

Lenten Ideas, in three parts

Hello!

Happy Lent. Whether you're new to the practice or a bit established, here are 30+ suggestions for ways to enter the season. You'll find **Lenten Resolutions** in three "categories":

- Introductory
- Gentle and
- Challenging

With a **bonus appendix of 40 prayer-prompts**, one-per-day for Lent!

And some **10-word-or-less prayers** to sprinkle into your day!

I like to keep in mind two things when making Lenten resolutions:

1. I want to set goals for things that are doable in real-life, not just my imagination, but also
2. I want to hit Easter and know that I gave Lent my all. 😊

With that! Here are some ideas. Take it to prayer and see if any of these would help you this season.

Intro-to-Lent Ideas *to wet ya feet*

Lent is an old practice for Christianity, but if it's been a few years (or ever!) since you've practiced, keep in mind that there are three main "themes"—prayer, fasting, and giving of alms. A lot of what we hear about centers around fasting, the "giving up" of things you love. Not a bad place to start! But, explore a few of the other options as well. Pick one or two to help your faith walk this Lent!

PRAY	FAST	GIVE
Do the Sign of the Cross each time you enter or leave your home.	Unhealthy snacking between meals	Your time—call someone who is lonely. 6 weeks of Lent = 6 fewer lonely people in the world.
Listen to Fr. Mike read a bit of the Bible each day on Spotify.	Complaining (if it helps, pick a topic: about someone, about a political thing (COVID), etc)	Attend a charitable fundraiser.
Read the Gospel of the day each day and write a word or phrase that strikes you on a sticky note. Stick it on your wall. Lenten art installation.	From your typical TV/ Movies/ Streaming services...watch religious-themed shows instead. ("The Chosen," anyone?)	Forgiveness. If there is someone who has wronged you, process the experience for your own healing and freedom.
Pray for one of the prayer-prompts each day. (See appendix)	Fast food/ eating out.	Make cookies for someone (provided they're not giving them up for Lent) 😊
Add a short prayer—"Hail Mary" or "Our Father"—to your morning routine. As soon as you wake, give the day to God.	Snooze buttons.	A few extra bucks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plate at church• The tip jar• A birthday card
Read a biography of one of the saints—and email me which one! <i>Danielle.center@gmail.com</i>	Follow the rules of the church and abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent; and try <i>fasting</i> on Ash Weds and Good Fri! 😊	Clean up trash in your neighborhood one day.

Gentle Lenten Ideas *for someone looking for the compassion of God*

PRAY	FAST	GIVE
Pray the Litany of Trust daily or weekly	Hustle-culture. Bravely, creatively, stubbornly insert rest into your routine.	An action of physical affection every day
Have a cup of tea while reading through Sunday's readings the day or two before	Alcohol.	Food to your feathered neighbors: hang a birdfeeder in your yard.
Walk around your block once a week or day, and find ONE THING for which you can thank God	Society's expectations for what you "should" be. Maybe that means giving up something like make-up or shopping —ponder and act.	Write a love letter to yourself...from God's perspective
Pray the Divine Praises daily or weekly	Social Media. Silence the voice of comparison.	A weekend to your relationship—pilgrimage to a church or retreat center and spend some time journaling
Add a Short prayer to your day each day—just as you rise or as you enter your car or as you drift off to sleep or...(see appendix)	Write a gratitude list, 1 or 2 things/ day for each day of Lent.	Words of kindness—write texts or snail mail daily or weekly to express love for others.
Read a short Word from Jesus each day (see appendix)	Negative Self-talk. Practice affirming your successes.	Give prayers at a local cemetery for the eternal rest of the souls.

Challenging Lenten Ideas *for someone ready to push themselves*

PRAY	FAST	GIVE
Extra Holy Hour/ week or day	Using your phone. Desktop emailing and snail mail, baby	Sundays to God alone—no shopping, working, etc.
Weekly Confession	Electric lights in the evening	Go through your items and select ones to donate.
Examen—top tip from St. Ignatius!	Workaholicism. Arrive and leave at the proper time each day.	Buy some socks and granola bars, and keep them in your car. When you see a person experiencing homelessness, distribute.
Angelus at Noon and/ or Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3 p.m. Daily prompts for intentions!	Bickering or talking back to your family.	Ask your local food bank/ shelter/ crisis center what they need, and spend some cash to fill the need.
Extra Daily Mass/ week or day	Try fasting from food once a week. If that's too much, how about a particular food: caffeine, sugar, gluten, meat, etc.	Kindness. If someone talks poorly of another, skillfully insert charity and mercy for that person into the conversation.

Appendix:

Prayer Prompts for Specific Persons

Here's an intention-a-day for 40 days (plus a bonus). Either read over this list, or print them out and add them to a jar, pulling out one/ day.

1. A family member
2. Someone carrying a heavy mental load
3. A specific government official
4. A teacher you once had
5. Someone at your work/ classroom
6. A previous coworker
7. Someone who is sick
8. Someone going through a hard time
9. Someone who serves in the medical field
10. The last homeless person you saw
11. Someone who serves to protect our country
12. Someone with a broken heart
13. Someone who lost someone they love this year
14. A neighbor
15. Someone who drives you nuts
16. Yourself
17. A child you love
18. A religious leader in your community
19. Someone you see nearly every day
20. Your mail carrier
21. Someone caring for someone who is ill
22. A parent with many kids
23. A friend who lives overseas
24. A momma who is expecting
25. Someone looking for a new job
26. Someone who doesn't know the love of Jesus
27. Someone who works with young people
28. Someone in prison
29. A missionary
30. Someone with whom you disagree
31. A Christian in a persecuted country
32. Someone who is hungry
33. A student
34. A widow
35. Someone who makes a difference in the world
36. The first person you saw today
37. A celebrity
38. Someone on the church prayer list
39. A foster parent
40. A veteran
41. Someone who died this year

5 Short but hard prayers

1. Thy will be done
2. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!
3. Jesus, I trust in you.
4. Jesus, son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
5. Let it be done unto me according to your word.