



# PARENTS 4PARENTS PRESS



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**“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”  
Ephesians 4:32**

As we embark on the sacred journey of Lent, we are invited to reflect deeply on our faith, renew our spirits, and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter. This season is a time for introspection, prayer, and acts of kindness, reminding us of the profound love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Lent offers us a unique opportunity to grow closer to God and to one another. Through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we can strengthen our faith and demonstrate our commitment to living out the Gospel values in our daily lives. Let us embrace this season with open hearts and a willingness to transform ourselves and our communities.

May this Lenten season be a time of spiritual renewal and grace for each of us. Let us support one another in our Lenten journeys and strive to make a positive impact in the lives of those around us.

Wishing you all a blessed and meaningful Lent.



OAPCE

2025 Lenten message from the Liaison Bishop

✠ Yvan Mathieu, SM

Dear Parents of the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE),

On Wednesday March 5th, we start the Lenten Season. During the forty days that precede the great feast of the Resurrection of Christ, we are invited to follow and imitate Jesus who, after his baptism by John, "Full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was put to the test by the devil." (Luke 4:1-2)

This year, the beginning of the Lenten Season coincides with the March break. Strange time to start a season of penance and fasting! But this is also a good reason to rediscover the spiritual meaning of Lent. In our childhood memories, Lent is synonymous with privation of good things: no dessert, no chocolate, no meat on Fridays. But Lent is fundamentally a time to return to God in order to love him with all our hearth, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength (see Mark 12:30). This can be done even when we enjoy the March break.

On Ash Wednesday, Jesus invites all his disciples to do three things: to give alms, to pray and to fast (see Matthew 6:1-6,16-18). These three practices touch fundamental relationships in our life: our relation to our brothers and sisters (almsgiving), our relation to God (prayer) and our relation to creation (fasting). In these three fundamental areas, we are invited to accomplish the will of God our Father. The idea is not to be praised or be seen by others. It is rather to center our life on the Gospel. The purpose is to be seen and praised by God: "your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Mt 6:4,6,18)

As Catholic parents, we could use the time we have during the March break and during Lent to be closer to our children and to show them how closely we follow Jesus' teaching in the Gospel. The idea is not so much to start preaching to them about charity, prayer and fasting. The most important way of teaching our kids about the Gospel is not so much what we say but how we act on a daily basis.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16) "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35)

Together with our children who received the light of Christ on the day of Baptism, let us take the time to rekindle the light of faith in our family life. A family could decide to put aside some money during Lent, and to share it with those who are in need. Another family will decide to invest some time in the food bank of its parish. This could be a dynamic way to give alms! What if each family of OAPCE was to take one brief moment, 15 minutes a week maybe, to pray together and to share the Sunday Gospel? Our prayer life would certainly improve! And since ecology is such an important issue for our kids, what if we were to do our best to recycle rather than waste the products we consume? What a fast that would be!

Have a great Lenten Season

✠ Yvan Mathieu, SM

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## ENGAGE

### OAPCE 86TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMING MAY 24, 2025 MORE DETAILS TO COME SOON!

OAPCE is excited to announce the 86th Annual Conference will take place on Saturday May 24, 2025 in conjunction with the Niagara Catholic District school board in Niagara Falls Ontario! The all day Conference will take place at St. Michael's Catholic Secondary School and will have presentations, resources and opportunities to meet other parents in Catholic Education from across the province! More details will come including cost, hotel info and agenda for the day!



OAPCE Regional meetings are where we connect as parents in Catholic Education! Thank you to all the OAPCE representatives who joined us in our last meeting in February! This is where we engage and see the true spirit of OAPCE lives when parents come together from across the province and grow together in our journey as parents! Please see our Regional reports on your School board webpage on our website under Enhance where you can find updates for all the regions. Our next meetings are in April check the website for updates and we look forward to always connecting with all of you! Stay informed and stay engaged!

[Learn More](#)

# ADVOCATE

We WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! As our ongoing advocacy for Parents in Catholic Education we would like to hear from you! We meet regularly with the Ministry of Education and provide ongoing feedback to them. OAPCE is surveying parents across the province to receive integral engagement in order to advocate! Please take a few minutes to fill in this anonymous form! The survey will close on March 28, 2025.

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## The Power of Choice

The right to choose our children's education is a fundamental pillar of Ontario's school system. In response to a recent opinion editorial calling for an end to public funding for Catholic schools, one Ontario parent shares a powerful perspective on why Catholic education remains vital. From personal experience to historical context, this response highlights the importance of preserving choice for families across the province. Read on to discover why Catholic schools continue to play a valuable role in shaping inclusive and well-rounded education for all students.

[Read More](#)





## ENHANCE

### The Future is Bright: Exploring Careers in Skilled Trades

As parents, we all want our children to find fulfilling and stable careers, but university isn't the only path to success. With Ontario's growing demand for skilled trades professionals, students have incredible opportunities to build rewarding careers with great salaries, hands-on experience, and minimal debt. This blog highlights key programs like co-op, apprenticeships, and Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), designed to help students gain valuable skills while still in high school. Discover how these programs can open doors to in-demand careers and set your child up for long-term success.

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### Beyond Giving Up Chocolate: A Parent's Journey Through Lent0

Lent is more than just giving something up—it's about transformation. This reflection explores how prayer, fasting, and almsgiving can deepen our faith and guide our children's spiritual growth in meaningful ways.

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## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT & RESOURCES

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### Pilgrims of Hope: Embracing the Jubilee Year of Hope

On February 13, 2025, OAPCE representatives gathered for an inspiring session with Dr. Josephine Lombardi, who explored the significance of the Jubilee Year of Hope. She reflected on the virtue of hope as a source of strength and renewal, reminding attendees of St. Paul's teachings and Pope Francis' reassurance that "Hope does not disappoint."



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## FAITH RESOURCES

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### Celebrating Saint Patrick: The Patron Saint of Ireland

Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is honored every year on March 17th for his role in spreading Christianity across the country. His incredible journey—from being captured as a slave to returning as a missionary—has inspired countless legends, including his use of the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity.



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## FAITH RESOURCES

### "Lego, Lent, and Bible Stories: A Creative Way to Connect with Your Kids"

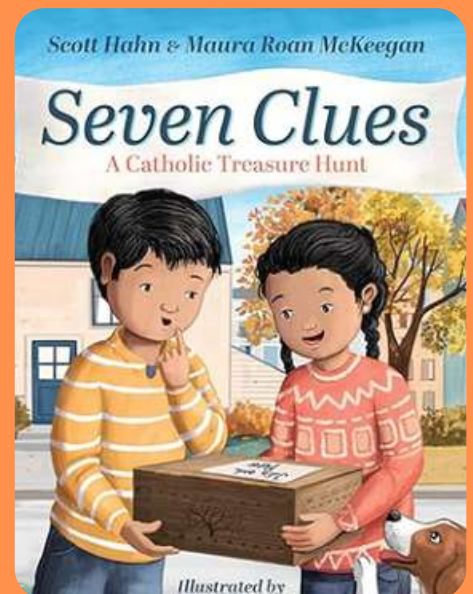
Lent is a time for reflection, prayer, and growing closer to God—but engaging children in this journey can be challenging. This year, why not use something they already love—Lego! By building Bible stories together, watching Lego-based faith videos, or even creating your own scenes, you can make Scripture come to life in a fun and meaningful way. Explore digital creators like Bible Builders and Big Block Studios, and turn playtime into faith-filled moments that deepen your family's connection during this sacred season.



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## OAPCE BOOK NOOK

On an otherwise ordinary day, the children unexpectedly receive a package at their doorstep, addressed specifically to them. Inside, they find an invitation and a scroll containing seven clues. As the mystery unfolds, the children embark on a treasure hunt that deepens their understanding of their Catholic faith. Each clue reveals another secret about the greatest gift God has ever given the world.



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## OAPCE BOOK NOOK

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Thus begins a love letter from an anonymous narrator to their beloved. Through rhyming couplets rich with metaphor, the letter offers thirteen heartfelt and admirable principles, collectively forming a guide for a life well lived. These gathered words of wisdom convey the narrator's deepest hopes for their cherished one as they embark on their future, emphasizing above all that they are loved unconditionally.

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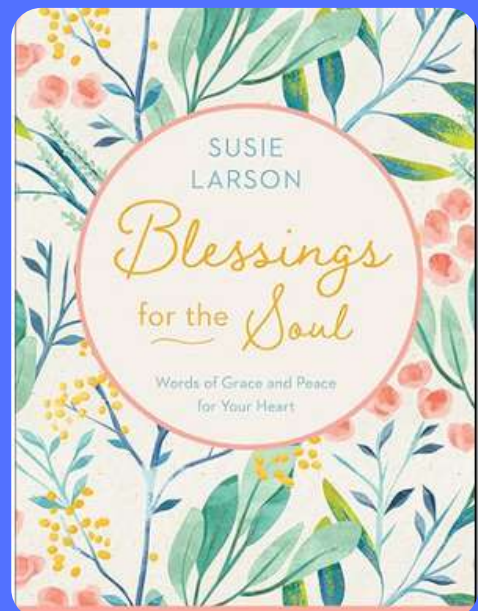


## OAPCE BOOK NOOK

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Start each day by remembering that God's love for you is passionate and everlasting. Entrust Jesus with your worries and responsibilities, allowing Him to nourish your heart, comfort your soul, and impart wisdom through His Word. Each blessing and accompanying Scripture takes just moments to read but is filled with a hopeful, biblical perspective that will bring joy to your soul.

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## International Women's Day

On this International Women's Day,  
as we celebrate and give thanks for the achievements of women,  
we remember the women who have played a part in our lives.

Those who have  
nurtured us,  
taught us,  
inspired us,  
loved us.

Forgive us when we have limited women  
through inequality,  
by stereotype,  
by exclusion,  
through lack of opportunity.

On this International Women's Day,  
as we acknowledge the challenges women still face,  
we pray that all women may know equality  
of healthcare,  
of education,  
of wealth,  
of prospects.

We pray that all women may know themselves to be  
respected,  
safe,  
included,  
empowered.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus,  
Amen.



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## SUPPORT OAPCE

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Your generous donations help us continue our mission to advocate for Catholic education and support parents in Ontario. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference in enriching the educational experience for our children. Join us in making a positive impact!

[\*\*SUPPORT NOW\*\*](#)

## STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

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Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter), and subscribe to our new YouTube channel for inspiring content, community updates, and spiritual resources. Like, follow, and subscribe to stay engaged with our faith community—we can't wait to connect with you online!



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