for dinner can actually improve focus and productivity later. After reflecting, Kara proposed her own solution: she would start her homework earlier by limiting screen time after school. Then she could make dinner on time.

The conversation ended not with resentment, but with a shared plan and mutual understanding.

Feasts & Celebrations

February 2 – The Presentation of the Lord (1st Century). Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple forty days after His birth, and Simeon praised God for revealing the Savior (Luke 2:29-32).

February 6 – St. Paul Miki and Companions (1597). St. Paul Miki, a Jesuit missionary in Japan, was arrested along with 25 other Catholics and forced to walk more than 300 miles to Nagasaki where they were crucified. They preached the whole journey and embraced their crosses praising God.

February 18 – Ash Wednesday. Ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. This first day of Lent is a day of abstinence from meat and fasting – one regular meal and two meals that together don't equal a full meal.

February 19 – St. Barbatus of Benevento (682). Born near Benevento, Italy, in 612, St. Barbatus preached against the violent pagan practices there. When Emperor Constans II besieged the city, they repented, the city was spared, and Barbatus became their bishop.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)



= a day of fasting and abstinence from meat



= a day of abstinence from meat.

Family Lent Calendar 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				February		
22	23	24	25	18 Ash Wednesday	19	20
Stay after church and pray for a holy Lent.	Display an image of Jesus to keep focused on Him.	Practice patience — patiently!	Have everyone pick a person or situation in the news to pray for at dinner.	Attend Mass together. Wear the cross of ashes all day.	Help children choose Lenten promises of prayer, penance, and almsgiving.	Choose a family Lenten sacrifice — ex. giving up desserts, praying together, giving to charity.
7 March	2	3	4	26	27	28
Stop to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory after Mass.	Pick a Beatitude to work on together this month (Matthew 5:3-11).	Set up a good deed jar: For every good deed performed, add a jellybean. Enjoy on Easter.	Send a card to someone who needs cheering up.	Commit to charitable speech: if it's not kind, don't say it.	Family Movie Night Order a cheese pizza and spend time together.	First Saturdays are dedicated to the Blessed Mother. In Mary's honor, pray a family Rosary.
8	9	10	11	5	6	7
After Mass, light a candle for the Pope's intentions.	Encourage everyone to refrain from bickering today.	Before bed, gather before a Crucifix and pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be.	Enjoy pretzels — twisted bread that recalled monks' arms folded in prayer.	Pray one decade of the Rosary together each evening for the rest of Lent.	First Friday Make a brief chapel visit together to console Jesus' Sacred Heart.	First Saturdays are dedicated to the Blessed Mother. In Mary's honor, pray a family Rosary.
15 Laetare Sunday	16	17	18	12	13	14
The priest wears rose to mark the midpoint of Lent. Celebrate with a small treat.	Fill a box with gently used items you no longer need and donate it to charity.	Pray for Catholic school teachers, catechists, and missionaries — all who teach the Faith.	Help everyone examine their consciences with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).	Fill a jar with loose change, then donate it to the poor box at church.	Check how everyone's Lent is progressing. Refresh commitments as needed.	Pray a Chaplet of Divine Mercy for the dying. Find it here: www.usccb.org
22	23	24	19	20	21	22
After Mass, go over the homily in terms children can understand.	Write prayer intentions on slips of paper and place them in a bowl to pray for nightly.	Encourage children to look for a sign of God's love for them. Share at dinner.	St. Joseph's Day Say a special prayer for fathers everywhere. Remember to pray for priests!	St. Joseph's Day Turn off the phones and take out the boardgames. Winner picks dessert!	Family Fun Night Attend Confession together and celebrate God's mercy.	Attend Confession together and celebrate God's mercy.
29 Palm Sunday	30	31	1 April	2	3	4
Place palms around the crosses in your home, symbolizing Christ's victory.	Offer extra prayers tonight for everyone becoming Catholic this year.	Talk about what Lenten practices you want to continue after Easter.	Ask forgiveness of those you may have hurt. Forgive those who have hurt you.	Holy Thursday Make a chapel visit together, fulfilling Jesus' request for our company (Matthew 26:40).	Good Friday Pray the Stations of the Cross together and meditate on each one.	Holy Saturday Renew your baptismal vows as a family to be faithful to God.