Lesson: Three Pillars of Lent

Grades: 1-6

Length: 45-60 min.

Resources:

Catholic Online (2012). Retrieved March 6, 2012 from <http://www.catholic.org/clife/lent/faq.php#prayer>

Materials Needed

* Worksheet (provided below)
* Song (<http://youtu.be/0ZFN8TBfgNU>)

Students will be able to:

* State what the three pillars of lent are
* Give a basic explanation of what the pillars mean
* Give examples of how to live out the three pillars of lent in their lives

Procedure

Introduction

* Begin class with prayer (either your own or the one below)
* *Lord, during this Lenten season, may we remember you and all the sacrifices you made for us. Whenever we are faced with difficult decisions and temptation, help us to turn to you and remember to choose the choice that will make you smile. Thank you for your strength and graces. (Take 3-5 prayer intentions) We ask this in your name. Amen.*
* Play the song: *How Great Is Our God* (<http://youtu.be/0ZFN8TBfgNU>)
* Allow for a few moments of silent individual prayer

Body

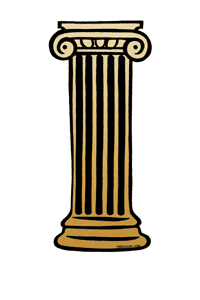
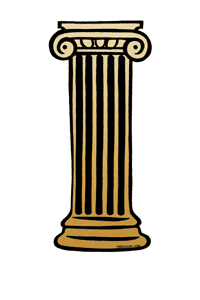
* Lead the students through a discussion on what the 3 pillars of lent are. *For older students you may want to use the worksheet below (version 2) and have them fill in notes and key concepts.*
* As an introduction you may wish to watch this video (better for older students): <http://youtu.be/_UDaD5upTlI>
* Some things you may wish to discuss:
  + The three pillars are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.
  + They are called the three pillars because they are the basis of our actions during lent—they are what hold us up and get us to our goal of becoming a better version of ourselves.
  + **Prayer:** More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord, and help us to know Him better. He can help us with our struggles when we are being tempted.
  + Different ways to pray can include having a personal conversation with God, or praying a rosary or other memorized prayers (Our Father, Glory Be, [Saint Michael Prayer](http://www.ourladyswarriors.org/prayer/michael.htm), [Divine Mercy Chaplet](http://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/mercy/dmmap.htm), etc.)
  + **Fasting:** Fasting traditionally means to go without food or drink for a certain period of time, but there are different levels of fasting. Some adults may drink only water for a day, while some may just give up certain treats like chocolate or coffee. The most common form of fasting is to give up meat on Fridays during lent. “Fasting is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God.” (Catholic Online)
    - Note that we don’t JUST have to give something up for lent. We can also take something extra on. We may decide to exercise more, or to help mom and dad with the chores more. We can take on something that may be kind of difficult for us normally, and then we can rely on God giving us strength to do these extras.
  + **Almsgiving**: Almsgiving, in its most basic sense, is giving money to charity, but that is not where it stops! While giving money to charity is a good thing, we can also give of our time and talents. Our goal is to be thinking of those less fortunate than we are and meet them where they are at.
    - Some other ways we can give alms are to give food to the food bank, help out at the soup kitchen, go visit people at senior’s centers (play games, or sing there), spend some time picking up litter around town, or any kind of volunteer experience.
* **Option A:** At this point, students can fill out a worksheet about what they have learned.
  + As a class, decide on how you can follow the 3 pillars of lent. Decide one way to increase your prayer, one thing to fast from or take on, and one way you may want to give alms. Once you have done that, you can write them in the blanks on the worksheet.
  + Simple examples may be
    - Prayer: start your day off with a decade of the rosary
    - Fasting: if your students get treats for certain tasks, refrain from them until Easter.
    - Almsgiving: everyone bring one item to donate to the food bank as a class donation.
* **Option B:** Students can build their own pillars using the template below.
  + Simply cut out the pieces and glue the tops onto the tabs. To create more of a “Roman” pillar look the students make curl the ends of the top and bottom pieces.
* They can write the names of the three pillars on the separate column and decorate them if they wish.

Closure

* End the class in a prayer of thanksgiving and asking for strength for their Lenten journey.

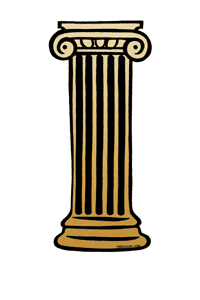
**The Three Pillars of Lent**

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**Pillar #1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What it means:**

**How I can live it out in my life:**

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**Pillar #2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What it means:**

**How I can live it out in my life:**

**Pillar #3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What it means:**

**How I can live it out in my life:**