



Teaching From The Heart



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Lent 2004

Episcopal Diocese
of Albany

From Ashes to Alleluias: A Lenten Primer

Upcoming Christian Ed Events

**Episcopal
Diocese of Albany
Christian Education
Conference**
"I Love to Tell the
Story"
Date: Sat., May 1, 2004
Time: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Place: Faith Baptist
Church, Rexford, NY
Speaker: Gretchen Wolff
Pritchard

**The Core for Youth
Ministry**
Date: April 18, 2004
Place: Albany, NY
Need more info?
www.youthspecialties.com

**Walk Thru the Bible:
Old Testament**
**Sponsored by the
Episcopal Diocese
of Albany**
Date: Sat. August 21, 2004
Place: TBA

Children's Ministry Live
Date: Sept. 25, 2004
Place: Harvest Church
Clifton Park, NY
Need more info?
www.cmmag.com/cmml2004

From the first time you appear at your job or school with the sign of the cross on your forehead, you realize what it means to be a public witness. I've been doing this for so many years that I keep thinking everyone must know what that simple cross—and the Lenten season—mean. But many people, including Christians who go to non-denominational churches want to know, "What's Lent all about?" This guide should help you answer those questions. Feel free to publish this in parish bulletins for your congregation during Lent.

Lent: The word Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for spring-time, which is a literal translation for 'the lengthening of the days'. In the early church, the Lenten period was used as a time for preparing new converts for Baptism on Easter Sunday. Today it is a time for preparation, reflection, growth, and change. The forty-day period of Lent was established in the middle of the fourth century.

Shrove Tuesday: Shrove is derived from

the Latin word for 'shriven' which means to confess, or be removed from, our sins. As the day before Ash Wednesday, this is our last celebratory day before the solemnity of Lent begins. Traditionally we eat the foods that will be forbidden (or given up by choice) during Lent. Rich desserts, meats, pancake suppers and Mardi Gras (literally Fat Tuesday) parties occur on this day. People symbolically use all the fats and sweets left in their homes to empty their cupboards of all tempting foods.

Ash Wednesday: The official beginning of the Lent, a season known for fasting, penitence and prayer devotions. We commemorate this day by wearing a cross of ashes on our foreheads, a sign which reminds us that from dust we came, and to dust we shall return, remembering God's edict to Adam and Eve as He sent them out of Eden after their disobedience (see Genesis 3: 19b). Ashes from burnt offerings were also used by the Israelites to sprinkle over those considered unclean in order to restore them to their communities. Palm ashes from the previous year's Palm (or Passion) Sunday began to be commonly used on Ash Wednes-

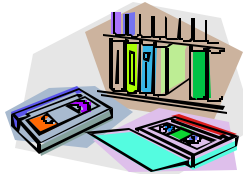
day around the third century.

Palm (or Passion) Sunday: A joyful celebration of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This is the high point of this final week, or Holy Week, which ends with the crucifixion of Christ and the vigil, or devotional watch, on Saturday evening. Most churches have a procession and distribution of palms to re-enact Jesus' own travels. (Mother Ellen Neufeld tells me that down south, people simply cut palms from their own front yards and bring them to church on Palm Sunday.) Another common practice is the reading of the Passion of Our Lord, which contains the chilling words shouted by the crowds: "Crucify him!" Palm Sunday is a day that begins with celebration and procession, but it is also the entry point for the solemnity of the final week of Lent, commonly called Holy Week.

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NEW Video Resource Program



Christian Ed and the Diocese of Albany are participating in a video lending program through Virginia Theological Seminary. Literally thousands of videos are available for mail rental. Visit their website to check out the offerings at:

www.vts.edu/cmt/video_resource_program_catalogue.htm

Lending criteria:

1. Fill out a Diocesan Lending Agreement Form (available on line or from Diocesan office).
2. Diocese will pay *rental fees only*; parishes are responsible for their own mailing fees, late fees and any damages incurred. Parishes will be billed for all fees beyond rental.

Youth Mission Organization

You don't need to create your own summer mission trip, and you don't need to leave the country. Check out these two web sites for information about mission trips for junior and senior high students:

Group Work Camps:
www.groupworkcamps.com

Non-profit, interdenominational camps which do home repair projects in over 50 US locations.

Youth Works:
www.youthworks.com

Over 70 N. American sites focused on being "the hands and feet of Christ."

Ashes to Alleluias: (con't. from front page)



Maunder Thursday: Derived from the Latin word 'maundatum' which means 'commandment' to love one another as He loves us. The focus is on the Eucharist, a reminder to us of the Last Supper Jesus celebrated with His disciples. In some churches, the celebrant also washes the feet of twelve congregants in a re-enactment of Jesus' own teaching in the book of John: "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than His master, nor is a messenger greater than one who sent him." (John 13: 15-16) His example for us to serve one another is both humbling and powerful.

Good Friday: What's so 'good' about this day? People ask me that

all the time. One theory is that the day was originally called "God's Friday" which then became Good Friday. While it is arguably the most solemn day of Lent, Christians can refer to it as 'good' for two reasons: 1) He died on the cross because He loved us so much, and 2) we know the 'Good News' of His triumphant resurrection and victory over death, a triumph we hope to share one day.

Easter: the name is probably derived from the word Austra, which means "to shine". Christians celebrate the birth of Christ as our own 'rebirth' each liturgical year, and it is derived from celebrations which, prior to the birth of Christ, had honored Austron, the goddess of the spring equinox. *Paschal*, another familiar Easter reference (Ie: Paschal Lamb) literally refers to the Passover, or the time of year when Jesus was crucified, and it refers also to the fact that Jesus offered Himself as a final sacrifice for our sins, making it forever unnecessary to present burnt offerings or other earthly sacrifices in exchange for the favor of God. In return, He asks only that we know

Him and proclaim Him in our hearts and lives as our Savior. The "Alleluias" we reintroduce to our liturgy on this Sunday ring pure and clear as we recognize His triumph over death and His saving grace in our own lives.

The following seven weeks of the Easter season are the oldest celebrated liturgical season of the church

year. The Easter Season ends fifty days after Easter Sunday at Pentecost when we celebrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So there you have it, a quick study of the Lenten season which will help prepare you to answer the question: "Why do you have that smudge on your forehead?" and so many more! I wish you and your families a blessed and holy Lenten and Easter season.

Some portions of this article were derived from Carolyn Templeton's article from Alert, February 1999, Vol. 28, No. 4, pages 6-8.



Lenten Lesson Plans and Web Sites (stations)

Exhaustive resources for your church, family and community:
www.spirit-net.ca/sermons/easter.html
www.textweek.com/lent.htm
 ☐ Worship planning
 ☐ Articles
 ☐ Liturgics
 ☐ Devotionals
 Also, **FREE** lesson plans for your church!
www.episcopalchurch.org/myp.htm

Stations of the Cross for Children

www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/stations/01.html
 This prints out beautifully and can be easily made into a booklet (be sure to credit the original source if you do this!)
 This illustration from the website above.



Pretzels for Lent

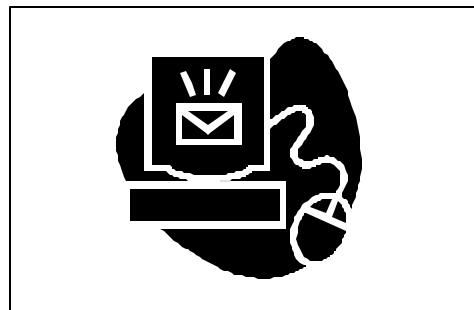


Beginning in the fourth century, monks made pretzels for children during Lent to remind them to be prayerful. (The shape of most pretzels looks like arms folded in prayer.) This is an excellent Lenten family activity, and it's a great opportunity to invite friends or neighbors in to share your faith and hospitality.
 For a simple recipe, go to: www.cooks.com and search for "soft pretzels"

Albany Diocese Christian Ed Web Page

Would you like to see back articles on Christian Ed from the Albany Episcopalian? Do you want to see the Web version of this newsletter (it looks snappier in color!)?
 Check out the new Christian Ed web page!
 ? Go to www.AlbanyDiocese.Org
 ? Click on "Ministries" on the left side of the page.

? Click on "Christian Ed", and you should open a new page that will allow you to choose to browse through archived materials.
 Be patient—it's new and we're still learning! But feel free to submit suggestions or ideas at any time; we're also flexible!



www.AlbanyDiocese.Org/Ministries/ChristianEd.html

Why Haven't You Subscribed?



Children's Ministry Magazine is one of the most useful and timely resources for your Sunday School Teachers.
 Visit them on-line at:
www.cmmag.com

Features:

- * Yearly VBS surveys and info
- * Age level insights (articles targeted to your kids)
- * Current trends and culture
- * Christ-centered ministry ideas to help your kids commit their hearts

CMM also offers a high-energy workshop that includes FREE subscriptions for your teachers if they attend!
When: September 25, 2004
Where: Harvest Church, Clifton Park
 For info, sites and registration:
www.CMMag.com/cmml2004



Did you know that among 13 yr. olds...?

75 percent believe:

- ◆ The devil does not exist.
- ◆ The Bible, the Koran and the Book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths.

50 percent believe:

- ◆ There are no absolute standards for morals and ethics.
- ◆ Jesus committed sins when He lived on Earth.

We are always looking for great Christian Education ideas and stories from the missionary outposts within the Diocese. Please send an e-mail to LGRohr@AlbanyDiocese.Org and we will work to share your successes!

From *The Spiritual Health of Our Children* by G.Barna
www.barna.org

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Disciples Making Disciples



Holy Lent and Happy Easter

