



40 Ideas for 40 Days

from Joe Paprocki

What's with the Pretzels?

- Ask the children to show a common posture for praying (kneeling or standing with hands folded)
- Explain that, in the early Church, Christians often prayed with their arms folded across their chests, each hand on the opposite shoulder (demonstrate for them).
- Invite the children to stand and to fold their arms in the manner described. Together, pray the Lord's Prayer.
- Next, show the children a twisted pretzel.
- Show how the pretzel "imitates" the prayer posture that they just demonstrated.
- Explain that, because we are called to pray and fast during Lent, the pretzel has come to be seen as a Lenten food because it reminds us of the prayer posture of early Christians and it is a simple food that we can eat in place of a meal.
- Tell the children that, according to tradition, an Italian monk in the early 600s invented the pretzel as a reminder to his brother monks to pray during the season of Lent. He named his creation "little arms" which in Latin is "bracellae." From this word came the German word bretzel (eventually pretzel).
- As an option, distribute modeling clay to the children and have them roll the clay into a "rope" about 10 inches long and then twist it into the pretzel shape.
- For a simple pretzel recipe that you can provide to the children, visit <http://daniellebean.com/recipes/breads-and-rolls/lenten-pretzels/>
- Encourage the children to include pretzels as part of their Lenten diet, especially as a replacement for meals they may be fasting from.
- Include pretzels as a Lenten treat in your classroom.
- Use this as an opportunity to talk about prayer postures in our personal prayer as well as at Mass (standing, sitting, kneeling, bowing, genuflecting, and so on).

