

Practical ways of turning “Lock Down” with Children into a peaceful and blessed time within our homes

Right now, we are all experiencing a myriad of emotions. We are most likely feeling nervousness and anxiety. We must remember to turn to prayer during this time of difficulty to give us peace and to refocus us. ***Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!*** We have to use these opportunities from God to self-reflect and turn to Him for strength.

Of course, on a lighter note, the one thing as a mother you never want to hear is, I am going to be stuck at home with my kids for two weeks! Or thoughts of, “what are we going to do for the next two weeks...how will I manage my little ones and older children at the same time, how will I help my older children with their learning from home?” This is a time where we as mothers are called to step up even more so into our roles of extra care-taker, leader, chef, and maid! These tasks we usually do anyway, but in most instances, have some time to do them alone! Now what? How do we keep order and keep peace at the same time during this Lenten season?

1. Make your home a little Church

During this time that we do not have Divine services, let us bring the Church and Great Lent to our homes. Let us have our children begin their day with peace and prayer in front of the icons. Start off by saying morning prayers together and incensing the house. Have the older children read scripture and while they are eating, perhaps read to them from the lives of the Saints. Play some chanting from YouTube in the background. You can find hymns from the Akathist or from the Pre-sanctified Liturgy. Same for the evening time. Engage children by having the older ones read the evening prayers. Find a spiritual story to read over some tea and Lenten cookies! This is always exciting when children can have a Lenten treat! At the end of the evening, pray together as a family. Take turns saying the Jesus Prayer together and play chanting as our

children are going to bed to help them feel a sense of calmness during the night. ***+Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on me the sinner.***

2. Set up a schedule and routine

In order to keep order, we must set up the order! Children respond so well when expectations are laid out for them. Write out a schedule for your children so they know exactly what will be done for the day. Many of our children will have to complete E-Learning. Work that into the schedule. Set older children apart from the younger ones, so that they may focus. Build in quiet time, reading time, and chore time. This way everyone is helping to elevate the extra chores that are falling on you the mother. This is a time for us to get organized which will make us feel better.

3. Fun time

Of course, now we have to get creative as the “entertainers” for our children while we are limited as to where we can go. The last thing we want is to have them taking out every toy only to make more of a mess for us to clean up. Give them some time for play, and now during Great Lent when we don’t want them watching a lot of TV, maybe find bible stories for them to watch for a bit or let them watch a Christian themed movie. Have them help with some chores during lunch time and dinner time, such as setting up the table or helping with clean up. Finding a fun Lenten treat to make together is always a good idea!

Of course, these are unprecedented times where we must really rely on our faith to get us through this struggle. We hope and pray that we will be able to return to our normal routines as soon as possible. We are all praying that our Lord, Panagia and the Saints will guide us all and grant us much strength during this difficult time.

With much Love in Christ,

Presvytera Stefanie