

Family Bulletin – 2021 –

(Lent Sunday Reflections)



Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is pleased to provide these Family Reflection Tools for the Sundays of Lent. These weekly reflections are meant to help bring the discussion of the Gospel and our Lenten mission into the family home and to support family reflection and prayer throughout Lent.

Some of these reflections are linked to additional resources for engaging families in discussion, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. All our free resources are available at devp.org/lent.

Please feel free to share these Family Reflection Tools on your parish website, in newsletters or bulletins or, where possible, as church handouts.

Feel free to contact comms@devp.org with any questions or feedback.

Wishing you a blessed Lenten journey!

Share
Lent 2021



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1st Sunday of Lent

Mark 1:12-15

“¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.”

Fasting for forty days and forty nights is not easy, but we are called to it every year. That doesn't mean we don't eat for forty days and nights! Instead, Lent is a time for us to give up the things that distract us from God. It is also a time to give special attention to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Almsgiving means giving of our 'time, talents and treasure' to those who are in need in order to help build the kingdom of God.

It is easy to live on auto-pilot and not really think about what we are doing. Sometimes, we need to be reminded to think about why and how we do things. Sometimes, we need to take time away from our daily life to reflect or reconnect with those who are important to us.

Taking on the Lenten challenge to pray, simplify our lives, and share with those around us can help us shake off the auto-pilot and become more aware of our choices. Jesus is here to give us strength when we feel the temptation to give up on our Lenten commitments.

When choosing your Lenten challenge, consider replacing an old habit with a new one, and making your challenge an active commitment to God and those around you. This can have an impact on your life beyond the 40 days of Lent! If you are not used to praying daily, start with five minutes a day as your Lenten prayer commitment. To fast, you could give up a favorite food and say a prayer whenever you feel a craving. For almsgiving, you could share your allowance with people experiencing poverty through Development and Peace's *Share Lent* campaign.

Discussion Questions:

- What does our family do to come closer to God during Lent?
- How can we support each other in our Lenten journey?

Follow your Lenten journey with Development and Peace's [Solidarity Calendar](#). Each week, a different facet of Development and Peace will be explored through activities that include moments of prayer, action and fundraising.



2nd Sunday of Lent

Mark 9:2-10

“Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

Peace is the result of living the way Christ taught us. He taught us to respect each other, to make sure everyone has what they need, and to treat each other with love and compassion.

Peace is often built through dialogue, which literally means “through words.” But words aren’t just meant to be spoken, but also listened to. An important part of dialogue is listening! When building peace and social fraternity, listening to those with whom we have differences can be difficult.

When we listen to Jesus, we are asked to be courageous peacemakers. We have to break down barriers and put other people first. Jesus preached love, compassion, and care for each other. Sometimes, hearing these things is challenging, and we don’t want to hear them or do them. Sometimes, we don’t understand what we are being told.

The challenge of being a Christian, and of sharing love, is to listen anyway and do our best to follow the path of Christ. The Holy Spirit helps guide us, but we have to be willing to listen and be obedient, to learn and grow.

Discussion Questions:

- How can we listen this week, especially to voices we don’t often hear?
- How do we listen to Jesus? Do we pray just with words or with listening too?

This week, let’s practice listening by participating in an [online activity](#) and meeting a Development and Peace partner, Caritas Bangladesh. The activity will explore how this partner assists populations in crisis, specifically the Rohingya people.



3rd Sunday of Lent

John 2:13-25

“But he was speaking of the temple of his body”

The temple market was originally designed to help travellers buy what they needed to make their sacrifices at the temple. But, when Jesus threw them out of the temple courtyard, the sellers had been setting prices much higher than they needed to be to make more money for themselves, taking advantage of travellers. This made Jesus angry. He was angry not only that the traders were being unfair, but also at the idea that people had to buy things in order to pray. God is there for us all the time, not because we buy something, look a certain way, or do a particular combination of things.

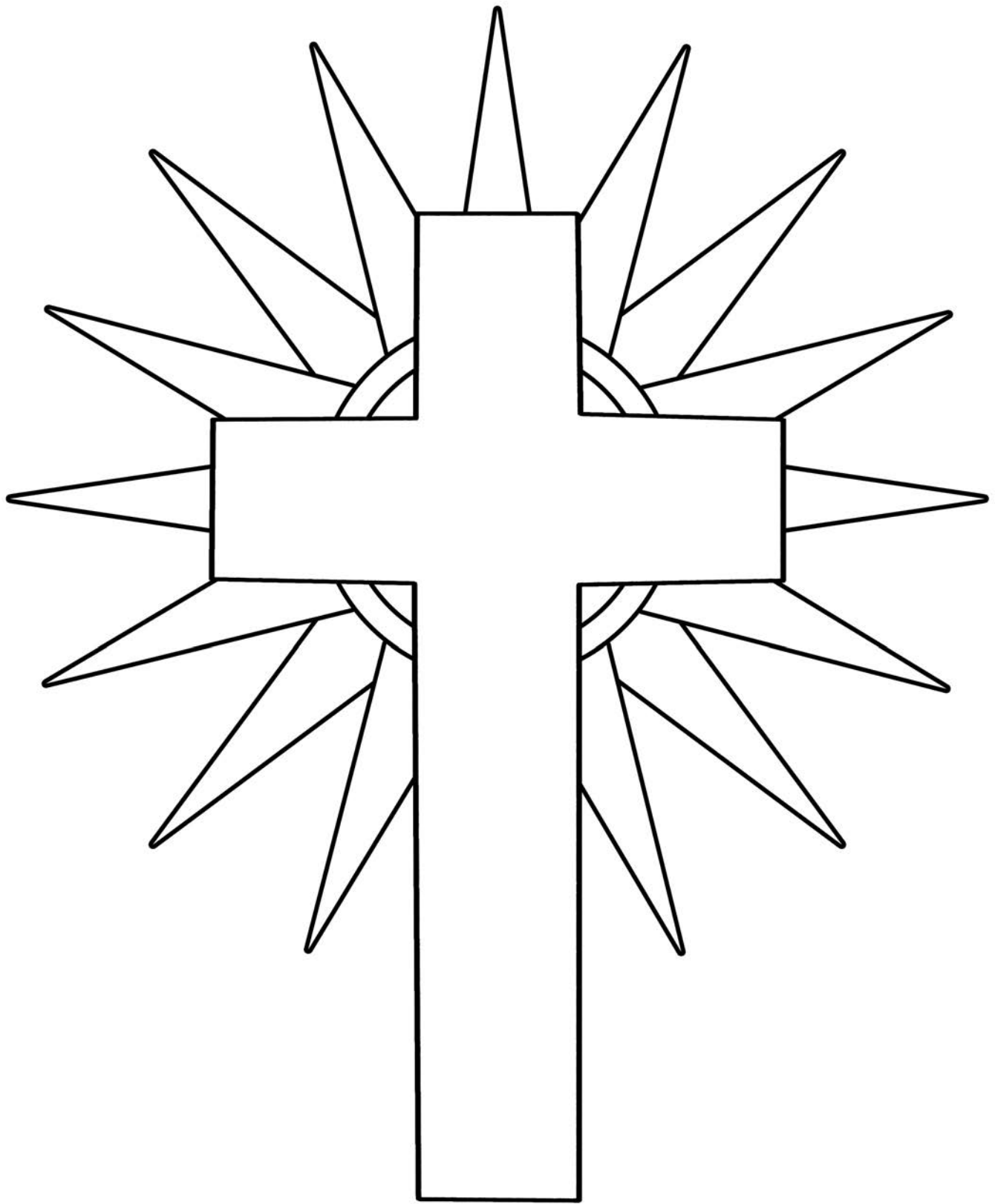
Righteous anger is a blessing – to be angry at injustice spurs us to act to make things better. How we use our anger is important – Jesus didn’t hurt anyone, but he was dramatic, loud, and visible to make his point. We can follow his example, by having courage to stand up and speak out when change is needed, always ensuring we are not harming others.

Sometimes working towards social fraternity requires that we stand up against what others think is normal. Sometimes we have to say something many times, and in many ways until we are heard. Sometimes practising love and tolerance in our world requires change.

When Jesus died on the cross, He changed the system of how we relate to God. He offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice when He died on the cross for us, so that we no longer are required to make sacrifices at the temple. Jesus wanted us to focus not on preparing ourselves to meet God, but to actually spend time with God and work on doing what God asks of us. We are called to spend our life working for the kingdom of God, a world of peace where all can encounter the love of God through each other.

Discussion questions:

- When and where are we scared to stand up for what is fair?
- How can we put our lives in service of social fraternity this week?



4th Sunday of Lent

John 3:14-21

“²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Today’s Gospel starts with a throwback to Moses (Numbers 21:4-9, go look it up!), which hints at the sacrifice of Jesus, so that all of us who are sinners and witness Jesus’ death will receive the promise of eternal life by believing He is the Son of God.

As we journey through Lent, we prepare to remember Jesus’ death on Good Friday and for the celebration of His resurrection at Easter. We are asked to really look at our lives, our habits, and our relationship with God. We are given a chance in Lent to make sure we have the right priorities and to make our relationships right, first with God, especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and then with our sisters and brothers.

Admitting when we have done something wrong is difficult. And doing what is right can be just as difficult, especially if we are frustrated, angry, or tired. It can be really difficult to listen when someone’s opinions are different from ours or when their experience does not match our own.

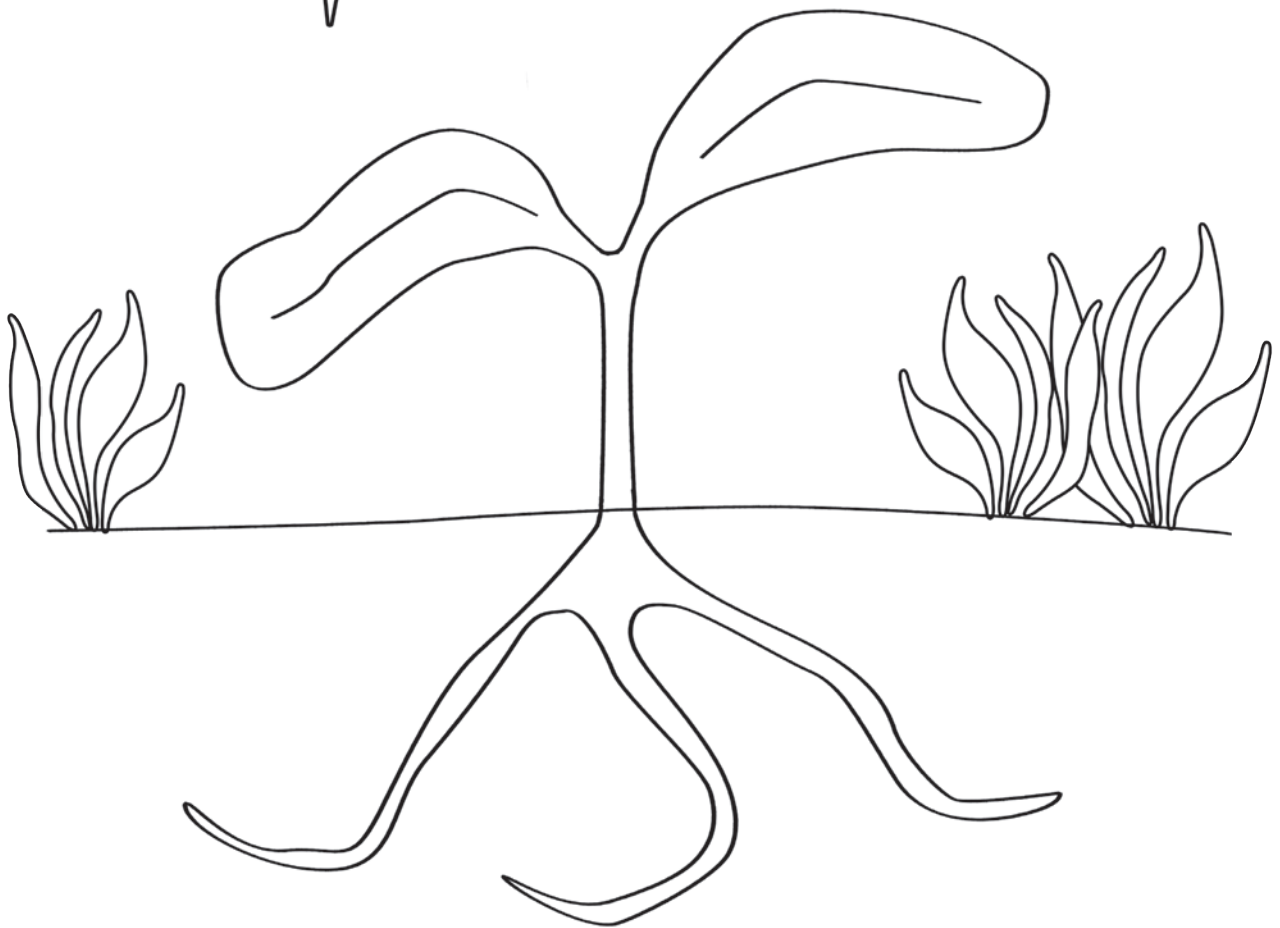
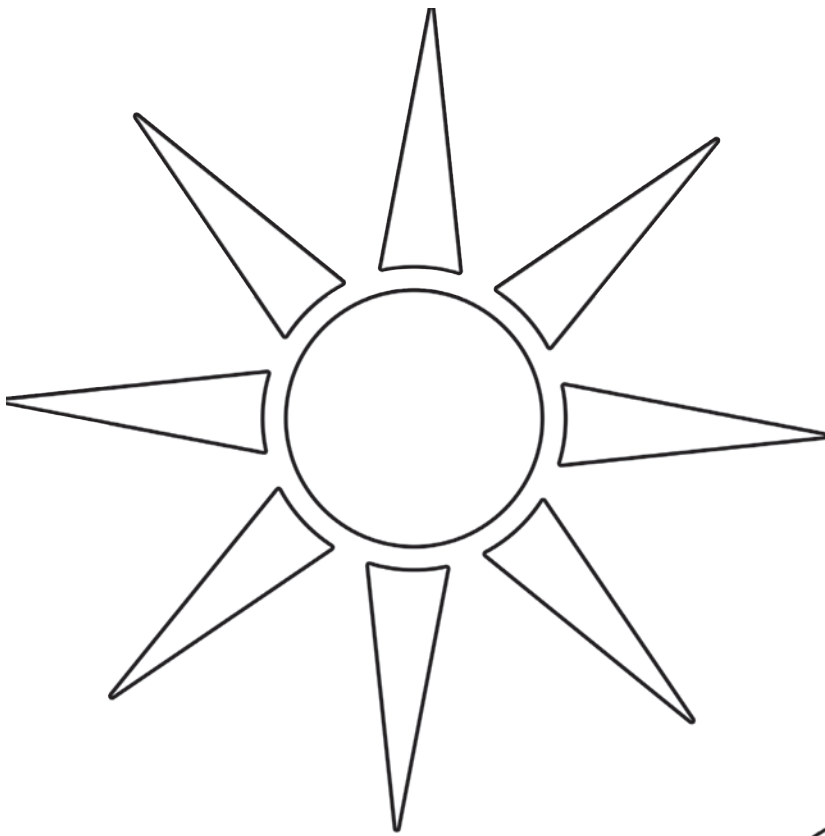
We must have courage in looking at our intentions and our actions through the Light of Christ. We must have courage in choosing to be humble, to apologize, and to change when we have done wrong. We must learn how our actions impact others and do better as we grow. This is the path of Solidarity.

Following the path of Christ is not always easy, but if we truly seek to follow the light, our steps illuminated by scripture, paying attention to the Spirit’s movements in our life, listening to the wisdom of our elders and leaders, we can stay true to the path.

Discussion Questions:

- **How can we help each other be courageous, and create an environment where admitting wrong and apologizing are easier?**

Let us find inspiration this week in Development and Peace’s campaign prayer, taken from Pope Francis’s latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*.



5th Sunday of Lent

John 12:20-33

Solidarity Sunday!

“²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

Today is Solidarity Sunday. It is a day that was set aside by the Canadian Bishops when they created Development and Peace, a day for all Canadian Catholics to reflect on how we love our sisters and brothers around the world and to share what we can to help those who are most vulnerable.

Living in Solidarity means dedicating ourselves to the wellbeing of our sisters and brothers – to take up the struggles they face as our own, to share in the celebration, the pain, the joy, and the journey together. We learn from each other, offering what we have for the common good, and being willing to listen and adjust our practices for the benefit of our sisters and brothers.

Solidarity is a way of loving each other – of willing the good of the other person, and working for it too. Sometimes this means we have to let go our own comforts and the convenient options, choosing to do what is better for others and our planet instead. When it comes to building peace, this means that we may need to let go of our egos, adjust our expectations, and make room for others in our hopes and dreams.

By living charitably and compassionately towards others and ensuring justice and fairness in how we treat each other, we can really build peace together.

Discussion Questions:

- **In what area of our lives can we more deeply enter into solidarity by learning, praying and acting? (eating and purchases locally, making our house a bottled water free zone, advocating for our government to support a just recovery after the pandemic, etc?)**



6th Sunday of Lent

Mark 14:1 – 15:47

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Accepting to follow God is not an easy path. Living compassion or kindness, praying daily, and protecting the dignity of our sisters and brothers – none are easy tasks.

At the 2016 World Youth Day celebrations in Krakow, Pope Francis told young people:

“My friends, Jesus is the Lord of risk, of the eternal ‘more.’ Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths. To blaze trails that open up new horizons capable of spreading joy, the joy that is born of God’s love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy. To take the path of the “craziness” of our God, who teaches us to encounter him in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the friend in trouble, the prisoner, the refugee and the migrant, and our neighbours who feel abandoned. To take the path of our God, who encourages us to be politicians, thinkers, social activists. The God who asks us to devise an economy inspired by solidarity. In all the settings in which you find yourselves, God’s love invites you bring the Good News, making of your own lives a gift to him and to others.”

This Lent, Development and Peace is asking us to build bridges, open dialogues, and make space for each other. We have to take up the challenge, peacefully, to build God’s Kingdom here on Earth – in these 40 days of Lent, and beyond.

“Are you up to this? What answer will you give, with your hands and with your feet, to the Lord, who is the way, the truth and the life?” – Pope Francis, WYD Krakow, July 2016

Discuss these questions from Pope Francis with your family.

Continue your journey in Solidarity by becoming members of Development and Peace. This will help you stay connected to social justice issues, learn how to take action, and invite you into a community of like-minded folk in your area. Learn more at devp.org/membership.