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# **Lenten Activity from *The Catholic Youth Bible*<sup>®</sup>**

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# Leader Guide Activity



# JOEL

## Joel, chapter 2 A Lenten Project

**Objective:** This activity encourages the students to integrate prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent.

1. Request one student to read Joel 2:12–18 aloud. Say something such as this to the students:
  - ▶ Catholics are invited every year to pray, fast, and give alms during Lent. It is important to see that the three activities are connected.
  - ▶ Jesus echoes the message of the prophets in saying that those with plenty are responsible for the suffering of those who are oppressed. Thus, we are called to give alms to people who are poor.
  - ▶ Fasting challenges us to detach ourselves from possessions and become more generous with our gifts.
  - ▶ Prayer sustains us while we fast and prompts us to be selfless.
2. Invite the class to participate in a Lenten project that involves making a contribution to a charity. Assign the class to research charitable organizations and select one. Then provide the following instructions in your own words:
  - ▶ Think of something that prevents you from being generous with time or money—such as buying fast food, going to movies, watching television, or shopping for clothes—and fast from that activity at some level throughout Lent. Calculate how much money or time you will save through that fasting, and give that amount of money or time to the charitable organization the class chose. Keep a prayer and reflection journal throughout the experience.
3. Collect the students' money on a regular basis throughout Lent, and make regular contributions to the charity chosen by the class. Also help the students carry out their commitments of time to the charity. During Holy Week, revisit Joel, chapter 2, in a short prayer service that honors the spiritual growth of the students as well as the human need for continued conversion. Invite the students to share reflections about the process of giving.

**Variations:** Instead of selecting a class charity and arranging for the students to give it their time or money in steps 2 and 3, suggest that each student individually identify some need and address it. For example, they might know a neighbor, family member, friend, or organization that could use their generous help for a period of time. This activity may not fall during the season of Lent. If it does not, consider adapting it for the current time.



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# Scripture Passage



## Return to the Lord

- 12 Yet even now—oracle of the LORD—  
return to me with your whole heart,  
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.
- 13 Rend your hearts, not your garments,  
and return to the LORD, your God,  
For he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,  
and relenting in punishment.\*
- 14 Perhaps he will again relent  
and leave behind a blessing,†  
Grain offering and libation  
for the LORD, your God.\*
- 15 Blow the horn in Zion!  
Proclaim a fast,  
call an assembly!\*
- 16 Gather the people,  
sanctify the congregation;  
Assemble the elderly;  
gather the children,  
even infants nursing at the breast;  
Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride† her bridal tent.
- 17 Between the porch and the altar†  
let the priests weep,  
let the ministers of the LORD weep  
and say:  
“Spare your people, LORD!  
do not let your heritage become a disgrace,  
a byword among the nations!  
Why should they say among the peoples,  
‘Where is their God?’”\*

## The Lord Relents.

18 Then the LORD grew jealous† for his land and  
took pity on his people. 19 In response the LORD  
said to his people:

I am sending you  
grain, new wine, and oil,  
and you will be satisfied by them;  
Never again will I make you  
a disgrace among the nations.

- 20 The northerner† I will remove far from you,  
driving them out into a dry and desolate  
land,

† **2:14 Blessing:** the rain that makes possible the grapes and grain (v. 19) that workers will process into Temple offerings.

**2:16 Elderly . . . infants . . . bridegroom . . . bride:** Jerusalem is in such great danger that even those normally excused from fasting or working are called upon to participate in activities to ward off the imminent catastrophe.

**2:17 Between the porch and the altar:** the priests stood in the open space between the outdoor altar for burnt offerings and the Temple building.

\* **2:10** Jl 4:15; Is 13:10, 13; Ez 32:7–8; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24; Lk 21:25–26. **2:11** Jer 30:7; Am 5:18; Zep 1:15. **2:13** Ex 34:6; Ps 86:5; Jon 4:2. **2:14** Jon 3:9. **2:15** Jl 1:14. **2:17** Ps 42:4, 11; 79:10; 115:2.

