



# Holy Childhood Association

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## **PRIMARY GUIDE for TEACHERS/CATECHISTS (Lent 2023)**

Dear Teachers/Catechists,

Welcome again to a new calendar year of mission activity with the Holy Childhood Association (HCA). Special greetings to return teachers and catechists and a warm welcome to newcomers. It is hoped that you find our information about “*Children Helping Children*” a rewarding and useful resource. The Pandemic may have entered a less serious time for us personally, but there are still many challenges being offered to us around the world that force us to pause and consider our relationship with less fortunate people.

The HCA is still as active as ever, in the production of the educational work that we produce for use by Catholic Schools and Parish groups throughout Canada. The Pandemic actually reinforced our earlier decision to make resources available online. Hard copies of all of our materials can be ordered using the order form and are available free of charge through the post. In addition, Newsletters, Teachers’ Guides, general educational documents and specific Lenten/Advent support materials are available online through the HCA section of our website [missionsocieties.ca](http://missionsocieties.ca). Naturally, some items that are not normal document size, such as mission banks, stickers, and membership cards can only be sent in the mail.

Our mission of “children helping children” continues to be as relevant as ever. Mission countries still need to cope with whatever COVID issues present themselves. Child poverty still exists in many parts of the world. Availability of education and facilities are still lacking for students in many areas. Children in some areas are exploited for their financial or military value. Increases in violence and conflict in certain areas of the world present challenges to innocent children. As members of the HCA, we need to continue our efforts to help these children around the world. Your role in guiding the young people under your care in this mission is significant.

Last year, October 23<sup>rd</sup> was World Mission Sunday. The theme of this day was: ***You shall be my witnesses*** (Acts 1:8)! What we do in our schools and parishes should be a reflection of Christ’s work in our world. We should reflect the mission of Jesus. Find the World Mission Sunday Youth Guide in the Educational Materials section of the HCA section on the Pontifical Mission Societies website. This is a useful resource to share with your students.

Once again, the Season of Lent approaches. In 2023, **Ash Wednesday is on February 22**, with **Easter following on April 9**. This is earlier than last year, meaning that there isn’t as much time to catch your breath after the return from the Christmas season. Your role in celebrating this sacred time in the Church Year is crucial, especially in today’s increasingly secular world.

### **Holy Childhood Mission Focus**

In this issue, the missionary country of focus is Nigeria. This is a very interesting but challenging country to study. It is the largest country by population in Africa, the seventh largest in the world and obviously, the country with the most of black citizens in the world. However, contrary to many stereotypes of African countries, there are at least 250 different ethnic groups and 500 spoken languages. Like many other countries, national boundaries were established by colonial powers with limited consideration of ethnic and tribal realities. Whilst Nigeria is rich in natural resources, especially oil, gas, minerals and agricultural goods, there is much poverty and many people do not benefit from these natural resources. Over the years, and still today, Nigeria has suffered from cultural and tribal strife as well as religious conflict. As recently as the past few months, there have been instances of Christian churches being attacked, people murdered as well as kidnappings, usually of young women to be used possibly as slaves.

One of the legacies that Nigeria has is that it was an area victimized and involved in the slave trade of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Many people, perhaps millions, were transported by colonial powers to the “New World” and forced into slavery. Many people in the Americas and the Caribbean today descended from these slaves. Whilst Nigeria became independent from Britain in 1960, the transition to democracy has been difficult. There have been political coups, civil wars, and much corruption.

The result has been that there is widespread poverty in a country rich in resources, and children have been vulnerable to a lack of basic needs.

### **Suggestions for using the Newsletter**

1. Always begin your lesson with the HCA prayer. Each student should have their own prayer card. (Additional cards are available from the National Office.) They can recite the prayer as a group, or have a student lead the prayer. Remind students of why they are members of the HCA.
2. Using a globe, atlas, the internet or all three, have children locate Nigeria. Locate its immediate neighbours: Benin, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and its position on the Atlantic Ocean. Look at the many other countries on the African continent. Find Canada and observe how far away we are. Read together the information provided in the Newsletter and discuss as appropriate. Allow children to colour select items.
3. Look at the Lent section of the Newsletter. Allow students to think about the Lenten words and then discuss with them. Talk about their relevance to Lent.
4. Refer to the current projects in Nigeria. Use the internet to look up the area and find out as much as possible about the people. Use the information to stimulate the raising of funds for these projects.
5. Look up and watch various You Tube references to Nigeria. There are several.
6. Be inspired by the work of the HCA organisations during Mission Month last October. Take photos and send us feedback on activities from your group.
7. Get your students involved in the drawing competition advertised at the end of this Newsletter. There’s not much time left to enter! Primary students especially would enjoy this.

### **Religious Education Applications**

1. Throughout Lent, say the Mission Prayer daily. Add it to the prayers already said each day within your classroom, school, or community. Make use of your prayer table, which usually consists of a candle, a children’s version of the Bible, a Rosary and appropriate pictures, photos, or other relevant books. Use the colour purple on your table. Purple is a symbol of penance. The Scriptures tell us that a purple garment was placed on Jesus during his passion as an act of mockery.
2. Say the ***Lenten Prayer*** with your students.
3. Ask the students for their understanding of “giving up” things for Lent. What is relevant for them to “give up?” Discuss the positive way of “giving up”. What positive things can they do throughout Lent in preparation for Easter?
4. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. Encourage participation in the distribution of Ashes either at school or in your parish. Discuss why ashes are used on this day.
5. Read and discuss the Pope’s Lenten message with your children.
6. Download the Lenten Word Searches and Crossword from the web site.
7. Download the Lenten Calendar, found in the Educational Resources section of the website, <http://www.missionsocieties.ca/holy-childhood-association-hca/education-materials>. Follow the calendar daily, or weekly, as appropriate.
8. As Lent is a time for reconciliation, review what students know about the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Encourage students to participate in this sacrament either within the Parish Community or within the school, if it is offered. (Depending on your location and Parish customs, Primary children may or may not have received First Reconciliation. If they have not, your parish priest may be willing to conduct a non-sacramental rite for those individuals).

9. Be sure that your students are familiar with the special days and events of **Holy Week**. Prepare them as appropriate to their age before this special time arrives. Go over the readings and discuss the events that culminate with the Resurrection. Students need to be aware of these in order to attend and participate actively at these unique celebrations.

## **LENTEN ACTIVITIES** (repeated from past issues)

### **LENTEN SIGNS**

**Objective:** To allow students to understand the meaning of “giving up”.

**Lesson Outcome:** The children will have a good understanding of what it means to “give something up”.

**Materials:**

- Poster paper
- colours

**Directions**

- Students discuss what it means to give something up
- Students choose positive ways of “giving up” (being helpful, friendly, generous, etc.)
- Students label their poster: I AM GIVING UP .... I AM BEING .... (Wording can vary)
- Students draw a relevant picture from their everyday experience.

**Follow-Up**

- Students display their poster to the class and talk about their message.
- Display the posters in the classroom, school halls, gymnasium, meeting room or church during the season of Lent.

## **PALM CROSSES**

Children can make Palm Crosses from palms collected on Palm Sunday. There are many instructions on YouTube as to how to make them, so have a quick look.

## **SISTER FAUSTINA AND THE DIVINE CHAPLET OF MERCY**

Sister Faustina is responsible for the special Lenten prayer, the Chaplet of Mercy. She was canonized as a saint in 2000 by Pope John Paul II. Look at her life and the events and occurrences leading to her sainthood.

Describe the meaning of her special prayer, the Divine Chaplet of Mercy, which is shown in the Educational Resources for Lent on the HCA web site.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Nigeria offers a good opportunity for raising funds and people's awareness of the HCA. Organize food drives for poor and neglected children. Raise some money for the HCA by having events such as a bake sale.

Nigeria offers opportunities for research activities for Primary students:

- The flora and fauna of Nigeria, while similar to other countries in the area, have unique features. Students can research birds and animals in the country.
- Pick a tourist holiday area and do some research on why people would want to go there for a holiday.
- Look at the several Lenten activities in the Educational Resources section of the HCA on our website. There are some challenging and interesting things for Primary students.