

LENT 2025

Suggested Activities

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION USA



**Hope is the
"sure and
steadfast
anchor of the
soul". - Pope
Francis in his
2025 Lenten
Message**

The Light of Hope During Lent

The focus of Pope Francis' 2025 Lenten message was Hope. Lent offers a wonderful opportunity to help children understand the concept of hope and how they can be "missionaries" of Christ's love in their everyday lives. Lent is a special time when we prepare our hearts for Easter. It might seem like a serious time with its purple colors and talk about sacrifice, but Lent is actually full of hope!

Hope is like a small light that shines even when things seem dark. Jesus once said, "You are the light of the world." During Lent, we can learn to be that light for others. When we share hope with someone who is sad or lonely, we're being missionaries of Jesus' love.

Be Missionaries of Hope During Lent:

- **Small Acts of Kindness:** Even the smallest act of kindness can bring hope to someone's day. Holding a door, sharing a snack, or giving a compliment are all ways to be Jesus' helpers.
- **Prayer Partners:** Choose someone to pray for each day of Lent - maybe a friend who seems sad or a family member who is sick.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Write down one thing you're thankful for each day of Lent. Noticing God's blessings helps us share hope with others.
- **Sacrifice with a Smile:** When we give up something for Lent, we can do it with joy! This teaches us to be cheerful givers like Jesus.
- **Forgiveness Practice:** Learning to forgive others (and ourselves) brings hope to relationships that might be hurting.



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"O Lord, the day I was born anew of water and the Holy Spirit, the image of your Cross was engraved upon my heart. Today you ask me: 'Whose inscription is written thereon?' It is be yours, then let me render to God the things that are God's. Grant that like, like Veronica, I may brave all human respect to carry your image about with me, not on a veil but on the tablet of my heart. Bestow on me the grace to be so much like you that others among whom I live may see something of you in me, as the maidservant saw something of you in Peter. If they do not see in me the marks of your passion, let them at least see the sparks of your love."

-Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, Way of the Cross, Station VI

St. Veronica's Veil Activity

On the day Jesus carried his cross, he was not alone. We too are not alone on our Lenten Journey. As a reminder of the sacrifices we make during Lent for our brothers and Sisters in the Missions, recreate the Veronica's veil to put on display.

You will need:

- **black crayons (peeled)**
- **Christ's face template (BELOW)**
- **8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper**
- **hot glue or white glue**
- **white or light-colored fabric (cut about the same size as your paper)**

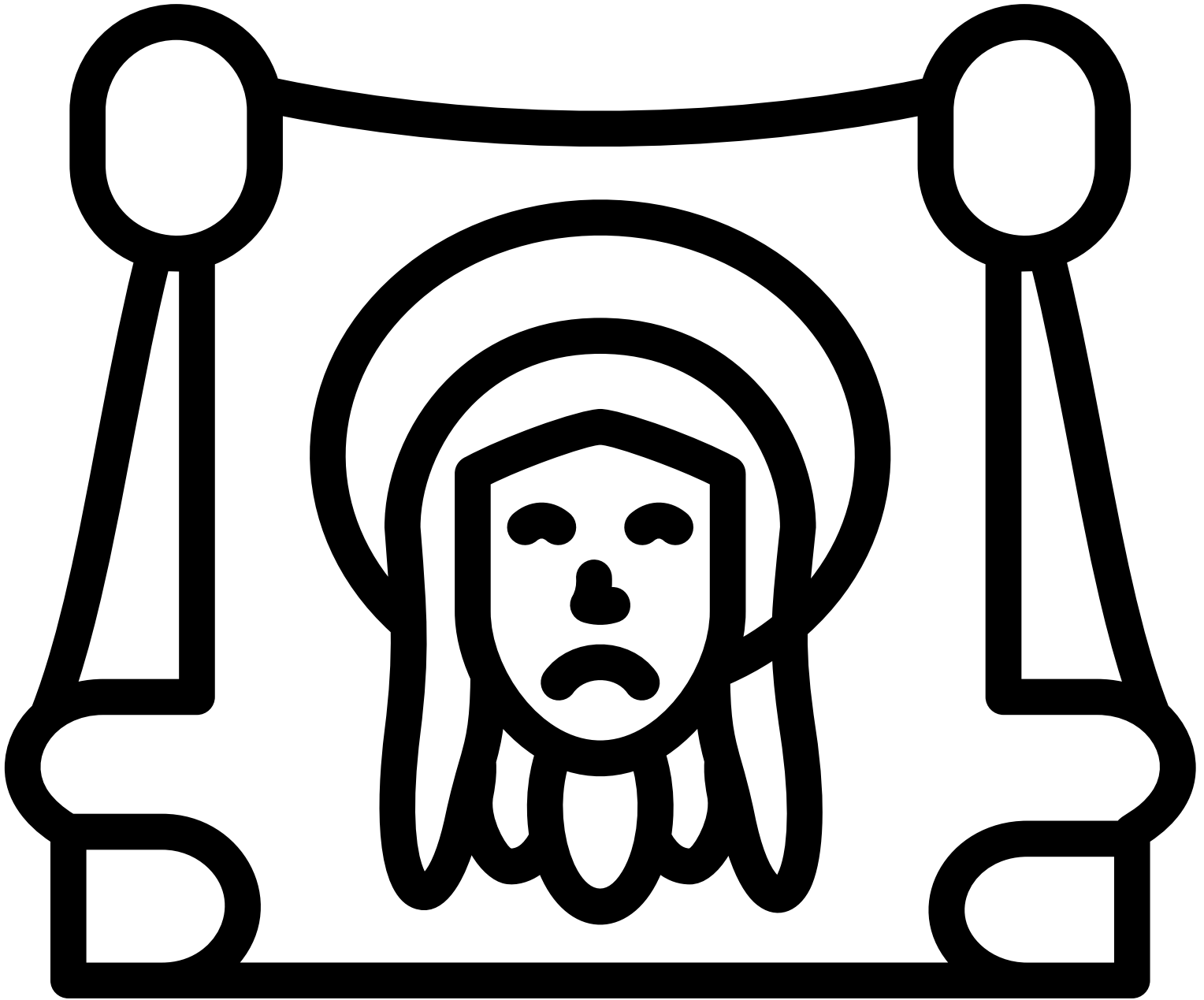


1. Begin by printing out a copy of the Christ's face template.
2. "Trace" this template onto another piece of paper using glue. Hot glue works well, but you can use whatever glue you have on hand.
3. Allow this "glue outline" to dry completely. This is what you will use to put Christ's face onto your "veil." This glue outline is reusable- you only need one for a small group of children or repeat this step to have multiple outlines for larger groups.
4. Tape the glue outline to a table or hard surface.
5. Center and tape your fabric over it. Using the side of a black crayon, rub back and forth firmly to transfer Christ's face to your veil.



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Saint Veronica, Pray for Us





PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION – LEADER:

Though not mentioned in Scripture, tradition tells us of Veronica, whose name means "true image." As Jesus carried His cross to Calvary, she stepped forward from the crowd, moved with compassion at His suffering. She offered her veil to wipe His face, and miraculously, the image of His face remained on the cloth.

St. Veronica reminds us that even small acts of kindness matter. In a crowd that watched and did nothing, she took action. She shows us that when we reach out to those who suffer, we encounter the face of Christ. We as missionaries, mimic her example, and help the most vulnerable of the world through our prayers and sacrifices for the Missions.

Gospel Reading: Matthew (25:34-40)

Leader: Loving God, during this Lenten season, we gather to reflect on the compassion of St. Veronica, who reached out to Jesus in His suffering. We pray for children around the world who face hardship and challenges, especially those in mission territories. Fill us with hope as we journey toward Easter, that we may see the face of Christ in all we meet and respond with love and generosity. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: For children who hunger and thirst, that they may receive nourishment for their bodies and souls, we pray: All: Lord, show us Your face in these children and move us to action.

Reader 2: For children without access to education, that they may find opportunities to learn and grow, we pray: All: Lord, show us Your face in these children and move us to action.

Reader 3: For children who are sick or suffering, that they may find healing and comfort, we pray: All: Lord, show us Your face in these children and move us to action.

Reader 4: For children who have lost hope, that they may experience the love of Christ through our support and prayers, we pray: All: Lord, show us Your face in these children and move us to action.





Mission Inspiration

SAINT JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MALAWI



There is a very special priest named Father Ruffino who grew up in Uganda, a country in Africa. When Father Ruffino was a little boy in the 1970s, his country was going through some hard times. He was baptized by missionaries called Comboni missionaries, who came from far away to tell people about Jesus.



Father Ruffino loved God and the Church ever since he was a very small boy!

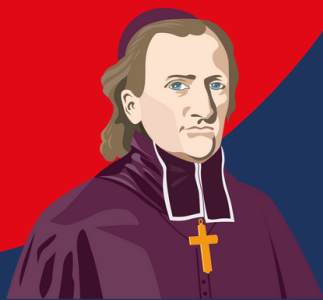
But something really sad happened when he was just nine years old - his dad died on Christmas Eve.

"Growing up, I used to think the most important feast in the Church was Christmas, because there was the possibility of having a good meal and drinking a soda," he said.

"Yet that December 25, when the whole world was around the crib celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, my siblings, mum and relatives were around dad's casket. Through this sorrow, I came to understand the newly born Jesus, Emmanuel-God, with us as a God who is with us all the times of our lives till the end of days."

This made Father Ruffino very sad, but it also helped him understand something important: Jesus (who is called Emmanuel, which means "God with us") is with us during happy times AND sad times. He is always there for us!





Mission Inspiration

SAINT JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MALAWI

Father Ruffino's mom had very strong faith even when she was sad, and this helped Father Ruffino find hope - just like the hope we celebrate at Easter.

One day, Father Ruffino talked to a friend who said he could only go to church "once every eight or nine months." This made Father Ruffino realize what he wanted to do with his life - he wanted to become a priest so he could bring Jesus to people who couldn't go to church very often.

The Missionary Childhood Association supports priest and missionaries just like Father Ruffino, who help children all around the world. These missionaries are spreading this same, very special message during the Lenten Season, to have **HOPE**.

During Lent, when we remember how Jesus spent 40 days praying and fasting in the desert, we can help missionaries like Father Ruffino who work hard every day to share Jesus' love with people who need it most.

Pray this Lenten Prayer with the *Pontifical Mission Societies*

Heavenly Father,
Through the intercession of Our Lady,
Help me walk with Christ this Lenten season.
Let my heart burn for souls in distant lands—
Where there is hunger, help me share Your bread,
Where there is darkness, help me bring Your light,
Where faith has not reached, help me serve Your love.

Teach me to give, not out of abundance, but sacrifice,
Following Saint Francis Xavier's burning zeal.
Make my heart beat with Your missionary spirit, As
I unite my prayers with those who serve afar.

Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving,
Strengthen the bonds of our universal Church,
And draw all peoples to Your Sacred Heart.
Make this Lent be a time of evangelization—
For me, for mission lands, and for all Your people.

Through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Lenten Sacrifices

- Giving up treats like candy, desserts, or favorite snacks
- Limiting screen time or giving up a specific game or show
- Setting aside a portion of their allowance for MCA
- Doing extra chores or helping others without being asked
- Taking on positive practices like daily prayer or reading age-appropriate religious stories
- Participating in family prayer or devotions
- Being extra kind to siblings or classmates
- Creating a Lenten calendar with small daily acts of kindness

