

Relationship with GOD

More than Just SUNDAY

Making Lent Count



Each year it seems Christmas is barely in the rear-view mirror when suddenly we see Lent looming ahead. Ash Wednesday is just a month away! (March 6). The risk is that we will tumble into Lent half-aware and not really recognize it till about the third week. One way to avoid this and to make Lent really count is to engage it with other people in your family and in your parish – planning ahead.

It is likely that your parish will feature a number of opportunities for deepening your life in Christ this Lent. Be sure to watch for them and take advantage of them. Many parishes encourage small groups to meet around some combination of reflection and prayer. This is one of the best means for personal and community renewal.

If you are part of such a group or looking to form one, you may already have your resources lined up. In the event that you are looking for some good options, you are invited to consider the following five:

Blessed Are You: Living the Beatitudes, by Chris Ruff

This 6-session book for small group study is an excellent fit for the 6 weeks of Lent. Each session covers one of the Beatitudes (“Blessed are the poor in spirit, the merciful, the pure in heart,” etc.) with a brief commentary and a compelling true story to help that Beatitude come to life. Like the other books in the Discipleship Series, the concise sessions are rounded out by prayer and discussion questions that apply the

Beatitudes to our daily lives, with a special emphasis on love of neighbor in Christ. To preview the book, visit www.diolc.org/faith-alive. To order at the diocesan price of \$10 each, contact the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns by emailing ministries@diolc.org or calling 608-791-0161.

How God Offers Us Guidance, by Ann and Carol Lankford

How does somebody go about seeking guidance from God? How can we tell if it's just us talking to ourselves or if we're listening to God? These questions are answered through 8 sessions which will provide principles for knowing that God guides us as well as understanding how this guidance from God is given. The focus of the sessions includes such topics as how God offers us guidance in answer to our personal prayer, through the Scriptures and through other people. The materials for the 8 sessions may be downloaded from the Diocesan website: diolc.org/deeper.

Catholicism, by Bishop Robert Barron

This DVD Series captures the beauty of Catholicism as Bishop Barron explains why we believe what we believe, on-location and in the streets illustrating the splendor of the global Church. This is the Catholic story told with knowledge, sympathy, and passion, rooted in friendship with Jesus Christ. You will discover the full meaning of the Faith by one of the Church's best messengers. (The DVD Program can be checked out from your parish and discussion questions will be emailed to you by contacting Ann at alankford@diolc.org.)

Oremus - Let Us Pray, by Fr. Mark Toups

Do you find it easy to pray? Is prayer an integral part of your day? For most of us, prayer becomes a source of frustration as

we struggle to calm our minds and to find even a few minutes to pray. In our busy lives, prayer is seen as a luxury, when in reality, it is at the foundation of a healthy spiritual life. The Program is personal in that Fr. Toups relates personal stories to explain how to become more aware of God's presence in your life, learn how to overcome frustrations, distractions and dryness in prayer and grow in your relationship with God and those around you. (8 Sessions; DVD Program available for free rental from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization by calling 608-791-2658)

Who Am I to Judge? Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love, by Edward Sri

How do we talk about what is right and wrong in a world that no longer believes in truth? When we're bombarded with messages of “Be tolerant!” and “Don't judge!” many people feel afraid to say anything is right or wrong. In this 8-part study program, learn how Catholic morality is all about love, how making a judgment is not judging a person's soul, how to share the truth with compassion, and how relativism wounds people and is “the spiritual poverty of our times.” (DVD Program available for free rental from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization by calling 608-791-2658)

If you would like basic guidelines to facilitate a group as well as helpful suggestions for most effective participation, go to diolc.org/deeper. May you be drawn closer to Jesus this Lent.

By Ann Lankford
Office for Catechesis and Evangelization



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