

Sunday morning
teaching plan

15th
February
2026

TITLE:	Lent
THEME:	Seasons of the year
AIM:	To consider what lent is and why we should observe it.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Traditionally Lent is the period of 40 days leading up to Easter. During this time many people fast – that is they give something up. They do this to help them concentrate on the passion of Jesus and to identify with Jesus' time in the wilderness.

The day before Lent is marked by Shrove Tuesday' or Pancake Day. This tradition stems from those who would finish up the food they had in their cupboards to prepare for the fast.

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday – this is a time for remembering that humans are sinful and need God. In certain church traditions people have their foreheads marked with a cross made of ash.

Maundy Thursday also falls in Lent. This is the Thursday before Easter when Christians remember how Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Some churches re-enact this ceremony.

The Easter weekend is a time to reflect on Jesus death and what it means to Christians.

Lent ends on Easter Sunday with a massive celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

WARM UP

Create their own pancake decoration and we judge the winner. They can then eat the pancakes.

Play flipping pancakes or egg and spoon.

MAIN TEACHING

What is Lent?

Lent lasts **40 days** (not counting Sundays)

- It begins on **Ash Wednesday**
- It leads up to **Easter**

- It's a time of:
 - Prayer
 - Repentance
 - Fasting
 - Growing closer to God

Why 40 Days?

Matthew 4:1–11 – **Jesus tempted in the wilderness.**

- Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness.
- The number 40 in the Bible represents testing and preparation:
 - 40 days of rain in Noah's time (Genesis 7)
 - 40 years Israel in the wilderness
 - 40 days Moses on Mount Sinai

Key Point: Lent mirrors Jesus' time in the wilderness — a time to prepare our hearts.

Why Do Christians Practice Lent?

There are 3 spiritual disciplines that are practised at Lent; Fasting, Prayer and Giving.

1. Fasting

What do you understand about the term fasting?

Usually, we apply this word to food, but it could describe anything people decide to deprive themselves of.

Use the slides and ask them to rate on a scale of 1-10 how hard they think it would be to go without each item for 40 days.

- Fasting at Lent is not about making people miserable or giving something up for the challenge of it! Rather, people fast at Lent to make a bit more room in their lives for God. They try to fill the extra time that fasting gives them with things that will help them reflect on all that Jesus has done for us. Fasting isn't about showing off.
- It helps us depend on God more than comforts.
- When we give something up, it reminds us to pray.

Matthew 6:16–18 Ask: How they could make a bit more room to think about God over the weeks before Easter.

Examples:

- Social media
- Complaining
- Junk food
- Gaming time
- Negative words

The Point: To consider why people fast at Lent.

3. Giving (Almsgiving)

Almsgiving is a word Christians use for giving to help people in need.

Fasting is about giving something up for God. Giving is about giving something away for others.

Matthew 6:1–4

In Matthew 6, Jesus talks about giving to those in need. He says when we give, we shouldn't do it to show off or get attention. Instead, we should give quietly, because God sees what we do.

- In Jesus' time, some people made a big show of giving money to the poor.
- They wanted others to think they were holy or generous.
- Jesus says the real reward isn't attention — it's pleasing God.

Note the phrase: "Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Ask: Why do you think it's tempting to show off when we do something good?

Why Giving Matters Spiritually

A. Giving Reminds Us Everything Comes from God

Psalm 24:1 says: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

- The money we have.
- The food we eat.
- The time we have.
- The abilities we have.

All of it ultimately comes from God.

Giving helps us remember: "I'm not the owner. I'm a steward."

B. Giving Changes Our Hearts

Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Ask: Have you ever given someone a gift and felt really good about it?

Explain:

- Giving fights selfishness.
- It helps us think about others.
- It makes us more like Jesus.

Jesus gave everything — even His life.

C. Giving Reflects God's Generosity

John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave...”

God is generous.

When we give, we reflect His character.

You might say:

“When we are generous, we look more like Jesus.”

What Can Teens Give?

It's not just about money.

☐ Time

- Helping at home without being asked
- Volunteering
- Sitting with someone lonely

💬 Kindness

- Encouraging words
- Forgiving someone
- Standing up for someone

💰 Money

- Supporting a charity
- Church giving
- Buying something for someone in need

Ask: Which one is hardest for you — money, time, or kindness?

Lent Challenge Idea

What if during Lent you chose one intentional act of generosity each week?

Examples:

- Week 1: Give up buying snacks and donate the money.
- Week 2: Serve someone in your family.
- Week 3: Write encouragement notes.
- Week 4: Help someone who can't repay you.

2. Prayer & Growing Closer to God

Lent isn't mainly about giving things up. It's about making space for God.

Explain clearly:

- When we fast, we remove distractions.
- When we give, we turn outward.

- When we pray, we turn toward God.

Prayer is how we build relationship.

What Is Prayer Really?

Ask: If someone asked you, “What is prayer?” what would you say?

Prayer is simply talking and listening to God.

It’s not:

- Fancy words
- Long speeches
- Sounding impressive

Read **James 4:8**:

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”

God isn’t distant.
He wants relationship.

Prayer is how we draw near.

Why Focus on Prayer During Lent?

Read
Luke 5:16

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Even Jesus — the Son of God — took time to pray.
If He needed it, how much more do we?

Lent is about following Jesus’ example in the wilderness:

- He fasted.
- He resisted temptation.
- He stayed connected to the Father.

What Does Prayer Do in Us?

A. Prayer Changes Our Hearts

Sometimes we think prayer changes God’s mind.
Often, it changes us.

When we pray regularly, our hearts begin to care about what God cares about.

It softens us.
It helps us forgive.
It makes us more aware of God's presence.

B. Prayer Strengthens Us Against Temptation

Connect back to Matthew 4 (Jesus in the wilderness).

Jesus responded to temptation with Scripture and trust in God.

Prayer:

- Reminds us who we are.
- Reminds us who God is.
- Gives us strength when we're pressured.

Ask: Where do you feel pressure in your life? School? Friends? Social media?

Prayer builds spiritual strength.

C. Prayer Builds Relationship

If you never talked to a friend:

- Would the friendship grow?
- Would you feel close?

Same with God.

Prayer is daily connection.

Not just emergency prayers.
Not just Sunday prayers.

Daily conversation.

Practical Ways to Pray During Lent

Use their prayer diaries:

🕒 5-Minute Prayer Plan

- 1 minute – Thank God for something
- 1 minute – Say sorry for something
- 1 minute – Pray for someone else
- 1 minute – Ask God for help
- 1 minute – Sit quietly and listen

📖 Pray with Scripture

Read a short Bible passage.

Ask:

- What does this show me about God?

- What does this show me about myself?

Then pray about it.

Replace Scroll Time with Prayer

Challenge: During Lent, every time you feel the urge to scroll, you say a short prayer first?

Jesus you are Great. You have done great things in my life. Help me be great for you. Amen.

Growing Closer to God

Growing closer to God doesn't mean:

- You suddenly feel emotional all the time.
- You become perfect.
- You never struggle.

Growth often looks like:

- Choosing prayer even when you don't feel like it.
- Being quicker to apologize.
- Becoming more patient.
- Caring more about others.

Spiritual growth is usually slow — like growing muscles or learning a skill.

You don't pray so that God will love you more.

You pray because He already loves you.

Lent is about responding to love, not earning it.

Reflection Questions

- When do you usually pray?
- What makes prayer hard?
- What distracts you most?
- What would change if you prayed daily for 40 days?

Lent is an invitation. An invitation to slow down, to listen, and to draw near to God. And when we draw near to Him, He promises to draw near to us.

What Lent Is NOT

Lent is NOT:

- Earning God's love
- Punishing ourselves
- Competing with others
- Just giving up chocolate

Lent IS:

- Preparing for Easter
- Remembering Jesus' sacrifice
- Making room for God in our lives

Luke 9:23

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

- Denying yourself means putting God first.

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Ask:

- What is one thing you feel God might be asking you to focus on this Lent?
- Is it prayer?
- Forgiveness?
- Giving something up?
- Starting something new?

Close with a guided prayer:

“Lord Jesus, during these 40 days, help us grow closer to You.
Show us what we need to let go of.
Help us resist temptation like You did.
Prepare our hearts for Easter.
Teach us to love You more.
Amen.”

TAKEAWAY

EXTRA INFORMATION

Equipment needed:

Power point

Pancakes and toppings.

Prayers for prayer diaries.