

# OUR TREASURE

## Living Out A Meaningful Great Lent as a Family

### 1. Recount

Ask your kids to tell you what we talked about at tonight's event. Listen to their version and their impressions.

### 2. Ask Questions

Ask what they think about everything they've seen and done tonight. What did Jesus say about treasure? What do they think about treasure? What does this tell them about God and heaven? What should we do for Great Lent this year?

### 3. Help Interpret

Help the kids think about what it would mean to live out God's love for us in this world. What sorts of things can we do during Great Lent to bring our hearts closer to God (pray, read the Bible, learn about Saints, etc.) and what can we do to spread love in this world and to become more loving ourselves (good deeds, share things, compliment people, thank people, etc.) How will we remember that it's Lent every day?



## What Comes Next?

Now that we have brought our children to the Church, how do we reinforce what they've learned? What we do and say in the home is more important in our children's formation than anything that could be accomplished at a quick parish event or in a Sunday School classroom. Just asking questions on the ride home — what did you learn today? — invites conversation and creates space in the family for talking about God. If we truly wish to raise Christian children whose faith takes root deep in their hearts, let's keep the conversation alive. Let's watch to see God at work in our lives, to see the wisdom of the Scriptures in our everyday circumstances, and to actively engage in the life of the Church, even on an ordinary day with a busy schedule.

Great Lent is beginning on Monday, and this is our opportunity to lead our children through the season with awareness: let's increase our awareness of God and our awareness of prayer. Let's be intentional about showing God's love to one another and to the world, living the fast as it is meant to be lived.



## A Special Prayer for Great Lent

You can pray the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim every time the family prays through Great Lent. It is simple but deep, and can inspire quality family talks. Why does God want us to remove some qualities and replace them with others? How can I stop judging other people and see my own faults – and why should I? (And there are prostrations so it's usually a great hit with kids!)

○ Lord and Master of my life!

Take from me the spirit of laziness, idle curiosity, lust for power, and vain talk.  
(prostration)

But give instead the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your servant.  
(prostration)

Yea, Lord and King! Grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed to the ages of ages.  
(prostration)

Amen.

## Laying Up Treasures in Heaven

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

(Matthew 6: 19-21)

The earthly treasures for which we all work so hard can be destroyed by moths and by rust, and stolen by thieves. Only the treasures we lay up in the Kingdom of God are eternal and true, and will not disappear. Most importantly, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”, meaning that where we invest this effort and this attention is where our heart really is. If we invest in and focus on this world and the money and status we develop here, then our heart is here in this world and not in the Kingdom of God — but if we want our hearts to be with Jesus, we must build our treasure with Him.

How do we do that? We pray, we fast, we go to church, we study the faith and we put it into action by showing love in the world.

The kids have made treasure chests and have bags with 48 gold coins — one for every day of Great Lent and Holy Week. The coins offer ideas for living out Lent, from doing good deeds and speaking kind words, to saying special prayers or thanking God for long lists of blessings. Every day, they can do one of these things and place a coin in the treasure chest, reminding them that they're building up treasure in heaven by living out the faith.

Try to do this every day — and if you miss a day or two, don't worry. Just remember the good things they did and let them 'catch up' as needed. We don't want to make life harder, just richer!

### *Follow up at home with the Scriptures*

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the Gospel of St. Matthew, we find the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. In particular, Chapter 6 lays out how we should engage in Great Lent: how to give alms, how to pray, how to fast, and how to trust in God. You might review this chapter together with your spouse, or as a whole family, considering the importance of these actions. How can we bring them to fruition in our lives during this Great Lent?