



GSR in the Classroom: LENT

GUIDE – FRESH APPROACH COULD BRING US NEARER TO GOD

BACKGROUND:

Lent often sneaks up on us. We're caught off-guard as Ash Wednesday arrives, bringing a big spiritual shift into fasting after the feasting of the Christmas holidays. About two months ago, we celebrated God's coming among us with cookies, treats and gifts. In Lent, we sacrifice in solidarity, preparing for Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Jesus tells his followers, in the [Gospel](#) we hear on Ash Wednesday, to not blow our own horns or make a big deal of our prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

FOCUS:

In the [Gospel](#) for the First Sunday of Lent, Jesus shows his solidarity with us as he endures three very human temptations to give in to the lures of hunger, ego and power. Through his resistance, he affirms the glory and power to God. As we and our students consider the disciplines of our Lenten journey and take our first steps, may we also consider whether they please God and how they glorify God.

ACTIVITY:

Distribute a pen and a slip of paper to each student. Begin with these words: "If you were a superhero, what would your superpower be?" Ask them to jot their answer on the paper in large, bold letters.

Ask each student to announce their answer, then post the slip on a display board so that all can see it (if time allows, make this more fun by inviting students to choose a superhero name or, if appropriate and safe, to pretend they have the superpower they claim). After each student has announced and posted their superpower, ask each student, individually: "If you could replace your superpower with someone else's, which one would you want? Why?"

DISCUSSION:

After each student has responded, say: “None of us are superheroes, but when we consider our favorite ones, we also envy the abilities they have. Maybe we want to be more like them, or at least we’re glad they have those gifts to perform their unique feats.”

Ask certain students who indicated they’d change superpowers:

“If you changed your superpower, what would happen to the one you set aside?”

“Would the universe be less awesome or safe without you having your original power? How?”

Conclude by saying: “Jesus is not Superman or any type of superhero. He is fully human and fully God. Before he went out into the world to do amazing things, he first went into the desert to endure some of the same types of temptations we do. He had the opportunity to do things that might have made his body, his mind or his ego feel better, but doing so would have denied the strength and greatness he had as God. As we begin Lent, let’s pray for the strength to turn from temptations and draw nearer to God and the goodness we’re called to.”

PRAYER:

Awesome God,
we thank you for being you,
and for making us in your image.
Help us to trust in your power.
Give us strength for the struggles and challenges
and vision to appreciate the joys and hopes
that we’ll experience in our Lenten journey.
Amen.

