

Lenten Family Faith Activity #2

The Pretzel Prayer



Do you know that pretzels are often called the “official food of Lent?” The pretzel has a deep spiritual meaning for Lent. Using this everyday snack as a symbol of prayer and penance is a small but powerful way to bring families closer to God during this time. This Lenten tradition goes back as far as the fourth century in the old Roman Empire. At that time Christians kept a very strict fast during Lent which included fasting from milk, butter, cheese, eggs, cream and meat. It was common to make small breads of water, flour and salt during this time. Traditionally, these breads were made in the shape of crossed arms for in those days people crossed their arms over their chest while praying. Legend has it that a young monk created the twists from the leftover dough from the bread into this shape to use it as a treat for the children to recite their prayers. He named his creation “*pretiola*” Latin for “little reward”.

This simple Lenten food became very popular and was enjoyed by all. Pretzels became a symbol of good luck, long life and prosperity. They also were a common food given to the poor and hungry. Not only were pretzels easy to make and give to someone in need, but they also were both a substantial food to satisfy the hunger and a spiritual reminder of God knowing a person’s needs and answering prayers.

For the Activity:

You have the opportunity to continue the special Lenten tradition of the monks from long ago and make pretzels with your family!

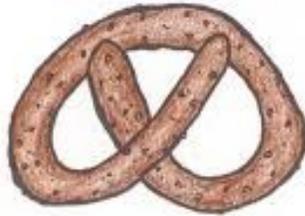
- 1) To make homemade pretzels with your family, use the recipe given to make pretzels and have a fun bonding time with your family.
- 2) Before eating the pretzels, pray the blessing prayers provided.
- 3) Remember that from now on, every time you eat a pretzel it is a reminder to pray and remember all that God does for us!
- 4) Send a picture or written reflection of your family pretzel making/prayer experience to egarfold@blessedtrinitypgh.net or ceisenbarth@blessedtrinitypgh.net

If you are unable to make your own pretzels, store bought pretzels work, too!

Lenten Soft Pretzel Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 package yeast .25 oz. (I used fast acting)
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1teaspoon salt
- 4 cups flour
- 1 egg
- Extra salt for the top of the pretzel...large kosher salt works best!



Instructions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- 2) Mix yeast, water, sugar, and salt in a large bowl.
- 3) Stir in the flour and knead until the dough is smooth.
- 4) Shape into the form of arms crossed in prayer and place it on a baking sheet.
- 5) Brush the dough with a beaten egg to give it a shiny finish. (Optional)
- 6) Sprinkle with salt.
- 7) Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes or until brown.



Note: The yield on this recipe depends on how large or small you make your pretzels. The author suggests making 5-6 pretzels with this recipe.

Recipe from Lacy at CatholicIcing.com



Prayers for Pretzels

Prayer before eating pretzels:

Dear God,

We ask you to bless these pretzels which we are about to eat. Each time we eat them may we be reminded that this is the season of Lent, a time of prayer. Help us to remember to pray for those who need our prayers each day. Keep your loving arms around us, O God, to protect us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

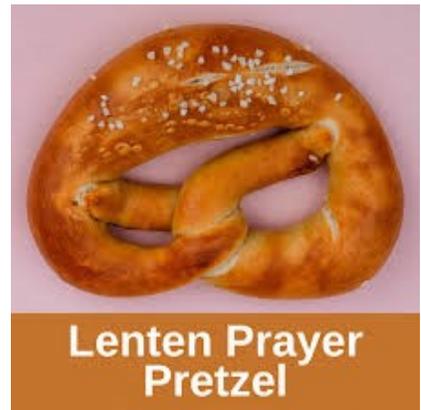
Pretzel Prayer for Family

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Heavenly Father, bless these pretzels.
Help them remind us that Lent is a time of prayer.
When we look at the shape of the pretzel,
Let us remember to cross our arms
And lift our thanksgiving and needs to you.

Lord Jesus, use these pretzels.
Help them remind us that Lent is a time of fasting.
When we consider the simple ingredients,
Let us remember the sacrifice you made for us on the cross,
And offer our own little sacrifices.

Holy Spirit, inspire us through these pretzels.
Help them remind us that Lent is a time of almsgiving.
When we pray and fast,
Let us consider those who have less
And give to them from our hearts. Amen



Pretzel Prayer before bed:

I bow my head and twist my arms tight,
Before I climb into bed each night.
I say a prayer to my Father above,
To give Him thanks and feel His love.
Amen.

Just like arms
folded,
My **pretzel** will
stay.
A snack that
reminds me,
To **PRAY** everyday.

