

Weekly Lenten Guide For Your Congregation

Monday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Fasting/Abstaining

Throughout the Bible, fasting has been a discipline of self-denial in which people face their hunger as a reminder of their dependence upon God. Each Monday of Lent, suggest that corporately as a Church you set the day aside for fasting. Encourage your people to start simple, perhaps by giving up one meal on the first Monday and moving towards a full day and night of fasting by the end of Lent.

A few verses to ponder: Matthew 6:18, Matthew 4:4, Daniel 9:3, 1 Corinthians 9:27

Tuesday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Almsgiving

The idea of almsgiving comes from the description of the Early Church in the New Testament where it says that believers gave generously to one another so that none among them was in need. Set each Tuesday aside as a congregation to find a creative way to give and support those with needs in the community. This might look like donating a nice jacket to a local homeless shelter, donating to a meaningful cause, or providing a meal for those without. In doing so remember the sacrifice and gift of Christ.

A few verses to ponder: Matthew 5:16, Romans 1: 1-32

Wednesday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Solitude

Throughout his ministry, Jesus would often pull away from even his disciples in order to pray and sit before God. Because Wednesday is often in the heart of our work week, it is a great day to encourage your church to set aside a specific amount of time to withdraw from others, away from social media, work, and email in order to just sit silently before God. As with fasting encourage your people to start small, say 15 minutes and build up to an hour by the end of the season. As we stop, we feel the tug of busyness on our hearts, at which point we can pause, breathe, and surrender our work unto God.

A few verses to ponder: Matthew 6:6, Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:35

Thursday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Service

In the final week of Lent, known as Holy Week, the Church commemorates Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper and washing of the disciples' feet. Jesus calls us to love one another likewise and in the way Jesus washed the disciples' feet, we are called to serve one another. Encourage your people to set Thursday aside as a day of service. This may mean serving a loved one or spouse by doing all of the household chores without being asked, or serving at the local homeless outreach. In this act, we remember Jesus' servant heart and seek to follow his example.

A few verses to ponder: 1 Peter 4:9-11, Isaiah 58:10, James 2:18

Friday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Prayer/Reflection

As an obedient son of the Jewish faith, Friday would have traditionally been the beginning of the Sabbath day for Jesus. The Sabbath was a day of rest, reflection, and devotion to God. As many of us come to an end of our workweeks, Friday is a great day to make some special time to spend in prayer and reflection. As with Solitude and Fasting, encourage your people to set amount of time aside to pray and reflect upon the journey so far, building up towards the week of Easter. For many, keeping a journal to reflect upon the movements of God in their life can be extremely helpful as they journey through the Lenten season.

A few verses to ponder: John 15:7, Mark 11:24, Philippians 4:6

Saturday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Pilgrimage

Pilgrimages have always been a big part of the Christian faith – the idea of taking a spiritual journey not to reach a particular destination, but rather to experience the growth gained by the journey itself. In many ways Lent in and of itself is a pilgrimage. As such, Saturdays are a great day to encourage your people to make a short pilgrimage, either alone or as a family. This might mean taking a walk around a local park each Saturday that you've never explored, or walking around some streets downtown, which you would normally drive through. Encourage your people to walk with open eyes, looking for where God can be seen in the world around them.

A few verses to ponder: Psalm 84:5, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:25-34

Sunday

Suggested Spiritual Practice: Rest

In many traditions throughout Church history, Sundays are actually considered a “break” from Lent throughout the season, due to the fact that every Sunday is in a sense Easter. As such, Sundays are a great day to encourage your people to rest as a congregation. Encourage them to set aside specific time to participate in practices that restore their soul, not that simply distract them from work. This might look like reading that great novel they haven’t had time to read, taking an extra long bath, or woodworking.

A few verses to ponder: Exodus 33:14, Mark 6:31, Psalm 46:10

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