

40 Ideas for Keeping Lent

Day 1: Pray for your enemies
Day 2: Walk, carpool, bike or bus it.
Day 3: Don't turn on the car radio
Day 4: Give \$20 to a non-profit of your choosing
Day 5: Take 5 minutes of silence at noon
Day 6: Look out the window until you find something of beauty you had not noticed before
Day 7: Give 5 items of clothing to Goodwill
Day 8: No complaining day
Day 9: Do someone else's chore
Day 10: Buy a few \$5 fast food gift cards to give to homeless people you encounter
Day 11: Call an old friend
Day 12: Pray the Paper (pray for people and situations in today's news)
Day 13: Read Psalm 139
Day 14: Pay a few sincere compliments
Day 15: Bring your own mug
Day 16: Educate yourself about human trafficking [www](http://www.trafficking.org)
Day 17: Forgive someone
Day 18: Internet diet
Day 19: Change one light in your house to a compact florescent
Day 20: Check out morning and evening prayer at <http://dailyoffice.wordpress.com>
Day 21: Ask for help
Day 22: Tell someone what you are grateful for
Day 23: Introduce yourself to a neighbor
Day 24: Read Psalm 121
Day 25: Bake a cake
Day 26: No shopping day
Day 27: Give a candle
Day 28: Light a candle

Day 29: Write a thank you note to your favorite teacher
Day 30: Invest in canvas shopping bags
Day 31: Recycle
Day 32: Donate art supplies to your local elementary school
Day 33: Read John 8:1-11
Day 34: Worship at a friend's mosque, synogogue or church and look for the beauty
Day 35: Confess a secret
Day 36: No sugar day – where else is there sweetness in your life?
Day 37: Give \$20 to a local non-profit
Day 38: Educate yourself about a saint www.catholic.org/saints
Day 39: Pray for peace
Day 40: Pray for your enemies (you probably have new ones by now) then decide which of these exercises you'll keep for good

These ideas were shared by the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, pastor of House for all Sinners & Saints Lutheran Church in Denver.

Turn me over for more!

10 Questions to Ask Yourself this Lent:

1. When I wake up on Easter morning, how will I be different?
2. Is there a habit or sin in my life that repeatedly gets in the way of loving God with my whole heart or loving my neighbor as myself? How do I address that habit over the next 40 days?
3. Is there anyone in my life from whom I need to ask forgiveness or pursue reconciliation?
4. What practical steps can I take to carve out time for daily contemplation?
5. What spiritual discipline do I need to improve upon or want to try?
6. What are some things in my life that I tell myself I need but I don't?
7. Why am I giving this particular thing up? How does giving it up draw me closer to God and prepare me for Easter?
8. What am I going to tell myself when self-denial gets hard?
9. Is it necessary/helpful for me to share the nature my fast with others or should I keep it private?
10. What do the ashes mean to me this year?

10 Book Recommendations:

1. *Common Prayer* by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Enuma Okoro
2. *40 Days of Living the Jesus Creed* by Scot McKnight
3. *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster
4. *Facing East* by Frederica Matthews-Green
5. *The Divine Hours: Prayers for Springtime* by Phyllis Tickle
6. *A Book of Hours* by Thomas Merton
7. *A Gift For God: Prayers and Meditations* by Mother Teresa
8. *One Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp

9. *Show Me the Way: Daily Lenten Readings* by Henry J.M. Nouwen

10. *A Circle of Quiet* Madeleine L'Engle

5 Rituals:

1. Attend an Ash Wednesday service.
2. Create an Easter Tree
3. Practice the daily office for 40 days. Common Prayer includes daily prayers.
4. Choose a saint or a Christian you deeply admire to "guide" you through the Lenten period. (Consider St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, or St. Teresa of Avila)..
5. Incorporate the color purple into your home, office, and church. A simple purple candle or orchid or note card with a verse can remind you of the season and help keep you focused.

5 Fasts:

1. Choose to make water your only beverage for 40 days to help Blood:Water Mission provide clean water for people in Africa who don't have a choice. Check out Forty Days of Water for more info.
2. Traditionally, Christians abstained from eating meat during Lent, so consider joining millions of fellow Christ-followers around the world in this fast.
3. Give up eating out for 40 days and donate the money you save to your favorite charity.
4. Do a 40-day purge of all your excess stuff and donate the best of it to Goodwill or a local thrift store that benefits your neighbors.
5. Unplug—TV, Facebook, Twitter, Netflix, etc. This is perhaps the single best way to carve out some extra time in your day for prayer and meditation.

These ideas were shared by author and blogger Rachel Held Evans.