



2020 Guide to Lenten Practices for Families and Adults

What is Lent?

Lent is a period of 40 days (excluding Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter. It's a season of preparation, repentance, and renewal culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For us as followers of Jesus, it's a time to perform, deepen, and renew the faith practices and rituals that we strive to live out every day of the year. In particular, Lent is a time to:

- [Pray & Grow](#)—commit yourself to a new prayer or faith formation practice that will deepen your connection to God;
- [Fast](#)—choose to “give up” something during Lent that will yield more time, money, or space in your life to give to God and others; and
- [Serve](#)—find a way to love your neighbors that spreads the love of Jesus.

Below you will find some suggestions for different practices that you might consider taking on during Lent. These lists are by no means exhaustive, but they'll give you some guidance to get started. Ultimately, there are no “Presbyterian requirements” for Lent. Instead, think of Lent as a season to recommit your life to God. And if you decide to take on a Lenten practice or two, ask yourself one simple question: Will this practice help me to love God and love my neighbors more deeply?

Pray & Grow

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.”

~2 Peter 3:18

Lent can be a time for spiritual renewal and growth. It’s a good time to take on a daily or weekly spiritual practice that might be new to you or that fits the season. This practice can take many different forms—prayer, silence, meditation, devotions, Bible study, or creative arts to name just a few.

Praying & Growing for Children+Families:

1. *Daily Family Prayer:* Gather as a family to pray together each morning and/or evening. You can choose your own prayers each day, or if you’d prefer some structure you can [use the Lenten prayer calendar below](#).
2. *Video Devotions:* We’ve created four family devotions that you can do together at home. Each of these four devotions will center on a different day of Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. They’ll incorporate a variety of learning methods, including reading, videos, games, and discussion questions. Download the devotions on our website.

Praying & Growing for Youth+Adults:

1. *Read the Gospel of Mark:* Read your way through Mark’s Gospel. It’s only about 15 verses a day ([reading schedule below](#)), and it’s a great way to journey with Jesus in this holy season. You can also [read *Meeting God in Mark*](#) if you’d like some background and reflection questions as you read.
2. *First Pres E-Devotions:* Throughout Lent, members of our congregation will reflect on the daily verses from Mark’s Gospel. You can [sign up here to receive these daily devotions by email](#), or you can find them posted on our church Facebook page each day.
3. *Lent Small Groups:* Lent is a time to break from the rhythms of everyday life so that we can connect with God and with one another in a deeper way. And joining a 6-week small group during Lent can be a great way to do just that. [Sign up online](#).
4. *A Moment of Peace:* Do you struggle to make time for prayer? Are you interested in learning new ways to pray? During these ‘micro’ prayer

sessions, we will introduce you to a new prayer practice, lead you through it together, and then give you some guidance for how you can use that prayer practice on your own throughout the next week. We will learn practices such as centering prayer, *lectio divina*, the *examen*, prayer journaling, and *visio divina*. We'll gather every Saturday morning during Lent from 9-9:45am in the Chapel.

5. *Books*: If you want to add a biblical learning experience alongside of a spiritual practice, you might consider reading [“The Last Week”](#) (Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan) or [“Jesus, the Final Days”](#) (N.T. Wright and Craig Evans). Each of these books are detailed accounts of Jesus’ final week written by renowned biblical scholars.

Fast

“Isn’t this the fast I choose...sharing your bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless poor into your house?”

~Isaiah 58:6-7

One of the most common practices during Lent is fasting, which can take many different forms. To fast is to give something up—a food, a habit, or a way we spend our time or money. The point of our fasting is not simply to make us suffer, but instead to re-focus our attention on Jesus and our commitment to be his disciples. So, if we choose to give something up for Lent, we should ask ourselves: How will this fast help me love God and love my neighbors more deeply?

Fasting for Children+Families:

1. *Technology Fast*—give up or cut back from different forms of technology. For example:
 - a. Fast from screens on a certain day of the week, or during a certain hour each day during Lent
 - b. Fast from specific apps during Lent
 - c. Fast from video games during Lent

Wonder: How can we spend the time this “extra” time in a way that honors God?

2. *Spending Fast*— pick something(s) you regularly spend money on that you will give up buying during Lent. For example:
 - a. Don't buy desserts/sweets during Lent
 - b. Cut back on eating out at restaurants during Lent
 - c. Suspend your Netflix account for Lent

Wonder: How much money did we save from not buying this item, and how can we spend that money in a way that spreads God's love?

3. *Fast of Things*— During Lent, decide which possessions you could give away to others. For example:
 - i. Each night (or at the end of each week), bring the possessions you're giving away. Each person go around and share what they're giving away and how they hope someone else can use it.
 - ii. Set a family goal for how many boxes or bags of items you can give away. Then, take a family trip to an organization to donate these items together.

Wonder: Where/to whom can I give these possessions that will bring others joy and bring these possessions new life?

Youth+Adults:

1. *Technology Fast*—give up or cut back from different forms of technology. For example:
 - a. Fast from social media (or a particular social media platform)
 - b. Fast from screens on a certain day of the week, or during a certain hour each day during Lent
 - c. Fast from specific apps during Lent
 - d. Fast from video games during Lent

Reflect: How can I spend the time this "extra" time in a way that honors God?

2. *Spending Fast*— pick something(s) you regularly spend money on that you will give up buying during Lent.

Reflect: How much did I save from not buying this item, and how can I spend that money in a way that spreads God's love?

3. *Energy Fast*—Follow the “Tread Lightly” Lent calendar and take one small action each day during Lent that helps you become more aware of your energy usage and limit it where possible. [Download the calendar here.](#)

Reflect: How can I live more sustainably and better care for God's creation?

4. *Food Fast*—Fast from eating during daylight hours on a certain day of the week.

Reflect: What steps can I take to better love my neighbors who don't have enough food to eat?

Serve

“This commandment we have from God: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.”

~1 John 4:21

As Christians, we are called to love and serve our neighbors in everything we do. Lent is a season when we double down on our commitment to serve. When we serve our neighbors, not only do we share the love of Christ, but we also open our hearts to receiving the love of Christ in return.

Serving for Children+Families:

1. Bernie's Book Bank—Volunteer to sort, tag, and bag books that will be given to children who may not have many books at home. [Sign up to volunteer](#) online.
2. Food Drive—Collect one non-perishable food item every day in a box, pray for the person who will receive it, and then at the end of Lent donate the food to a pantry or shelter (e.g. the [Libertyville Township Food Pantry](#) or the [COOL Food Pantry](#));

3. Feed My Starving Children—Families with children ages 5+ can pack meals that will be shipped around the world to help feed hungry children and adults. [You can sign up online.](#)

Serving for Youth+Adults:

1. PADS—There are many ways to serve at PADS. [Read more on our website and sign up to volunteer.](#)
2. Mobile Food Pantry—[Read more on our website](#) and [email Sue Ellen Skeens](#) to volunteer.
3. Group Service Opportunity—If there's an organization or a service project that you feel passionate about and you'd like to coordinate a group from the church to participate, [contact Pastor Ryan](#) with your idea.

Lenten Prayer Calendar

Below you'll find a list of suggested prayer topics for each day during Lent. You can pray however feels comfortable for your family, but if you'd like a little guidance to get started here's an example of a prayer: "Loving God, you call us by name, leading us to new life. Today we pray especially for **[insert daily prayer topic]** and we ask **[include your special prayers for the daily topic]**. Send your Holy Spirit to open our hearts and our minds so that we may live and grow in faith, sharing your saving love with others; for you are the resurrection and the life. We pray to you in the name of Jesus our Teacher and our Savior. Amen.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Pray for...</u>
Wednesday	3/6	the life that God has given us
Thursday	3/7	the beauty of God's creation
Friday	3/8	the love of our family
Saturday	3/9	children in Asia
Sunday	3/10	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always love our family
Monday	3/11	people who are older than us
Tuesday	3/12	people of other faiths
Wednesday	3/13	people who are generous
Thursday	3/14	the love of our friends
Friday	3/15	our Sunday School teachers
Saturday	3/16	children in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands
Sunday	3/17	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always love our friends

Monday	3/18	people who are lonely
Tuesday	3/19	people who help others to heal
Wednesday	3/20	the food that keeps us healthy
Thursday	3/21	our church and all its people
Friday	3/22	our beds
Saturday	3/23	children in Euope
Sunday	3/24	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always love our neighbors
Monday	3/25	one another
Tuesday	3/26	something good that happened to you today
Wednesday	3/27	people who are in prison
Thursday	3/28	the people who grow and prepare our food
Friday	3/29	people who are different than us
Saturday	3/30	children in the Middle East
Sunday	3/31	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always love people who are different than us
Monday	4/1	people who are part of other churches than ours
Tuesday	4/2	our neighbors
Wednesday	4/3	healing of the earth from pollution
Thursday	4/4	people who haven't always been nice to us
Friday	4/5	someone who is sick or hurting

Saturday	4/6	children in Africa
Sunday	4/7	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always love God
Monday	4/8	family or friends who have died
Tuesday	4/9	our teachers
Wednesday	4/10	people who don't have a place to sleep tonight
Thursday	4/11	people who don't feel safe where they live
Friday	4/12	families who are separated
Saturday	4/13	children in South America
Sunday	4/14	God to forgive us for the ways we don't always follow Jesus
Monday	4/15	people who are younger than us
Tuesday	4/16	our home
Wednesday	4/17	people who don't have enough food
Thursday	4/18	the bread of life from Jesus
Friday	4/19	those who suffer
Saturday	4/20	children in Mexico, Canada, and Central America
Sunday	4/21	the resurrection of Jesus!

Gospel of Mark Reading Schedule for Lent

Wednesday	26-Feb	Mark	1:1-13
Thursday	27-Feb	Mark	1:14-28
Friday	28-Feb	Mark	1:29-45
Saturday	29-Feb	Mark	2:1-17
Sunday	1-Mar	Mark	~
Monday	2-Mar	Mark	2:18-28
Tuesday	3-Mar	Mark	3:1-12
Wednesday	4-Mar	Mark	3:13-35
Thursday	5-Mar	Mark	4:1-20
Friday	6-Mar	Mark	4:21-34
Saturday	7-Mar	Mark	4:35-41
Sunday	8-Mar		~
Monday	9-Mar	Mark	5:1-20
Tuesday	10-Mar	Mark	5:21-43
Wednesday	11-Mar	Mark	6:1-13
Thursday	12-Mar	Mark	6:14-29
Friday	13-Mar	Mark	6:30-56
Saturday	14-Mar	Mark	7:1-23
Sunday	15-Mar		~
Monday	16-Mar	Mark	7:24-37
Tuesday	17-Mar	Mark	8:1-21
Wednesday	18-Mar	Mark	8:22-9:1
Thursday	19-Mar	Mark	9:2-29
Friday	20-Mar	Mark	9:30-50
Saturday	21-Mar	Mark	10:1-16
Sunday	22-Mar		~
Monday	23-Mar	Mark	10:17-34
Tuesday	24-Mar	Mark	10:35-52
Wednesday	25-Mar	Mark	11:1-11
Thursday	26-Mar	Mark	11:12-33
Friday	27-Mar	Mark	12:1-7
Saturday	28-Mar	Mark	12:18-37
Sunday	29-Mar		~
Monday	30-Mar	Mark	12:38-44
Tuesday	31-Mar	Mark	13:1-23
Wednesday	1-Apr	Mark	13:24-37
Thursday	2-Apr	Mark	14:1-11
Friday	3-Apr	Mark	14:12-31

Saturday	4-Apr	Mark	14:32-52
Sunday	5-Apr		~
Monday	6-Apr	Mark	14:53-72
Tuesday	7-Apr	Mark	15:1-20
Wednesday	8-Apr	Mark	15:21-39
Thursday	9-Apr	Mark	15:40-47
Friday	10-Apr	Mark	16:1-8a
Saturday	11-Apr	Mark	16:8b-20