

## Lesson for Sunday, February 21, 2021 (The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent)

Dear K-1 Promise Families,

Blessings to each of you. I am praying that you are well and having a good week! Please find below the outline to this week's lesson for your child. Do not hesitate to reach out if you are having difficulty with anything or need clarification.

- We are working this week on the February 21<sup>st</sup> Pflaum Gospel weekly lesson.
- The complete lesson can be found by going to the Holy Family website at [holyfamilyrockland.org](http://holyfamilyrockland.org). Hover over the Menu button on the right corner of the main landing page and then Click on Faith Formation. Next, choose your child's grade level, **Grade K-1 Promise**. Everything you need for the week is found there: (Remember, I will always give you lots of options – you do what you can get to each week based on your family's schedule and your child's abilities.)
  1. Links to the Parent Teaching Guide pages to help you help your children each week.
  2. A digital copy of their lesson (they have the hard copy that you picked up for them)
  3. A video clip and activities to support the lesson.
  4. Prayers: For the season of Lent we will be focusing each day on our Lenten plan that you are making this week with your child. Each night when you say your prayers together spend time reviewing the day – what did you do well – what can you do better tomorrow. Say the Act of Contrition. Discuss your Lenten plan: did you **FAST** from what you said you would, did you make time for more **PRAYER**, did you **GIVE** of yourself generously to others?

**This Sunday's Gospel: Mark 1:12–15** This Sunday we start the new liturgical season of Lent. Remember our big circular calendar that we use in the church to celebrate the different seasons in the Catholic Church. Lent lasts for 40 days and is marked in purple on the calendar. Lent gives us time to think about our lives, the things we aren't doing so well with – our sins and make a plan to do better!

In the Sunday Gospel, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness for forty days. The desert is a place of testing, but it is also a place to be close to God. Jesus' time in the desert calls us to make Lent a season of growth, a season for developing habits that will make us more loving toward God and one another.

**Making a Plan for Lent – Please read this together with your child as we begin the season of Lent (the 40 days that lead up to Holy Week and Easter Sunday).**

On Calvary, on either side of Christ, hung two thieves. Both were equally guilty. Both were sentenced to death. Both were able to talk to Jesus in their last moments. One of the criminals hanging there yelled at Jesus, saying, *"Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us."* The other thief responded, *"Have you no fear of God...? We have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal."* Then he said, *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."* (Luke 23:39-43) Two sinners. Same opportunity for grace. Two different endings. **One thief became bitter. One thief became better.**

People think of Lent as time to give things up. It is a time of penance (A time to be sorry for our sins and try to do better). But the reason for giving good things up, or things you enjoy, is to train yourself so you can give up bad things that hurt your friendship with Jesus. Remember Jesus said: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Lent gives us time to pause and helps brings our sins to our attention so we can work to be better.

The good thief is known as St. Dismas, patron saint of penitent sinners (that's us 😊). His feast day is March 25, deep into the season of Lent, just in time to make a good confession. He knows all about having to own up

to sin and trust in the Lord's mercy. **We will be having Confession here at Holy Family on Sunday, March 21 after the 10:00 AM Mass.** Make sure to include "getting to Confession" when you are making your family Lenten plans.

Put yourself in Dismas' place for just one second. Imagine his guilt, his shame, his pain. Maybe he thought it was too late, that his sins were unforgivable. Now imagine him seeing Our Lord innocently suffer — His patience, His meekness, His concern for others, even in His agony. Dismas now knows that this man can only be God. **With God all things are possible.** Even mercy for him, even to find peace in these last terrible moments. Dismas makes his confession. And Jesus says to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

**Take time this week as a family to discuss what your individual and family Lenten plan will be.**

- **PRAYER:** Look for opportunities to add prayer into your daily lives. (A thank you in the morning for waking up. And Act of Contrition at bedtime and a review of the day – what did you do well – what can you do better tomorrow.)
- **FASTING:** Look for ways that you can "fast" from bad habits and replace them with good gestures, kind words. Make a plan, write it down, commit to it every day.
- **ALMSGIVING:** Give freely of your time and talents during Lent. Help at home, write a letter to a relative, donate to a food pantry or shelter, use your Lenten Rice Bowls to help those less fortunate.

**Whatever your plan for Lent this year, don't be like the thief who became bitter, be like Dismas –  
BE BETTER!**

**Promise (Grades K–1) Lesson Summary:** (The complete lesson can be found on your child's webpage under Parent Guide.) As Lent begins, you and your child will learn about how they can do loving actions and can pray. Talk about loving actions your family can do during Lent and set aside a time for family prayer. Help your child make the prayer box from their Gospel Weekly.

**Lastly, and most important:** Please make a point of signing up to attend 10:00 AM Sunday Mass in person (if your family is comfortable with that) or watching Mass together as a family this week (preferably on Sunday). The easiest way to access the Mass recording is on our website. It is also showing on local cable WRPS. We always want our children to make the connection, like the great Road to Emmaus story in the Bible (Luke 24: 13-35), that we learn the scripture readings and then we celebrate Eucharist in the Mass – even if it is Spiritual Communion during this time of the pandemic.

We miss you! We love you! Please let us know if we can help in any way to make this process as smooth as possible for your family. We continue to pray for the health and safety of all our families and offer prayers of gratitude for all those that are working here in our area and around the world to administer vaccines and aid those affected by the Coronavirus. **God bless you!**

Yours in Christ,  
Mrs. Liz Davis