

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Justice That Restores, Mercy That Heals
EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE GUIDE



DISCOVER YOUR NEIGHBOR™

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AT RESTORES, MERCY THAT HEALS

Welcome to the Lent Edition of Discover Your Neighbor. Although we often think of Lent as a time of retreat, a better image may be one of springing forth. The Lenten readings remind us of Jesus' mission: it began in the desert, where he resisted temptation and then went forth boldly. He seeks out those on the margins, crosses boundaries, offers living water, heals blindness, and brings life out of death.

Lent is our time to follow him and do the same. As Pope Leo XIV challenges us in his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* ("I Have Loved You"), we are invited to rediscover the heart of God revealed in the faces of those who suffer, struggle, and are marginalized.

Join us this Lent on a journey of encounter — to see the world more clearly, to reflect on how God calls us to restore loving and just relationships with God, our neighbor, ourselves, and creation, and to discern how the Spirit is inviting us to continue the mission of love that Jesus has entrusted to us.

Matt Dulka
Associate Director, Mission Formation Ministry

F **faith grows when it is shared. Love deepens when it crosses boundaries.**
— Pope Francis



DISCOVER YOUR NEIGHBOR™

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We are the **Mission Formation Ministry** team—a community of educators, storytellers, and companions on the journey of faith. Rooted in Maryknoll's global mission spirit, we help people connect their faith with their brothers and sisters worldwide through formation, encounter, and reflection.

Our formation programs encourage groups and individuals to discover what vibrant missionary discipleship looks like in today's world. Our immersion trips open hearts to the beauty and resilience of communities around the world. And our free bilingual resources bring prayer, justice, and solidarity into everyday life. Be sure to check our global solidarity events and resources for Lent at our new Mission Formation Ministry Academy at www.maryknoll.us

Wherever you are on the journey, we're here to walk with you—so that together, we can make God's love visible in the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Discover Your Neighbor is a quarterly resource guide designed to inspire young people to engage with important issues, empowering them to live out their faith as agents of love and service.

04 DYN - Middle School

10 DYN - K-5 Grade School

Families in Mission is a weekly reflection guide based on the Sunday Readings to help families bring the Gospel message home.

16 2nd Sunday of Lent

19 3rd Sunday of Lent

22 4th Sunday of Lent

25 5th Sunday of Lent

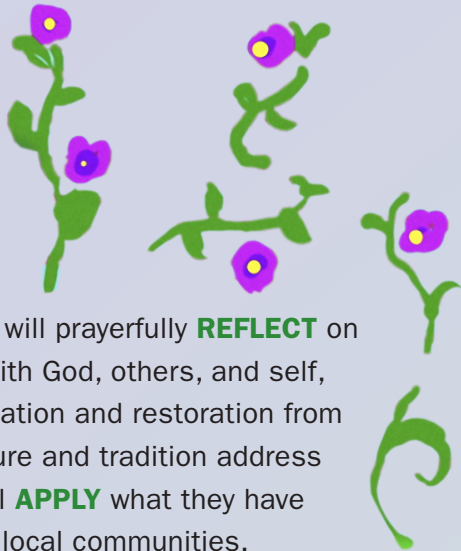
28 Palm Sunday

Lenten Resources

30 Stations of the Cross

31 Sunday Reflections Guides

Discover Your Neighbor
MIDDLE SCHOOL
Justice That Restores,
Mercy That Heals



OBJECTIVE: This Lent, students will prayerfully **REFLECT** on restoring broken relationships with God, others, and self, **ENCOUNTER** a story of reconciliation and restoration from Brazil, and **EXPLORE** how Scripture and tradition address these topics. Then, students will **APPLY** what they have learned by taking action in their local communities.

STEP ONE: PRAY

Bring yourself into a greater awareness of God's love and reflect:

Think of a time when you hurt someone and were forgiven. What were you feeling when you hurt them? How did you feel afterward? How did you feel once you had made amends?

Now, think of a time in which you forgave someone. What was it like to be wronged? Was it difficult to forgive them? How did you feel after making amends?

In both of these situations, where did you notice God at work? Journal your ideas, and when you are done, take 3 deep breaths and **pray together:**

Loving God, you know me better than I know myself. You know that I love you and desire to be good. Help me to forgive others when I am hurt and seek reconciliation when I cause hurt. You challenge me to extinguish hatred and sow peace wherever I journey in life. Amen.

STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

The restorative justice process enables offenders and their victims to heal. By Joanne Blaney, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner

In one of the poorest and most violent neighborhoods in São Paulo, Brazil, Raquel (not her real name), a teacher, was the victim of an armed assault and carjacking. After filing a police



report, she heard that the adolescent perpetrators were in custody and later sent to a juvenile detention center. "But I felt no peace," says Raquel. "I wanted to know why this happened to me." Years later, Victor (not his real name), one of her assailants, re-encountered Raquel and fled, fearing she would recognize him.

Victor's probation counselor asked Victor to imagine how the victim might have felt if she had seen him. Victor recalled how Raquel trembled the day he assaulted her. The counselor probed: "If you could talk to her now, what would you say?" "I would say I was sorry," Victor replied. The counselor invited Victor to write a letter to Raquel, sharing his feelings and asking how he could repair the harm he had caused.



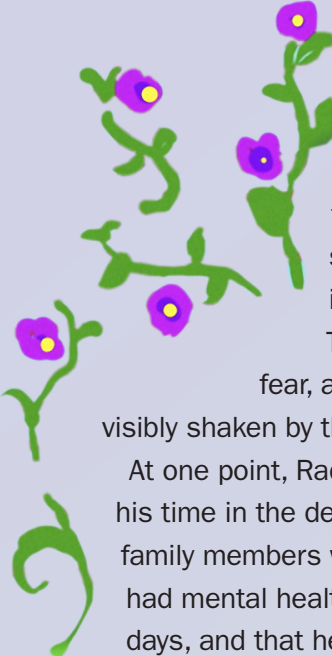
Raquel and Victor at Popular Education and Human Rights Center. Brazil.

That led Victor and Raquel to the Popular Education and Human Rights Center in São Paulo, where another facilitator and I began with them a restorative justice process, which includes a face-to-face meeting of offender, victim, and community support members.

The day of the meeting, Victor arrived with two staff members from the probation center. Raquel brought members of her family and her school director. The conference began with Victor admitting his responsibility for the crime. With quivering lips and fidgeting hands, he said the robbery was "not planned," that he had met with a friend "to hang out" and came upon the teacher parking her car. He said he remembered her fear and wanted to repair the harm he had done.

Raquel recalled the terror she felt when she saw her assailant's gun. She said she was still angry and nervous. "I wanted to meet you to find out why you chose me as your victim," she told Victor. She





explained that at the time of the crime, she was going through an extremely difficult personal problem. In addition, that day, because of the assault, she was unable to participate in the special school activities she had prepared for her hearing and visually impaired students.

Then Raquel's family shared their feelings of fear, anger, and frustration over the crime. Victor was visibly shaken by the impact his action had on so many people.

At one point, Raquel asked Victor to talk about his life and his time in the detention center. She wanted to know why no family members were present with him. Victor said his mother had mental health problems and sometimes disappeared for days, and that he was responsible for his younger brothers. His mother did not have money to visit him while he was in detention, he said, and the only people he knew to accompany him to the conference were staff members from the probation center.

As the conference continued, we asked Raquel, "What do you think needs to happen to repair the harm?" Together, she, Victor, and the members of the community came up with a plan of reparation that included Victor using his artistic talents to give art workshops to Raquel's students. He would also paint the school, as well as return to school himself.

In the final moments of the conference, Raquel asked to speak. "I feel so relieved," she said. "I am a different person now than I was before the conference. A weight has been lifted. I believe in change. All of us make mistakes."

Turning to Victor, she said, "You have your whole life in front of you. Everything is resolved between us. I have overcome this trauma today. You suffered in the detention center far away from your family and in a system that only punishes and rarely rehabilitates. I want to ask you to return to your studies, look for work, and go forward with your life. It would be good if your mother were here so she could be proud of you, of your courage to come here personally to ask for forgiveness. Your courage brought me

here today. I invite you to register at our school. I would love to be your teacher, and the director and I will support you."



The director of the school followed up: "This circle today has been a wonderful process of overcoming violence. It has been a transformative process for all of us and a positive step for change."

I have seen the transformative power of restorative justice, whether in cases of bullying, the death of a child at a school, or prison conflicts. Truth, individual and collective responsibility, repair of harm, and reintegration are key elements to the process.

Research consistently shows that victims benefit greatly from restorative justice procedures. Telling their story to the person who caused the harm is very healing. Often, they and their family members seek answers to questions that have been haunting them. In the process of meeting, anger turns into compassion. Research also shows that most offenders do not return to crime after a restorative justice process, as compared to current retributive procedures that indicate a 66 percent to 70 percent recidivism rate in the United States.

Pope Francis exhorts us: "Each one of us is an artisan of peace by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding onto it, by opening paths to dialogue and not by constructing walls!" May we rise to the challenge!

REFLECTIONS QUESTIONS ON STORY

1. Why do you think it was important for Raquel and Victor, and their community members, to meet face-to-face?
2. There is a well-known phrase: "forgive and forget." What do you think about this saying? What was gained in Raquel and Victor's situation by forgiving, but not forgetting what happened?
3. Close your eyes and imagine yourself as Raquel. Reflect on how she would be feeling leading up to meeting with Victor. If you were in Raquel's shoes, what would you want to share with Victor?
4. Now imagine what it would be like to be Victor leading up to the conversation with Raquel. What might you want to say?



- Would you feel intimidated, anxious, or regretful?lose your eyes and imagine yourself as Raquel. Reflect on how she would be feeling leading up to meeting with Victor. If you were in Raquel’s shoes, what would you want to share with Victor?
5. What might it be like to be a loved one of Raquel or Victor?
 6. Share with a partner a story of reconciliation from your own life.

STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

READ the following scriptures. REFLECT on the questions.

Old Testament: Psalm 10:12-14

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

New Testament: Romans: Hebrews 12:14-21

1. What does it mean for God to be a “defender of orphans?”
2. How did Zacchaeus try to restore broken relationships? What motivated him? How was it similar or different from Victor’s story?
3. Paul encourages the Romans to “conquer evil with good.” Recall a time when you learned to love your enemy.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis wrote, “When conflicts are not resolved but kept hidden or buried in the past, silence can lead to complicity in grave misdeeds and sins. Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest, and patient negotiation.”

The dialogue required for restorative justice is exemplified in the story of Raquel and Victor. We must be honest with one another about our experiences, and we must listen deeply when others share their hurt and experiences with us.

In 2000, the US Bishops released a document entitled “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice.” In the document, they discuss the need for addressing factors that lead to poverty and crime and offering rehabilitation opportunities to offenders rather than trapping them in a cycle of punishment with no opportunity for reconciliation.



1. What factors might contribute to someone ending up in juvenile hall or prison?
2. What might be alternatives to juvenile detention to help young people remain in their communities and not end up in the prison system?
3. Have you ever tried to avoid a conflict rather than facing it? What was the result of keeping it buried?

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION (ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:)

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Do a bit of research into what organizations in your community help contribute to restorative justice - what are their current needs? How can you raise awareness for their cause in your friend groups, school, church, and wider community?



Fr. Fedora in Peru. Photo by: David Aquije

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Fr. Joe Fedora M.M. helps provide medicines the detained and secretarial services to the

Chaplain at Peru’s largest prison, San Pedro de Lurigancho, a facility built for 3,300 prisoners that currently holds 10,000, making it the most densely populated prison in the Americas. The aim is to support individuals who have been abandoned by society, and for many, even by their family. Read more and support this cause here <https://maryknoll.link/spl>.

ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY

Practice reconciliation as a family. When issues arise, rather than keeping them buried, have open dialogues about how to move forward in negotiation and love.

Go to the digital version of this lesson plan for more resources at discoveryourneighbor.org



NEXT ISSUE IS COMING IN APRIL 00, 2026

Discover Your Neighbor

K-5 STUDENTS

Justice That Restores,
Mercy That Heals

OBJECTIVE: This Lent, children will learn the concepts of **restorative justice** and **common good** through prayer, story, Scripture, and discussions.

STEP ONE: PRAY

We all make mistakes sometimes. We all get hurt sometimes. Our prayer today will be for those times. Listen for the word, “unconditionally.” It means there are no limits or rules. In this prayer, we will see that there are no limits to God’s love for you. God does not say, “I will love you IF you....” God loves you always, forever, and without any “ifs”.

Leader: Let us pray. Dear God, our Creator,

For the times others have made us feel bad, small, or dumb, help us know that you love us unconditionally.

All: Thank you for always loving us.

Leader: For the times we have said something hurtful, or pushed someone we were angry at, or yelled at someone, help us know God loves us unconditionally.

All: Thank you for always loving us.

Leader: For the times when someone we love has made us angry, help us know you love us unconditionally.

All: Thank you for always loving us. Amen.



2019 Children in Cambodia

STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

By Anne Neuberger

Sometimes we humans do things that hurt others. The hurt person may feel frightened, angry, or wonder if it was their fault. The person who caused the hurt might feel embarrassed or sorry, or may not realize how hurt the other person is. This is an unhealthy and unhappy situation. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE is needed.

Go to this QR code for **vocabulary** definitions for this lessonwalked the streets.



School was done for the day, and several kids were playing on the playground. A kindergartener named Brigid was running and laughing with friends when some third and fourth-graders began to chant, “Kindergarteners are babies! Kindergarteners are dummies!” Some of the other kids did not hear them. Some didn’t care. But Brigid was shocked. She was hurt, and she was a little frightened, too. She began crying. She cried so hard that her mom couldn’t tell why she was upset. But her big sister, Maureen, knew. She ran up to the kids who had said these things. “You made my sister cry! You treated her disrespectfully. She is not a baby, and she is not dumb! It is not okay to put people down! You go and apologize to her!”

They decided to follow Maureen’s direction. They found that Brigid was still crying. They said they were sorry. They said she was not a baby or a dummy. Among this group was Dominic. He felt very uncomfortable. Suddenly, he knew he was sorry, remembering a time when older kids had hurt his feelings. He decided he would never tease someone like Brigid again.

He said, “I am really sorry. Do you like to swing? How about if I push you on the swings for a while?”

Brigid hesitated, but she had stopped crying. She looked at Maureen, who nodded. “I’ll go too,” she said and took Brigid’s hand.



Lay Missioner Susana Carpenter teaching kindergarteners in Mwanza.

Reflections Questions On Story

1. What do you think happened in Brigid's thoughts when the others started shouting at her? What happened to her feelings?
2. Do you think the kids who did the teasing were able to restore (make new again) Brigid's good feelings?
3. Why do you think the older kids teased Brigid?
4. After making fun of Brigid, Dominic felt bad. How did he take responsibility for his actions? How did he reconcile with her?
5. Discuss what Maureen did to bring about restorative justice. What do you think she thought about? What do you think she felt? Did what she did take courage?
6. Have you ever treated someone badly and caused pain? When did you realize you had done something wrong? How did you deal with it?
7. What if the person who hurt your feelings is someone you love? What do you say and do when your parents or siblings make you angry?

STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Read the Scriptures

Numbers 5:7

Here is a rule that was given to the Jewish people about restoring a relationship: when they have done something wrong, they must explain to others and fix whatever they have done, and do extra. (e.g, if this involves money, they must give back more than they took)

Life of Jesus: Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus was on a mountainside, teaching a large crowd of people. He spoke about what to do when a person has done something wrong. There was a way in which people would go to the Temple to ask God to forgive them. Jesus said that before asking God for forgiveness, one should first ask forgiveness from the person they had hurt.

Christian Living: Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness and anger, fighting, and any kind of hurtful ways. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Jesus forgives us.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

In the Bible and Catholic teaching, restoring right and just relationships is a highly valued principle. The Church calls this restorative justice. It means helping to repair relationships when someone has been hurt or when something has gone wrong.

Restorative justice is closely connected to a Catholic Social Teaching principle called the common good. The common good means: "All the things in a community that help every person grow, feel safe, and live a full life." Saint John XXIII, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1906

When the common good is harmed, for example, when someone is treated unfairly, left out, or hurt, the community may need restorative justice to bring healing, fairness, and peace.

Often, children first learn about restorative justice by practicing the common good in their everyday lives. They can develop these habits long before they learn the broader concept of "restorative justice."

The Common Good means doing what is best for everyone by:

- Considering others — thinking about what other people need, feel, or might be experiencing
- Being kind — choosing words and actions that help, not hurt
- Being respectful — treating others the way we want to be treated.

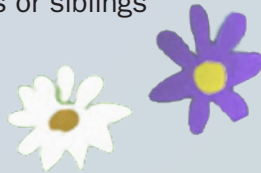
These are simple ways children participate in making their classroom, home, and parish a place where everyone belongs. Learn more by scanning this QR code to watch a short, kid-friendly video and learn more about the Common Good!

<https://maryknoll.link/cg>

Or scan the QR-Code



2018 Immersion Trip in Africa



STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

Engage Your Family Or Classroom

1. Practice Forgiveness and Reconciliation

When problems or hurt feelings arise, don't ignore them or let them remain unresolved. Guide children in having simple, honest conversations about:

- What happened from each perspective?
- How does each person feel?
- What needs to change or be done differently?
- How can they move forward with kindness and love?

This helps children learn that restoring relationships is something we practice, not something that just happens.

2. Explore the Catholic Social Teaching Principle of the Common Good

Talk together about what "the common good" means. On chart paper or a whiteboard, make a list using the children's own words.

Examples might include:

- Sharing and including others, like taking turns
- Helping someone who is sad or excluded
- Keeping the classroom clean and caring for creation

3. Create a Common Good Poster

- Turn your list into a classroom or family poster.
- Invite children to draw pictures showing what the Common Good looks like in action.
- Leave space to add more drawings throughout the year.

This helps children see the Common Good as something alive and growing.

4. Use the Prayer from Step 1

Close your time together with the same prayer from **Step 1**, reminding everyone that we ask God to help us build a community where everyone belongs and is treated with love.

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Fr. Joe Fedora, M.M., works to provide medicines to the detained and secretarial services of the Chaplain at Peru's largest prison, San Pedro de Lurigancho, a facility built for 3,300 prisoners that currently holds 10,000, making it the most densely populated prison in the Americas. The aim is to support individuals who have been abandoned by society, and for many, even by their family. Read more and support this cause here.

<https://maryknoll.link/spl>



2018 Children in Nairobi

RAISE YOUR VOICE

As a family, conduct some research into the organizations in your community that contribute to restorative justice - what are their current needs? How can you raise awareness for their cause in your friend groups, school, Church, and wider community?

NEXT ISSUE IS COMING IN APRIL 00, 2026

www.discoveryourneighbor.org for the full edition and more resources.

Families in Mission
For Goodness' Sake
Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our family's journey into Lent — a season to look gently and honestly at how we love God, one another, our neighbors, and our shared home. Today's Gospel reminds us that real goodness doesn't need applause or attention; it grows quietly, like seeds hidden in the soil. Jesus invites us to do good not to be noticed, but because healing relationships, choosing mercy, and repairing harm is what love looks like.

This Lent, we ask: Where do we need healing? What needs mending in our home, our friendships, our community, or our world? And how can our family practice kindness that restores, not just kindness that performs?

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:

This Lent, create a sacred space in your home that will remind you of your journey together during this Lenten season. Cover a small table or shelf with a purple cloth. Add your family Bible (or a Children's Bible) and a small bowl of ashes or a stone to remind you of Jesus' call to quiet acts of love. Invite each family member to place an item representing their hope for the Lenten journey together.

OPENING PRAYER:

Merciful God, as we begin this Lenten journey, may your healing love open our hearts. Help our family see the quiet ways you mend what is hurt and restore what is broken. Teach us to pray deeply, serve humbly, and fast with purpose — not for attention, but to bring peace, justice, and kindness into our relationships and our world.
Amen.



2024 Immersion trip to Yucatan, Mexico.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Describe a time when you did something kind or helpful without anyone knowing, and how it made you feel. How did your quiet action bring healing or joy?

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS:

Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 as a family from your family Bible. Keep the Bible during the week in the Sacred Space you created. Go to this QR code ➡



REFLECT TOGETHER:

Where is something broken that needs healing — in our family, school, community, or world? What small, quiet action could help mend it?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

As a family, decide how you want to:

1. Pray (even 1 minute together counts)
2. Fast (choose something simple and meaningful)
3. Give (support someone in need locally or globally)

Show hidden mercy: Each family member chooses one quiet act of love to do this week — no announcing, no bragging. Just do it!

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of love and quiet power, guide our family as we begin this Lenten season. Heal what is wounded in our hearts, our home, and our world. Help us forgive, accept forgiveness, and practice mercy in small, steady ways. May our ordinary actions become your work of justice, peace, and restoration. Amen.



2025 Immersion trip to El Paso, TX / Mexico Border.

Families in Mission

Entering the Desert

First Day of Lent

February 22, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Lent begins with Jesus in the desert — hungry, alone, and facing tough choices. The devil offers him shortcuts to power and comfort, but Jesus stays rooted in knowing he is God’s beloved.

Families today face their own “desert moments”: pressure to get more, win more, or take the easy way. This week invites your family to slow down, breathe, and remember what truly matters: love, trust, and choosing what is right even when it’s hard.

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:

Have everyone in the family add an image or symbol to your Sacred Space that represents someone who has shown them they are loved.



2019 Floating Cambodia Immersion Trip

OPENING PRAYER

God who walks with us, teach our family to choose love over fear and kindness over control. When we feel pulled toward things that don’t really help us grow, remind us that your love is enough. Give us the courage to stand with people who struggle and to make choices that bring peace, healing, and fairness. Amen.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Describe a time when you did something kind or helpful without anyone knowing, and how it made you feel. How did your quiet action bring healing or joy?



SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Together read Matthew 4:1-11 from your family Bible. Go to this QR code ➡

REFLECT TOGETHER:

God the Father tells Jesus that he is beloved. How does it make us feel when we know that we are loved?

Jesus says, “One does not live on bread alone.” What do you think we really need to feel full as a family?

Who are people who do not feel loved? How can we be a family that chooses kindness and fairness, even when it’s hard?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

- This week, make it a goal to pray together daily. Start your time with 2 minutes of silence. Then share with one another where you felt God most closely in the previous day.
- Reach out to someone who needs more love and affection. Invite them to come to your home or meet them in a public place. During your time together, be intentional about asking them questions and listening to them.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Spirit of Love, guide our family through the deserts we face. When we feel tempted by shortcuts or selfish choices, remind us that your way leads to peace. Strengthen us to help others who are hungry for justice and kindness. Walk with us this Lent. Amen.



2025 Guatemala Immersion Trip

Families in Mission
Transfigured by Love
Second Day of Lent

March 1, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Last week, we entered the desert with Jesus. This week, we climb a high mountain with him and witness something amazing: Jesus shining like the sun. This moment, known as the Transfiguration, reveals to us who Jesus truly is and helps us see the world with new eyes.

God invites our families to look at one another this way, too: to notice the goodness, courage, and beauty that can sometimes get hidden under homework, chores, stress, or busy schedules. Just as Jesus' friends saw his true light, we are invited to recognize God's light in each person, especially those whose voices are often ignored.



2014 Immersion Trip to Africa

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:

This week, have each family member add a symbol of light to the space, such as a candle, a flashlight, or drawings of the sun.

OPENING PRAYER

Radiant Jesus, you shine with God's love. Help our family see your light in the people we meet each day — in helpers, teachers, caregivers, migrants, neighbors, and in one another. Open our ears to listen deeply, especially to those who feel unseen and unheard. May your light guide us down the mountain, bringing hope to others. Amen.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Share with each other about a time when you saw someone's goodness "shine" through a difficult moment.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Together read Matthew 17:1–9 from your family Bible. Go to this QR code ➡



REFLECT TOGETHER:

Why do you think Jesus showed his closest friends this "shining" moment? What might he have wanted them to remember later?

God says, "Listen to him." Who are the people in our lives who we need to listen to more closely — especially those whose voices are often unheard?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

- Look for the Light: Each evening this week, invite family members to name one moment when they saw goodness in someone else.
- Shine Light in a Shadowed Place: Do something kind for someone who may feel invisible — write a card, donate needed items, or support a local immigrant/refugee organization.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Beloved Jesus, you shine with God's glory. When fear or stress clouds our vision, brighten our hearts again. Help us see every person — especially those who struggle — as a beloved one. Send our family down the mountain, ready to bring your light to the world. Amen.



2018 Immersion Trip to Africa



Families in Mission
Really Being Heard
Third Day of Lent

March 8, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Think of a time someone listened to you so well that you felt truly heard. Maybe they didn't rush you, didn't judge you, didn't look away — they just showed up. That's what Jesus does for the Samaritan woman in today's Gospel.

Jesus and the woman come from communities that didn't trust or like one another, yet their honest conversation heals old wounds and opens new doors. Jesus shows us that real relationships grow when we meet people where they are, listen with compassion, and cross barriers that divide us. This week reminds our families that God's "living water" flows wherever people take the risk to listen, learn, and love across differences.



2019 Immersion Trip to Floating Cambodia

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:

This week, have each family member add a symbol of living water to the space, such as a bowl of water, seashells, drawings of rivers, oceans, or rain.

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, you met the Samaritan woman with honesty and compassion. Help our family recognize your presence in every person we meet — especially those whose culture, language, or background is different from ours. Heal what divides us, and make us people who listen, welcome, and restore. Let your living water flow through our home and into our community. Amen.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Share a time when you felt that someone truly listened to you and understood what you were trying to say.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Together read John 4:5–42 from your family Bible. Go to this QR code ➡



REFLECT TOGETHER:

Think about each of the people in the story: Jesus, the woman, Jesus' disciples, and people from the woman's village. How were they changed by this event and their conversation together?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

- The Gospel story illustrates how people from diverse cultures, initially unfamiliar and uncomfortable with one another, came together through listening and dialogue. Think of a way your family can have an encounter with someone from another culture this week.
- Choose one evening where each person gets uninterrupted time to share about their day — one speaker, everyone else listening without interrupting.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Jesus, you meet us at the wells of our everyday lives. Help us slow down, listen deeply, and see your presence in every person. Make our home a place of welcome, honesty, and healing. Give us your living water so we may share hope with others. Amen.



2019 Immersion Trip to Floating Cambodia

Families in Mission
Really Seeing
Fourth Day of Lent

March 15, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

This Sunday, Jesus meets a man who has been blind since birth — a man his community judged, avoided, and dismissed. When Jesus heals him, instead of celebrating, many people respond with suspicion and blame. They cling to their prejudices rather than opening their eyes to new possibilities.

Lent invites our families to ask: Where are we blind? Blindness isn't only about our eyes — sometimes it's our attitudes, assumptions, or quick judgments that keep us from seeing others as beloved by God. Jesus comes to heal that blindness so we can notice the people we often pass by, restore dignity where shame has clouded our vision, and build communities where everyone is seen.

**SACRED SPACE
ACTIVITY:**

This week, have everyone add a symbol of blindness or darkness, such as a blindfold or an image of someone who is unseen, like those who are unfairly treated, face prejudice, or are excluded.

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, Light of the World, you opened the eyes of the man born blind and restored his dignity. Open our eyes, too — to the people we overlook, to the ways we judge too quickly, and to the beauty hidden in every person. Heal our blindness and help us bring your light into our home, our school, and our community. Amen.



2019 Immersion Trip to Cambodia

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Tell about a time when you felt that you were being unfairly misunderstood, treated, or judged. How did that feel?

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Read John 9:1–41 from your family Bible. Go to this QR code ➔



REFLECT TOGETHER:

Who in the story do you think was more blind, the man born blind or the people who were judging him? Why?

Who in your school, parish, or neighborhood might feel judged or unseen? How could your family help them feel welcome?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

Choose one group that people often ignore, such as immigrants, unhoused neighbors, people with disabilities, or elders living alone. Learn about their experiences and discuss how your family can show solidarity or offer support, seeing them as God does.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Jesus, you search for the ones who feel pushed aside and restore their place in the community. Open our eyes to the dignity of every person. Help us see with your compassion and respond with your love. May our family become a source of light, welcome, and healing. Amen.



2025 Immersion Trip to El Salvador

Families in Mission
What's Holding You Back?
Fifth Day of Lent

March 22, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever felt stuck — like something in your life was too heavy, too confusing, or too sad to move past? Mary and Martha felt that way when their brother Lazarus died. They called for Jesus, but he didn't arrive until it seemed too late. And yet, Jesus steps into their grief, weeps with them, and calls Lazarus out of the tomb. Then he turns to the community and says, "Unbind him and let him go."

This Gospel reminds us that Jesus brings new life, and he asks us to join in the work of helping others find freedom. No one gets unbound alone. Healing, justice, and restoration are always shared tasks.

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:



2018 Immersion Trip to Africa

Create a "Community of Hope" Map. Draw a simple circle with your name in it. Then add circles around it filled with the names of people, groups, or organizations that help bring you hope when life feels heavy,

such as teachers, grandparents, friends, neighbors, mission partners, counselors, coaches, parish ministries, and more. Place your drawing in your sacred space as a reminder that God works through community to help us rise.

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, you bring new life where we least expect it. When we cry, you cry with us. When we feel trapped or discouraged, you call us toward freedom. Give our family the courage to join your mission to unbind those who suffer, comfort those who grieve, and bring hope to places that feel lifeless. Amen.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Share a time when you felt "tied up" by a problem, fear, or sadness. Who helped you feel free again? What did they do that made a difference?

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Read John 11:1-45 from your family Bible. Go to this QR code ➡



REFLECT TOGETHER:

What do you think it was like for Jesus, Mary, Martha, and their community to watch Jesus bring Lazarus back to life?

When Jesus brings Lazarus back to life, he tells the community to unbind him. Who are the people in your community and the world who need to be "unbound"?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

- Do you know someone facing loss or sadness? Bring a meal, make a card, or simply spend time with them. Your presence can be the "unbind him" moment they need.
- Identify a group that helps people rebuild their lives — reentry programs, addiction recovery ministries, mental health resources, immigration support, food justice programs. Choose one way your family can support them this month.

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of hope and new life, call us out of anything that keeps



2019 Immersion Trip to Africa

us bound. Give our family eyes to see those who are hurting, courage to act with compassion, and love that helps others rise. Strengthen our hearts to join your mission of mercy in the world. Amen.

Families in Mission
Love That Doesn't Die
Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Palm Sunday takes us from shouts of “Hosanna!” to the heavy silence of the cross on Good Friday. Jesus enters Jerusalem celebrated — yet only days later, he suffers violence, betrayal, and abandonment. Through it all, he responds not with anger or revenge, but with a love that restores and heals.

Standing with Jesus at the foot of the cross today means standing with people in our world who are hurting, rejected, or treated as if their lives don't matter. Holy Week invites families to walk closely with Jesus — and with all those who carry heavy crosses in our time.

SACRED SPACE ACTIVITY:

Add crosses to the Sacred Space. Create a cross from palm branches or strips of paper. Make or find other crosses to add to the space. Use the QR to watch a video on how to make crosses. ➡



OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, you carried the cross with courage and love. Help our family recognize your presence in people who suffer today, especially those who are hurting, excluded, or treated unfairly. Teach us to stand with them as you stood with the forgotten and rejected. May your love guide us through this Holy Week and make us instruments of healing and new life. Amen.

SHARE YOUR STORY:

Share an experience where you thought it was the end of the story, but were surprised by something new and exciting happening instead.



2025 Immersion Trip to El Paso, TX / Mexico Border

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Read Matthew 26:14–27:66 as a family from your Bible. Go to this QR code ➡



REFLECT TOGETHER:

Who are the “crucified” ones today? Are they the people who suffer because of injustice, violence, poverty, trafficking, racism, bullying, or neglect? What would it look like to stand with them?

The Gospel today reminds us that nothing can kill God's love. Where do you see new signs of God's love springing up in unlikely places that seemed dead?

TAKE ACTION AS A FAMILY:

- As a family, plan to attend as many of the Holy Week liturgies as possible at the parish, including the Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Saturday Vigil. Pray the Stations of the Cross together as a family.
- Discuss how God is inviting you as family to stand at the foot of the cross with those who are being crucified today, such as the unhoused, hungry, immigrants, those living in poverty, or facing discrimination and oppression..

CLOSING PRAYER:

Crucified Lord, your love breaks through fear, hatred, and injustice. As we enter Holy Week, give our family the courage to walk beside those who suffer and the wisdom to see you in their faces. Help us bring your healing to broken systems and broken hearts. Lead us from the pain of the cross toward the hope of Easter. Amen.



2024 Immersion Trip to Jamaica

SUNDAY REFLECTION GUIDES FOR ADULTS

FEED YOUR OWN FAITH

As teachers, parents, and catechists, you spend so much time feeding the faith of others. As Jesus reminded his disciples, we can't give what we don't have. Our own hearts need tending, too.

The **Sunday Reflection Guides** offer you a simple, life-giving way to pause, pray, and reconnect with the Gospel each week. Each reflection links the Sunday readings to real life—helping you stay centered, renewed, and inspired for the ministry you share. Sign up to receive them weekly at <https://maryknoll.link/RG>



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CHEWING ON THE WORD

It takes a village, so take time to be nourished in community. Chewing on the Word gathers teachers, catechists, and seekers each Wednesday at 12:00 PM ET / 9:00 AM PT for a half-hour of reflection on the upcoming Sunday Gospel. Together we listen, share, and let the Word do its quiet work within us.

Come as you are—no preparation, no pressure—just a sacred pause to be filled again by the Spirit who sends us out to teach, serve, and love. Get on the list at: <https://maryknoll.link/chw>

LENTEN RESOURCES

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Way of the Cross is more than a prayer—it's a journey of solidarity with Christ and with all who suffer today. Across cultures and continents, the passion of Jesus is retold in the faces, art, and stories of God's people.

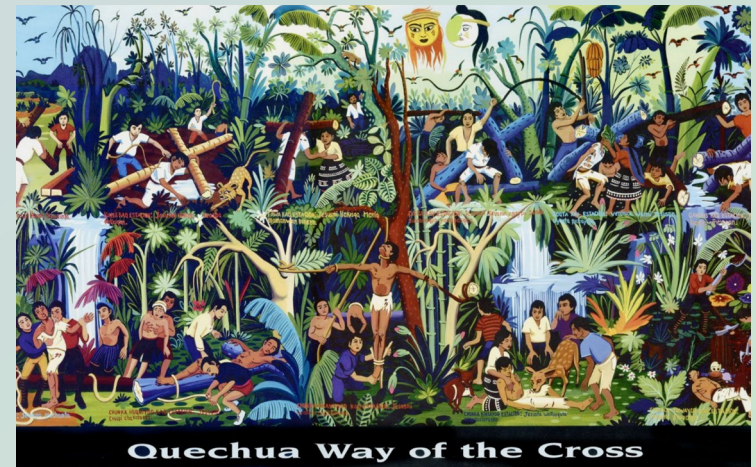
Through **Maryknoll's Stations of the Cross** resources, you're invited to enter that journey through diverse expressions of faith, such as the haunting beauty of the **Quechua Way of the Cross**, the vibrant imagery of the **African Stations**, and the contemporary call to conversion in the **Maryknoll Way of the Cross**.

Each path leads us to the same truth: Christ walks with us still—among the poor, the displaced, the earth itself. Join us this Lent in walking that sacred road anew.

Explore all the Maryknoll Stations of the Cross resources at www.maryknoll.us
OTHER RESOURCES

Visit the **Maryknoll Missionary Discipleship Academy** for more Lenten events, including **Justice that Restores — Mercy that Heals: A Virtual Lenten Labyrinth Journey** workshop, a restorative justice panel webinar, and a Holy Week retreat.

And more free resources, including posters, coloring book page, mission rosary, and more!



LENT

Time to Answer the Call

Lent is a 40-day journey shaped by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a season when the heart begins to understand things reason alone cannot. The cross on our foreheads invites us to live more simply and honestly, returning to a spirit of repentance that softens what has grown hard. In my experience as a missionary priest in China, when we enter Lent with an open heart, God truly reorganizes something within us. We find new courage to forgive and to be more present to one another, even when forgiveness feels like the hardest act of love.

Lent also reminds us that every Christian life responds to God's call. Some are called to walk with Maryknoll as mission education partners, sharing in compassion, justice, and global solidarity. Others may feel — or may see in someone they love — a quiet stirring toward the priesthood or brotherhood, a desire to give their lives fully to God's mission. Trust that the Spirit who once led Jesus into the desert is leading you too. If today you notice God's signs, even faintly... harden not your heart. (<https://maryknollsociety.org/vocations/>)

—Fr. Rodrigo Ulloa, MM



CUARESMA

Hora de contestar la llamada

La Cuaresma es un viaje de 40 días marcado por la oración, el ayuno y la limosna. Es una estación en la que el corazón empieza a entender cosas que la razón sola no puede. La cruz en nuestras frentes nos invita a vivir de forma más sencilla y honesta, volviendo a un espíritu de arrepentimiento que suaviza lo que se ha endurecido. En mi experiencia como sacerdote misionero en China, cuando entramos en Cuaresma con el corazón abierto, Dios realmente reorganiza algo dentro de nosotros. Encontramos un nuevo valor para perdonar y estar más presentes los unos para los otros, incluso cuando el perdón parece el acto más difícil de amor.

La Cuaresma también nos recuerda que toda vida cristiana responde al llamado de Dios. Algunos son llamados a caminar con Maryknoll como socios de la educación misional, compartiendo compasión, justicia y solidaridad global. Otros pueden sentir —o ver en alguien a quien aman— un silencioso movimiento hacia el sacerdocio o la hermandad, el deseo de entregar sus vidas por completo a la misión de Dios. Confía en que el Espíritu que una vez guió a Jesús al desierto también te está guiando a ti. Si hoy notas las señales de Dios, aunque sea débilmente... No endurezcas tu corazón. (w.w.w.discipulosmisioneros.org/vocations/) y únete a nosotros!

—Fr. Rodrigo Ulloa, MM

