

Shrove Tuesday

MIDDLESETTLEMENTS UMC

Prior to the season of Lent, Christians would slowly begin to say goodbye to the things they would be abstaining from during Lent (including the "rich foods" of butter, sugar, and meat). Of course, saying goodbye meant actually eating it all, so the goodbye (*vale*) to meat (*carne*) became a pretty joyous farewell party known as *Carnival*, ending with Fat Tuesday (*Mardi Gras* in French). The Church itself called it "Shrove Tuesday" (from *shrive*, which means to confess) and called all Christians to confess their sins and prepare for the "Great Fast" known as Lent that would begin the next day on Ash Wednesday.

A Shrove Tuesday observance highlights this transition from feasting to fasting. In the U.S., pancakes and penitence are a traditional pairing :)

01. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Plan the Menu

Pancakes of course, but feel free to add whatever else you may have decided to give up for Lent. Remember, the idea isn't to give up something wrong for Lent (like murder), because we've already committed to giving up sin for life (even if we fail). What we give up for Lent can be things that are more expensive, take time, are being over-prioritized in our culture or lives, or would be good to train us in resistance to sin (if we practice saying "no" to chocolate, maybe we'll strengthen our self-denial enough to say "no" when sin knocks at our door).

Set the table

Grab a bible, pens/crayons, and the "Take Up/Give Up" printout. Make things different and/or nice enough that the family will **see** something about this night is different.

02. PANCAKES & PENITENCE

During or after the meal, have someone read Matthew 16:21-24 and then discuss as a family:

1. Denying ourselves isn't self-hatred, it's the practice of denying our impulse to worship ourselves and put ourselves first, so what does Jesus mean when he says to deny ourselves and take up our cross?
2. What are some things we could give up this Lent to help us learn to deny ourselves?
3. What are some things we could take up this Lent to help us follow Jesus more faithfully?
4. Write out what you can "give up" and "take up" on your pocket-sized foldable.

End with prayer. Take the opportunity to "bless" each child out loud (like you do with food or we do at the end of worship).

