

Bunnies, and Chocolate and Eggs ... Oh My!



If Lent and Easter are holy Seasons, then why do we have so many non-religious images and symbols that we associate with them? Why do we give Easter baskets? Or eat jelly

beans? How does a chocolate bunny or colored egg represent the holiest time in our Church year?

Over the years we have used the following symbols and images to teach about our Christian faith:

*bunnies: represent new life in abundance, since bunnies reproduce so quickly.

*eggs: symbolize the tomb where Jesus was lain after death. The hardness of the shell represents the rock and the golden yolk inside represents the promise of Resurrection. Initially prohibited during Lent, early Christians gave colored eggs as gifts on Easter.

*candy: taste and see the goodness of the Lord! (Ps 34:8) Salvation is even sweeter than candy!



*lamb: symbolizing the Lamb of God, Jesus, who took away the sins of the world.

Recipes for Success!

*Make Resurrection Buns to help your younger children understand how Jesus entered the tomb, but was Resurrected leaving the tomb empty on Easter. ⁽¹⁾

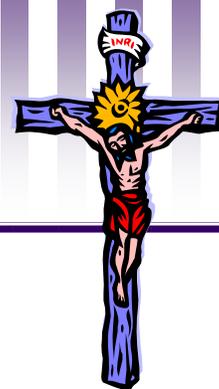
*Empty Tomb Cookies help older children to realize the same Truth, following the Passion and Death of Jesus to His Resurrection. ⁽²⁾

*For More Cool Lenten Activities, go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/CoolLentenActivities>



1. <http://tinyurl.com/ResBuns>
2. <http://tinyurl.com/TombCookies>

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Season of Lent On the Run

by
Beth Belcher

What are *you* giving up for Lent? Why do *I* have to give up something anyway? Growing up, the Season of Lent was always about what I couldn't do, or what I needed to give up. Candy was the usual sacrifice (Easter baskets weren't that far away!) until I realized how bad soda was for me, and then carbonated drinks became my favorite sacrifice. You know, kill two birds with one stone; do a little something and get healthy at the same time. Nothing too hard, but nothing too easy either, or my mother would just look at me. You know "the look," the one that says, can't you do better than *that*? And she was right. I just wasn't ready to be *that good*. This may sound familiar to you. You may have felt this way growing up, or your children may feel this way now. But Lent is about way more than giving up something that you can indulge in on Easter Sunday! Making little sacrifices helps us to walk in the footsteps of Our Lord and gives us the opportunity to discipline ourselves; build our spiritual muscles. Only Christ could suffer the way He did and die so that we could have Life. But each one of us can do *something* to show that we, too, want to be like Him and unite our sufferings with Him on the cross so to bring us closer to perfect union with the Father.



Sacrifice and Service

The Church mandates:
~adults 18-65 must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, unless they have a health issue which prevents it
~all people, ages 14-65, must abstain from meat on all Fridays in Lent

We voluntarily:
~ make sacrifices to follow Christ on His way to the cross

BUT ARE WE MISSING SOMETHING?
Is there something more? Another way to walk the narrow path? **YOU BET!**

We can add a layer to our Lenten Walk by serving rather than just sacrificing.



For most of us, sacrifice and service is about making a lifestyle change which will enliven our spirituality. For example, working at a soup kitchen can be just as valuable as giving up using foul language. They are both ways to give back to Our Lord and to His people, while taking a step towards our heavenly goal. Lent is about 'plus,' not 'minus.' It is about working on *who we are* not just what we do.

Did You Know?



In the early Church, sacrifices were made by Christians for the good of those who were to be baptized. We follow this tradition and understand that when we make sacrifices or do Works of Mercy for others during Lent, we, too, are helping to strengthen the faith of those in the RCIA program!

Don't forget to pray for those who are in need of prayers during the Lenten Season.



Calendar of Events 6 Weeks/40 Weekdays



***Ash Wednesday:** Begins Lent with ashes made from blessed palms from the previous Palm Sunday, reminding us to repent and turn to the Gospel, because we are dust and to dust we will return

***Laetare Sunday:** The half-way point of Lent. Rose colored vestments and decorations are used.

***Palm Sunday:** Jesus was hailed entering Jerusalem. We honor this Sunday before Easter with blessed palms.



***Chrism Mass:** Traditionally celebrated on Holy Thursday, it is the diocesan Mass where the three holy oils, Oil of Catechumens, Oil of the Sick and Holy Chrism, are blessed by the bishop.

***The Triduum:** Is Latin for 'three days.' These three high holy days constitute one Mass from the beginning of Holy Thursday Mass to the end of the Easter Vigil. The Church recognizes the three roles of Christ on these days; priest, prophet and king.

~**Holy Thursday:** also called Maundy Thursday, this Mass honors both the institution of the priesthood and the Mass, by celebrating the Last Supper. It is the last time a priest may consecrate until the Easter Vigil. A procession of the Eucharist to an altar of repose ends the celebration.

~**Good Friday:** Veneration of the Cross and Holy Communion received from hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday takes place on this day. Today we celebrate Christ as prophet; one who speaks for God and sacrifices his life because of it.



~**Easter Vigil:** should begin close to dusk with the blessing of the fire and lighting of the Easter candle; Scripture readings take us from creation to Resurrection; RCIA candidates receive Sacraments of Initiation. Easter Season officially begins.