

THIS IS HOME | A FAMILY RESOURCE FOR LENT



*Week 3:*  
**THIRD SUNDAY  
OF LENT**

ARCHDIOCESE *of* MILWAUKEE

# Week 3:

## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



### SIMPLE SCRIPTURE FROM SUNDAY

LUKE 13:6-9

And he told them this parable:  
“There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’ He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.’”

### BREAK OPEN THE SCRIPTURE

*Remember to give each member of the family enough time to think through what they would want to say before moving onto the next question.*

1. What was wrong with the fig tree in this reading? *It did not bear fruit!*
2. Some people like to say that we can be like the fig tree in this reading, and the reason that we do not grow any fruit is because our hearts are “hard.” Do you know what it means to have a hard heart? *The children may need some guidance on this answer, but still hear them out on their answers, using what you can toward the actual goal response: To have a hard heart means that you do not want to listen when God is speaking to you, so you do not get a chance to grow the fruit that God was hoping you would if you heard His voice.*
3. It sounds like someone is trying to give the fig tree another chance to grow fruit! How nice! How can we work on softening our hearts if we have not been good listeners lately? *There are so many wonderful answers possible here! Make sure to mention how important the Sacrament of Confession is to help soften our hearts so we are more prepared to hear the Lord speak.*



### SERVING THE LORD AS A FAMILY

CONTINUE TO ADD TO YOUR SACRED SPACE

*Continue to add sacrifice beans to the jar and highlight some great examples of sacrifices from the week (or have children share some highlights that they have observed that week).*

*Continue to pray the family prayer from Week 2 at least once per week, if not more often.*

*Bonus Activity: After speaking about the fig tree and harden hearts, make it a goal to go to Confession this week with all adults and children who are able. If it cannot happen this week, try to go once before Lent concludes.*

### Soft vs. Hard Heart - A Culinary Adventure

First, ask the child(ren) to collect one hard and one soft item from the house. For your items, find a rock and a soft rag/washcloth/towel. Bring all of the items together, and ask the kids to show off what they found. Ask them to hold up their item, based on the following questions:

1. Which item would you rather snuggle?
2. Which item would you rather have thrown at you?
3. Which item is easier to move around?
4. Which item is easier to squish?
5. Which item is more comfortable to hold?

Most likely, they will answer all of these questions with the soft item, as it is cozier, softer, and easier to move around. Remind them that the reading this week talked about the fig tree, and we said that it is a lot like us when we have a hard heart versus a soft heart to really hear God. These items are just like our hearts! Ask your children to pretend that their items are a hardened heart and a softened heart.

6. Which heart would be able to move and bend when hearing God's voice? (soft)

Tell your family: Wonderful! To remind us to have softened hearts, I am going to leave my rock and soft cloth on our prayer table until Lent is over. When you pass by it, remember to soften your heart that day.

Depending on the ages and abilities of the children in your home, this activity can be completed in a variety of ways. The main point is to have something

edible that has both a very hard and very soft version (with the soft being preferable).

Bake some cookies, brownies, biscuits, rolls, etc. Make sure that the majority of the batch finishes with a soft version of the food. Overbake a couple examples, such that you have two items that look the same, but one is very hard while the other is very soft. (For instance, you will have 10 soft, chewy cookies and 2 hard-as-a-rock cookies in a dozen.)

\*As a bonus, allow your older children to bake with you ahead of time!

\*To make things very easy, use a pull-apart set of cookies to complete this activity if your baking skills are not as advanced.

\*To make things more challenging, use a homemade recipe for whatever you may be baking, allowing your children to help when possible.

After the baking is done, sit down together with the baked items. Make sure that everyone has a nice, soft version of the food. Ask everyone to feel it, squish it a little if possible, and comment on how it feels, how they think it will taste, and if they are excited to taste it.

Then, pass around the gross, hard-as-a-rock versions, allowing everyone to feel them again. Ask them which ones seem more exciting to eat today. The soft one!

Remind that we will be working on keeping our hearts softened this week - to hear God as well as to listen to those around us. If we have a soft heart, we can be kinder, gentler, and more receptive to God's goodness.

Enjoy the treats!



## LET US PRAY

Light the candle in your sacred space.

Sit closely, hold hands if you would like to, and take some time to enter into the silence.

*Lord, we thank you for this time together to remember how important it is to return to a soft heart after having a hardened heart. We are all going to think about one time this week that we had a hard heart toward someone around us and ask your forgiveness. <allow for silence> The time I am asking forgiveness for is: \_\_\_\_\_ <use an example from your week>. Thank you for loving us, and help us to soften our hearts this week to hear Your voice. Amen.*