

Ash Wednesday



Carry Your Cross

(A Treasure Chest of Traditions For Catholic Families, Monica McConkey)

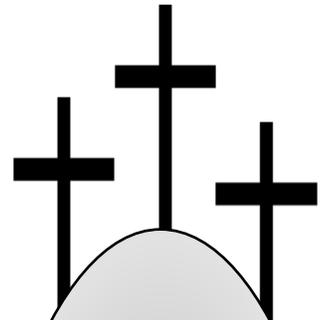
Jesus tells us that if we are going to be His followers, we have to “take up [our] cross and follow Him” (Mt 16:24).

But did it ever occur to you that sometimes we pick up the wrong crosses? There is an old story about a married couple who had a lot of crosses that they dragged around. Every day, they begged the Lord to take away some of their crosses. One night Jesus appeared and said, “Show me the crosses.” The couple emptied their sack. They had many black crosses in various sizes, and one gold cross.

Jesus picked up the gold cross and said; “This is the true cross. The black crosses are all of your own making. Get rid of them and you’ll discover that the true cross will be light, because I will help you carry it.”

We all experience pain and difficulties in life. But how many of the crosses that we carry are of our own making?

- How often are they the result of not getting our own way?
 - How often are they due to anger or resentments that stem from hurts we were never able to forgive?
 - How often do they stem from envy over not having what someone else has?
- Just like the cross of Jesus, the real crosses in our lives often involve sacrifices for someone or something that is greater than we are. The real crosses in our lives always lead to resurrection and new life. The real crosses are bearable because Jesus promises that “my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:30).



Brothers and sisters:

We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

For he says:
In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.

Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

2 Cor 5: 20-6:2

Scripture from
www.usccb.org

Helping Children Understand the Cross

Explain that Jesus died on a cross, but three days later, God brought him back to life on Easter Sunday. That’s how we know that the cross always leads to something good.

Acknowledge that everybody has difficulties in life. Sometimes we say our problems are the cross that we carry because we don’t want problems, but, like Jesus, we know that God will help us.

Talk about some of the crosses your children might experience in their lives. Encourage your children to pray that Jesus will help them carry their crosses. Are they struggling with shyness, or being picked on, or feeling left out at school? Do they speak before they think? Did they make a mistake like cheating on a test or stealing? Are they struggling with peer pressure? Talk through how they might respond to these challenges using different behavior or language.



Family Activity:

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Draw a large, blank cross on a piece of paper (with enough room to write inside of the cross). Ask your kids to write down what they think are the crosses that people are bearing right now, including family, friends, even themselves. You might be surprised by what you hear.