

The season of Lent is a period of preparation for Easter.

WE GATHER

✠ *Jesus, help us to follow in your way.*

Have you ever been on a trip away from home? Where did you go? Was this a vacation trip or was it taken for another reason? What did you learn from your travels?

WE BELIEVE

The entire season of Lent is like a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a trip taken to a shrine or sacred place. As Christians, a pilgrimage is a prayer journey that helps us follow Christ more closely. During Lent we focus on following Christ and thinking about the relationship that we began with him at Baptism. In Baptism we are united to Christ and to all others who are baptized. Through the waters of Baptism we die with Christ only to rise to new life with him.

Lent is a journey during which we prepare to celebrate at Easter Christ's dying and rising to new life. The entire Church takes part in this preparation through our worship and by the way we live. This season is the final time of preparation for those who will celebrate the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at Easter. These three sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—are called the Easter Sacraments. Those who receive them will share in Jesus' Death and Resurrection and have new life in Christ. We pray for them, support them, and welcome them into our parish.



On Ash Wednesday Catholics and other Christians can receive ashes, a sign of both sorrow and hope.

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends many weeks later on Holy Thursday evening. Absence and simplicity describe the season of Lent. There are signs of this absence in our churches and in our liturgy. Water is usually removed from the holy water and baptismal fonts as preparation for the Easter Sacraments. During the liturgy, alleluia is not said or sung nor are bells rung. Dark purple is the color used in worship, and green plants and flowers may be removed from the churches. All of these changes remind us of our need to recommit ourselves to Christ and to the Church.

They help us to prepare to renew our baptismal promises at Easter and to celebrate the new life Christ has won for us by his Cross and Resurrection.

The way we live during this season is also a sign of absence and simplicity. We are called to follow the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, or practicing works of compassion. The word *alms* comes from a Greek word meaning "compassion." Almsgiving can be the giving of time, money, or goods to those in need. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are always part of Christian living. However, during Lent they take on special meaning as we prepare to renew our Baptism.

Prayer

During Lent we focus on God's mercy and forgiveness. We call out to God to remember us and strengthen us to live by his laws. Lent is a good time to spend extra time in conversation with God. We may devote more time to personal prayer and to prayer with our parish community.

The Church prays especially for those who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Many parishes gather for the Stations of the Cross and have special celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance.

Fasting

Fasting is a way to cleanse our bodies of harmful things and our hearts and minds of things that keep us from loving God and others. Fasting is also a form of penance. Doing penance helps us to turn to God and to focus on the things that are important in our lives as Christians. Doing penance is a way to show that we are sorry for our sins.

One way to fast is to give up things we enjoy, like a favorite food or activity. Catholics of a certain age are called to fast from food on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. They are also called to give up meat on these days and on all the Fridays during Lent.

Almsgiving

During Lent we also show special concern for those in need. We follow Jesus' example of providing for the hungry and caring for the sick. We try to help other people to get the things they need and make sure that people have what is rightfully theirs.

Many parishes have food and clothing drives during this time of year. Families may participate in these drives and also volunteer at soup kitchens, visit those who are sick, and practice other works of mercy.

My Lent Plans

EACH DAY I WILL PRAY...

(Prayer)

I WILL GIVE UP...

(Fasting)

MY GOOD WORKS WILL BE...

(Almsgiving)



Lent Word Search

Name: _____



Directions: Find all 12 words associate with the season of lent. Answers may be backwards or diagonal.

Lent

Forty days

Jesus

Praying

Fasting

Almsgiving

Ash Wednesday

Holy Thursday

Reconciliation

Purple

Charity

Abstinence

Sacrifice

Solidarity

St. Patrick

Fish Fry

P	J	Y	W	R	P	S	P	F	V	K	P	H	W	R	T	W	F	T	M
Q	U	A	E	P	E	R	B	L	M	C	U	Y	W	N	X	B	Y	N	Y
R	B	D	V	C	A	C	V	W	H	S	R	J	E	Y	Q	K	S	V	T
R	H	S	O	Y	I	H	O	A	E	F	P	L	E	S	A	S	J	R	I
K	G	E	I	K	K	F	R	N	H	Z	L	P	D	T	Z	F	N	T	R
U	I	N	U	K	G	I	I	S	C	F	E	B	V	U	X	W	Q	A	A
V	G	D	J	C	T	N	I	R	U	I	O	G	N	I	T	S	A	F	D
H	G	E	E	Y	P	F	I	U	C	D	L	R	Z	M	K	D	G	N	I
N	B	W	S	N	N	D	P	V	D	A	M	I	T	K	K	J	D	Q	L
A	Z	H	U	E	C	N	E	N	I	T	S	B	A	Y	E	W	M	C	O
H	P	S	S	U	A	D	U	H	V	G	H	G	E	T	D	W	D	B	S
A	P	A	H	O	L	Y	T	H	U	R	S	D	A	Y	I	A	E	S	T
X	X	Y	W	H	N	H	N	P	R	H	A	M	V	Q	V	O	Y	E	O
B	S	D	M	X	N	O	J	E	Y	R	Z	W	L	L	N	R	N	S	J
R	V	O	I	K	N	P	E	H	K	V	R	V	I	A	N	G	F	T	K
L	S	V	I	K	L	D	C	D	C	T	J	V	J	Q	A	L	U	H	E
B	B	H	C	H	T	Y	O	Q	U	M	Z	C	N	O	X	N	P	Y	O
L	S	T	P	A	T	R	I	C	K	C	B	R	O	G	K	P	A	X	S
E	A	P	S	B	K	M	T	A	N	R	G	I	Q	K	L	P	F	L	T
B	M	N	U	I	N	Q	F	P	R	G	U	C	O	Z	Y	O	M	R	Y

