



40 Ideas for 40 Days

from Joe Paprocki

What Lenten Hymns Teach

This Lenten activity is an opportunity for catechists to reach those young people who are more musically inclined.



- Ask the young people to identify some of their favorite songs that they keep on their Ipod or other MP3 players.
- Explain that some songs and CDs are labeled with warnings that the content is “explicit.” Tell the young people that, for better or worse, songs teach us, and that songs with explicit lyrics can teach us that certain unacceptable behaviors (such as violence against women) are OK.
- Tell the young people that, by the same token, songs can teach us positive messages. If possible, name a few contemporary songs with positive messages (for example: “If Everyone Cared” by Nickelback; “Beautiful Day” by U2; “Soak Up the Sun” by Cheryl Crow)
- Point out that at Mass, we sing songs (hymns) that teach us about our faith and that, during the season of Lent, we sing some traditional Lenten hymns.
- Arrange to have some hymnals from the church on hand and invite the young people to locate some of the following examples of Lenten hymns.
 - Stabat Mater (At the Cross Her Station Keeping)
 - O Sacred Head Surrounded
 - Be With Me Lord
 - The Glory of These Forty Days
 - Hosea
 - All Glory, Laud, and Honor
 - Jesus, Remember Me
 - Attende Domine – Hear, O Lord
 - Forty Days and Forty Nights
 - (I’m sure there are many other wonderful Lenten hymns not mentioned here)

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- Arrange the young people in groups of 3 or 4 and assign a song or songs to each group and tell them to summarize what the song teaches us about the season of Lent (i.e. if you didn't know anything about Lent and all you had was this song, what would you learn about Lent from it?)
- If possible, arrange to play recordings of some of these hymns or arrange to have a choir member, cantor, or liturgical musician join you to play/sing these songs for the young people.
- After each song is played, have the young people report what the song teaches.