



**St. Ignatius of Loyola Church
Pre-K-5 Family-Based Program**

March 14th - Fourth Sunday of Lent

Reflection Point: We are called to be faithful disciples, and sometimes we make mistakes and sin, but God always shows us mercy and forgiveness.

Reading: John 3:14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish
but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned,
but whoever does not believe has already been condemned,
because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the verdict,
that the light came into the world,
but people preferred darkness to light,
because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light
and does not come toward the light,
so that his works might not be exposed.

But whoever lives the truth comes to the light,
so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Reflecting Together:

1. According to what we just heard, why did Jesus come into the world? How does he do this?
2. Because Jesus died for our salvation, we do not hide our sins from God. Instead we confess our sins to God, confident that God forgives us. In what sacrament do we experience God's forgiveness?

Going Deeper:

1. When was a time that you may have acted in unloving ways? How did you feel?
2. During Lent, we are invited to spend time on how we can improve our relationship with God, including temptations and sin. What is one thing you can work on this week to be closer to God and experience the joy of God's forgiveness?

Finding God in Our Week

Parents whose children are afraid of the dark are struck by John's observation that darkness is preferred to light. Perhaps this is as it should be. God made us to live in the light of his love. But this original friendship with God was corrupted by sin. Our sin causes us to shy away from Christ, the light that has come into the world. During the season of Lent, we try to fight this tendency by remembering God's great mercy and the salvation that we have received through Jesus. We do not fear confessing our sins, knowing that God forgives us, and so, during Lent, we seek out opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

At Home

After your family gathers, sit for a time in darkness, then light a candle. Invite people to talk about what it felt like to be in the darkness and to compare that to their feelings when the candle was lit. What are we able to see by the limited glow of the candlelight that we couldn't see when we were sitting in darkness? John's Gospel teaches us that Jesus was the light that came into the world. In this light we know ourselves to be sinners, but we are not condemned. Instead we have been saved because we have been forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Conclude in prayer together, thanking God for the great gift of forgiveness we have received through Jesus. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

An Example of Lived Faith: Saint Laura Montoya



St. Laura Montoya, whose feast day is October 21st, was born in 1874 in Jericó, Colombia. After Laura's father died in war when she was only a child, she was forced to live with different family members in a state of poverty. This reality kept her from receiving formal education during her childhood. What no one expected is that one day she would become Colombia's first saint! Her aunt enrolled her in a school at the age of 16, so she would become a teacher and make a living for herself. She learned quickly and became a great writer, educator and leader.

She was a pious woman and wished to devote herself to the evangelization of the natives. As she prepared to write Pope Pius X for help, she received the pope's new writing on the deplorable condition of Indians in America. Laura saw it as a confirmation from God and founded the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart and St. Catherine of Siena, working for the evangelization of natives and fighting for their behalf to be seen as children of God. May St. Laura's ministry inspire us to keep working to bring the light of Christ to all with those we encounter!