

# What is Lent

Since the time of the early Church, the first Christians observed the time of the Lord's passion and resurrection (what we may think of as “Holy Week” or more commonly “Easter time”) with great devotion, and it became customary for Christians to prepare themselves for that time by a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance. This season of Lent, the 40-day period leading up to Easter, provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.

It was also a time when certain members of the church who had fallen out of fellowship due to questions of serious sin were invited to be reconciled back into the church by a process of repentance and forgiveness. You could say that both new Christians and renewed Christians were focused on in this season, but in doing so, the whole church was granted the opportunity to realize afresh their own need to continually pursue Christ in repentance and faith, by daily taking up their own cross & following Him. In this way, Lent is not an event. It is a season. It's a time of preparation. It is a journey. A journey into the wilderness with Christ.

# Observing Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes with Easter Sunday. Today, it is common for Christians to observe the season of Lent by adopting practices of fasting, bible reading, or prayer. Engaging in these spiritual practices is meant to remind believers of their continual need for Christ and prepare their hearts to observe the events of Holy Week. This Lent, we invite you to take on one of the spiritual practices listed in this guide.

Genesis 3:19

“for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

# Spiritual Practices

*Fasting – Intentionally giving up or abstaining from food, drink, or certain practices for the purpose of focusing on God.*

- If you've never fasted, start small. Consider giving up only a certain type of food and use each craving as a reminder of your need for God.
- You may also consider abstaining from something like social media, news, etc. for the purpose of shifting your focus to God.

*Bible Reading – The discipline of studying and reading the scriptures.*

- Consider finding and adopting a 40 day reading plan. These can be found in youversion and online.
- A simple 40-Day Reading Plan through the book of John is also available in this guide.

*Prayer – The practice of spending time in loving conversation with God.*

- Pick a time, pick a place, and make a plan. Take some time to pray intentionally.
- This may be 5 minutes a day, 1 hour a week, during your drive to work, or over your lunch. Be flexible. Embrace a plan that works for you.

# 40-Day Reading Plan

- Day 1: John 1:1-18
- Day 2: John 1:19-42
- Day 3: John 1:43-2:12
- Day 4: John 2:13-John 3:15
- Day 5: John 3:16-3:36
- Day 6: John 4:1-26
- Day 7: John 4:27-42
- Day 8: John 4:43-5:15
- Day 9: John 5:16-30
- Day 10: John 5:31-6:15
- Day 11: John 6:16-6:40
- Day 12: John 6:41-70
- Day 13: John 7:1-24
- Day 14: John 7:25-52
- Day 15: John 8:1-20
- Day 16: John 8:21-47
- Day 17: John 8:48-9:12
- Day 18: John 9:13-41
- Day 19: John 10:1-21
- Day 20: John 10:22-42
- Day 21: John 11:1-16
- Day 22: John 11:17-37
- Day 23: John 11:38-57
- Day 24: John 12:1-19
- Day 25: John 12:20-50
- Day 26: John 13:1-17
- Day 27: John 13:18-38
- Day 28: John 14:1-31
- Day 29: John 15:1-17
- Day 30: John 15:18-16:15
- Day 31: John 16:16-33
- Day 32: John 17:1-26
- Day 33: John 18:1-24
- Day 34: John 18:24-40
- Day 35: John 19:1-16
- Day 36: John 19:17-37
- Day 37: John 19:38-20:10
- Day 38: John 20:11-31
- Day 39: John 21:1-14
- Day 40: John 21:15-25