

LENT DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Lent is about Jesus. It is a season during the church calendar when we revisit, retell, and re-enter the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, leading to his suffering and death. Lent is a time to reflect on our own lives, remember the life of Jesus, and repent of those things in our lives that do not look like Jesus. During the forty days of Lent we are intentional about identifying with the sufferings of Jesus in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

The season of Lent begins on March 6, Ash Wednesday, and continues for forty days until we reach Easter Sunday on April 21. We do not count the Sundays during Lent as a part of this forty-day journey because every Sunday is a celebration and marks the resurrection of Jesus.

We encourage you to join us during this Lenten journey as we engage in four ancient spiritual practices: read, pray, deny, and give. These practices help us identify with Jesus - who was fulfilling the Scripture, praying to remain in sync with God the Father, denying himself, and giving to those in need around him.

Life is filled with busyness, work, friends, phones, texts, emails, media, news, bills, anxiety, and conflicting interests that pull us in different directions. The practices of Lent are a way to break away from the things that drain us, so we can be filled with the life of God.

HOW TO USE YOUR LENT DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

[CELEBRATE]

Each Sunday during the season of Lent is a mini-celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. These times of public worship during Lent continue to build within us an anticipation of the ultimate day of Christian celebration on Easter Sunday.

[READ]

Each day you will have a short passage to read, primarily from the Gospel of Mark. As you read these Scriptures give attention to your heart, and imagination and put yourself in the story.

[PRAY]

Your devotional guide includes a prayer for each week during Lent. Also, we will meet in The Library at 3:30 p.m. on each third Sunday of the month for healing prayer.

[DENY]

Each week you will be given opportunities to pull away from certain activities to remind yourself of your dependence upon God as the source of life. Self-denial is at the heart of the season of Lent.

[GIVE]

Each week you will be given opportunities to give to others. Saying no to ourselves is an opportunity to give to other people in reflection of Jesus, who gives his life to us.

WEEK 1 / MARCH 6-9 / ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

[READ]

Luke 18:9-14

[PRAY]

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

[THURSDAY - SATURDAY]

[READ]

Thursday: John 17:1-8; Psalm 42

Friday: John 17:9-19; Psalm 43

Saturday: John 17:20-26; Psalm 44

[PRAY]

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Spend an extended amount of time (10-60 minutes) every day this week by yourself, away from other people. During this time of solitude reflect on your dependence upon God.

[GIVE]

Reach out to friends or family members you have lost contact with. Call, text, email, or message them with a word of encouragement or appreciation.

WEEK 2 / MARCH 10-16 / THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 10

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[MONDAY - SATURDAY]

[READ]

Monday: Mark 1:1-13; Psalm 46

Tuesday: Mark 1:14-28; Psalm 47

Wednesday: Mark 1:29-45; Psalm 48

Thursday: Mark 2: 1-12; Psalm 49

Friday: Mark 2: 13-22; Psalm 50

Saturday: Mark 2:23-3:6; Psalm 51

[PRAY]

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Deny yourself all fluids except for water each day this week. Keep track of the money you would have spent on soft drinks, coffee, tea, etc.

[GIVE]

Place the money you saved each day in an offering envelope, and designate it for The Food Bank of Manatee.

WEEK 3 / MARCH 17-23 / THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 17

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[MONDAY - SATURDAY]

[READ]

Monday: Mark 3:7-19; Psalm 53

Tuesday: Mark 3:19-35; Psalm 54

Wednesday: Mark 4:1-20; Psalm 55

Thursday: Mark 4:21-34; Psalm 56

Friday: Mark 4:35-41; Psalm 57

Saturday: Mark 5:1-20; Psalm 58

[PRAY]

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Deny yourself the ability to experience the “words” of others. Fast from personal use of social media or television news each day this week.

[GIVE]

Give someone a word of encouragement this week. Write a brief handwritten note to someone in your life and express your appreciation.

WEEK 4 / MARCH 24-30 / THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 24

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

MONDAY - SATURDAY

[READ]

Monday: Mark 5:21-43; Psalm 60

Tuesday: Mark 6:1-13; Psalm 61

Wednesday: Mark 6:13-29; Psalm 62

Thursday: Mark 6:30-46; Psalm 63

Friday: Mark 6:47-56; Psalm 64

Saturday: Mark 7:1-23; Psalm 65

[PRAY]

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Only eat food you prepare at home. Keep track of all the money you would have spent at restaurants, fast-food, etc.

[GIVE]

Place the money you saved each day in an offering envelope, and designate it for our sister missions in Cuba and Angola.

WEEK 5 / MARCH 31-APRIL 6 / THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 31

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

MONDAY - SATURDAY

[READ]

Monday: Mark 7:24-37; Psalm 67

Tuesday: Mark 8: 1-10; Psalm 68

Wednesday: Mark 8: 11-26; Psalm 69

Thursday: Mark 8:27-9: 1; Psalm 70

Friday: Mark 9:2-13; Psalm 71

Saturday: Mark 9: 14-29; Psalm 72

[PRAY]

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Do not purchase any non-essentials items this week.

[GIVE]

Go through your closet, attic, junk drawers, etc. and gather up items you can donate to a charitable organization like Goodwill.

WEEK 6 / APRIL 7-13 / THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, APRIL 7

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

MONDAY - SATURDAY

[READ]

Monday: Mark 9:30-41; Psalm 74

Tuesday: Mark 9:42-50; Psalm 75

Wednesday: Mark 10:1-16; Psalm 76

Thursday: Mark 10:17-31; Psalm 77

Friday: Mark 10:32-45; Psalm 78

Saturday: Mark 10:46-52; Psalm 79

[PRAY]

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[DENY]

This week deny yourself access to digital screens (phones, tablets, computers, laptops, TV), outside of work, school, and for essential communication purposes.

[GIVE]

Give full attention and eye contact to the people you eat with and spend time with each day this week.

WEEK 7 / APRIL 14-20 / HOLY WEEK / PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 14

[CELEBRATE]

We gather on Sunday mornings to sing songs of worship, pray, listen to scripture, demonstrate generosity in giving, reflect on the life of Jesus, share in communion, and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[MONDAY - WEDNESDAY]

[READ]

Monday: Mark 11:12-25

Tuesday: Mark 11:27-33

Wednesday: Mark 12: 1-11

[PRAY]

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Deny yourself the ability to live in denial about those you have wronged. Contact those you have wronged and ask for forgiveness during the first part of the week.

[GIVE]

Give forgiveness to those who have wronged you. Contact people who have wronged you and extend your love and forgiveness to them. *Additional readings; prayers, and practices for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are provided in the following pages.*

HOLY THURSDAY: APRIL 18

[READ] Mark 14: 12-25

[PRAY]

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Join us for a special Holy Thursday worship gathering at 6:30 p.m in the Harvest Centre.

[DENY]

Fast breakfast and lunch, eating only a small meal after attending one of the evening Maundy Thursday services in the Upper Room.

[GIVE] Invite an unlikely guest to your home or to a restaurant for lunch or dinner sometime next week.

GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 19

[READ] John 13:36-38

[PRAY]

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Join us for our Good Friday worship gathering at 12 p.m. in the Harvest Centre.

[DENY]

Fast breakfast, lunch, and supper today if you are physically able. Drink water.

[GIVE] Give yourself fully to reflect on the sorrow of the cross.

HOLY SATURDAY: APRIL 20

[READ]

John 19:38-42

[PRAY]

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[DENY]

Deny yourself the ability to use and enjoy electricity and light for some portion of your day (10 minutes to an hour) as a reminder of the darkness in our world

[GIVE]

Extend an invitation to a friend who does not attend church to join you for church tomorrow.

EASTER SUNDAY: APRIL 21

[CELEBRATE]

Join us at 6:45, 9, or 10:30 a.m. for one of our Easter worship gatherings. We have endured the sorrow of the cross, now is our time to worship in the joy of resurrection.

[READ]

Luke 24: 13-25

[PRAY]

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.