

Making Pretzels

Kitchen fun can provide teachable moments.* So roll up your sleeves and help your children learn how traditional pretzels can remind us of God.

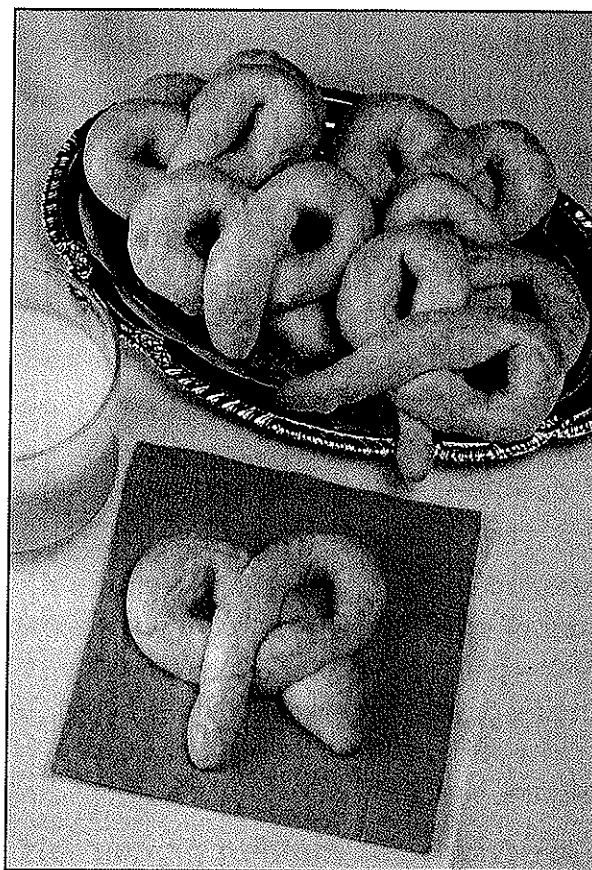
Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 1 pkg. active dry yeast
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 1/2–5 cups unsifted flour
- 1 egg, beaten (for glazing pretzels)
- coarse salt (to sprinkle on glaze)

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, dissolve yeast according to the directions on the package.
2. Add sugar and salt; stir until dissolved.
3. Add 3 cups of flour, stirring until all flour is mixed.
4. Add remaining flour and knead dough until smooth.
5. Place dough back in bowl, cover with a towel, and let dough rest for an hour or more.
6. Give each child a golf-ball size piece of dough. Have them roll the dough in the palms of their hands until they have 12-inch long strips.

7. Form pretzels on greased cookie sheet. Brush pretzels with beaten egg and sprinkle with coarse salt.
8. Bake at 425 degrees for 12–15 minutes. Makes 2 dozen pretzels.



** As you're mixing the ingredients and kneading the dough, talk about the shape of a traditional pretzel. It has three parts to the whole, making it a perfect discussion-starter for talking about the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Its shape can also remind us of arms crossed over the chest, which is how early Christians prayed. Rather than folding their hands as we often do, they crossed their arms over their hearts. Monks are credited with forming these traditional pretzels as symbols of arms crossed in prayer.*

Reflection

Redeemer of the world, give us a greater share of your passion through a deeper spirit of repentance, so that we may share the glory of your resurrection.

The Liturgy

Prayer

Dear Parent(s),

During the Lenten season, we will be focusing on different aspects of Lent: its meaning, its symbols, its customs, and its traditions. Each week, your child will bring home Family Take-Home Pages, which are filled with activities that reinforce what we are discussing and learning in class. These Take-Home Pages are theme based and divided into three sections: Warm-Up Exercises, Getting Started, and Putting It into Practice. The theme for this week of Lent is Prayer. May the activities suggested in these pages provide you with additional tools for nurturing your child's faith.

Warm-Up Exercises...

Gather the family around the Lenten candle. Have one member of the family light the candle and another read from Scripture.

A reading from Luke 4:1-13

When Jesus returned from the Jordan River, the power of the Holy Spirit was with him, and the Spirit led him into the desert. For forty days Jesus was tested by the devil, and during that time he went without eating. When it was all over, he was hungry. The devil said to Jesus, "If you are God's Son, tell this stone to turn into bread."

Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say, 'No one can live only on food.'"

Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place and quickly showed him all the nations on earth. The devil said, "I will give all this power and glory to you. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. Just worship me, and you can have it all."

Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'"

Finally, the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on top of the temple. The devil said, "If you are God's

Son, jump off. The Scriptures say: 'God will tell his angels to take care of you. They will catch you in their arms, and you will not hurt your feet on the stones.'"

Jesus answered, "The Scriptures also say, 'Don't try to test the Lord your God!'"

After the devil had finished testing Jesus in every way possible, he left him for a while.

After sharing this passage with your family, lead them in a discussion. You may want to use the following questions:

We heard how the devil tried to tempt Jesus. How do you think the devil tempts us today?

What are some of the things that keep us from spending time with Jesus? Could these be temptations, too?

How can temptations be harmful?

What can we do to avoid temptation?

How can prayer help us avoid temptation?

How often do we turn to Jesus in prayer?

Follow your discussion with prayer. Have everyone close their eyes. Then tell them: Everyone struggles with temptations. Sometimes it's not easy to do what is right. Think about something you're struggling with now. Is it like a boxing match? A wrestling match? A dark cloud? Drowning? Now picture Jesus right there with you in the struggle. Put the struggle or the

Family Take-Home Pages

temptation right at Jesus' feet. You go to a river and sit on the riverbank. Jesus tells you he understands your struggles. He also had to struggle. Tell Jesus everything in your heart. Feel Jesus put his arm on your shoulder. No matter how many times you may have fallen, Jesus still puts his arm on your shoulder and says, "I died that you might live for me and be truly happy. I will never leave you. You mean so much to me that I gave up my life in order to save you. Count on me to be there with you all the time. I am always there to help you."

After the prayer, talk briefly about what it is like to know that Jesus understands. Come up with a prayer you can pray as a family in tough situations, such as, "God bless you, God love you, God keep you," or, "Jesus, I'm so weak, help me." Suggest these words to each other when things are tough.

Then pray the Our Father together as a family.

Getting Started...

The Bible gives us lots of clues about praying. In the Gospel of Matthew (6:6), we discover that Jesus told his followers, "When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private, and he will reward you."

Jesus wasn't talking about going to your bedroom to pray. He was talking about the "inner room" of your heart. When you block everything from your mind except for Jesus, then you will find that "inner room." Even in a room full of people, you can pray privately in your heart.

Help your children learn to find that "inner room" with the following exercise.

Have your children find a comfortable place to sit and have them close their eyes. Tell them: Imagine a breeze blowing you far, far away. Toss your worries from your mind.



Let the wind carry them away. Pause, then add: Now, relax and think of Jesus. Repeat silently, Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you. Say it over and over again. Once you've focused on Jesus, sit quietly with him.

After a few minutes, have the children open their eyes. Explain that this is called meditation.

Putting It into Practice...

The Bible tells us to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Why not make this your family's goal for this week?

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Whenever you hear an ambulance siren, pray for the person in need of medical attention, medical personnel, and family members.

Whenever someone tells you wonderful news, thank God for that blessing.

Whenever you hear bad news, say a prayer for the person(s) involved.

When a friend or neighbor is going through a difficult time, pray for him or her.

When you receive a card, letter, or e-mail, pray for the person who sent it.

When someone celebrates a birthday, sing: May the dear Lord bless you... (to the same tune as Happy Birthday). Song is prayer, too!

See how many suggestions your family can come up with. Happy praying!

Praying the Rosary

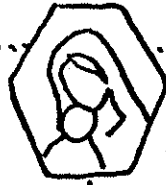
The Rosary is a Gospel prayer in which we contemplate the lives of Jesus and Mary. In the Rosary, we pray with Mary to grow closer to her Son, Jesus.

Often a parent will “lead” the first half of the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory, while the children join in with the second half. But you may want to let your children “lead” different decades of the Rosary. (You can obtain posters of the mysteries of the Rosary at www.pauline.org.)

Though the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries have been around for centuries, Pope John Paul II added another set of mysteries in 2002—the luminous mysteries. Some families prefer to meditate on the sorrowful mysteries during Lent. Other families prefer to use the luminous mysteries during the first five weeks of Lent and the sorrowful mysteries during Holy Week. During the Easter season, the glorious mysteries are preferred.

How to Pray the Rosary

1. Start by making the Sign of the Cross.
2. Pray the Apostles’ Creed, then one Our Father, three Hail Marys, and one Glory.
3. Announce the first mystery (see mysteries following.) Explain it to your children or read it from the Bible, and then pray a decade of the Rosary, which includes one Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and one Glory.
4. Announce the second mystery and then pray one Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and one Glory.



5. Repeat this process, announcing a different mystery with each decade.
6. When all five mysteries are completed, pray the Hail, Holy Queen.

Mysteries of the Rosary

Joyful Mysteries

The Angel announces to Mary she is to be the Mother of God’s Son (Lk 1:26–29, 38); Mary visits Elizabeth (Lk 1:40–42); Jesus is born (Lk 2:6–7); Jesus is presented in the Temple (Lk 2:22, 34, 35); the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:42–43, 46).

Luminous Mysteries

John baptizes Jesus (Mt 3:16–17); Jesus reveals his glory at the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1–5, 9–11); Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God (Mt 1:14–15); Jesus is transfigured (Mt 9:2–3, 7); Jesus gives us the Eucharist (Mt 14:22–25).

Sorrowful Mysteries

Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:32, 35–36); Jesus is scourged (Mt 27:26); Jesus is crowned with thorns (Mt 27:28–30); Jesus carries the cross (Jn 19:17); Jesus is crucified (Jn 19:25–27).

Glorious Mysteries

Jesus rises from the dead (Lk 24:1, 4–7); Jesus ascends into heaven (Acts 1:9–11); the Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles (Acts 2:1–4); Mary is assumed into heaven (Jn 14:3); Mary is crowned Queen of heaven and earth (Rev 12:1).

