

A DISCIPLESHIP KIT FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is the season set aside in the historical church calendar to help believers remember Jesus' temptation, Last Supper, and crucifixion. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends the day before Easter. Lent focuses on the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting. Through prayer, fasting, and seeking God through Scripture believers follow Jesus in his wilderness temptations. The 40 days of Lent symbolize the 40 days that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.

Theologically, the goal of Lent is to help the church turn away from sin and turn towards Jesus. In this season God calls us to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to seek first the kingdom of God, to take up our cross and follow Jesus. It is a season of self-denial, of giving up what is good in order to find what is best.

USING THIS DISCIPLESHIP KIT

The purpose of this Discipleship Kit is to help our church walk through the Lenten season. This kit includes:

A DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

The full Bible reading plan takes the reader through Book 1 of the Psalms and the entire gospel of Luke. If that seems like too much for you, consider just tackling either the Psalm readings (1 chapter/day) or the Luke Readings (½ chapter/day). If you are brand new to daily devotions, and especially if you are using this discipleship kit for family devotions with small children, you might want to start by just reading the assigned "Key Verse" each day. These "Key Verses" are one or two sentences take from either the Luke or Psalm reading assigned for the day.

Along with each Bible Reading assignment there is a "Key Idea" and "Discussion Question" listed for encouraging conversation during family devotions, or for personal reflection while journaling.

Note: The Bible readings are assigned for each day of the 40 days of Lent, so there are no readings assigned to the Sundays. Our plan does include a reading for Easter Sunday.

WEEKLY SUGGESTED FASTS

For each week of Lent, this Discipleship Kit suggests a fast for you to try individually or as a family. These suggested fasts have been borrowed from The Village Church's "Seasons" guide (https://www.tvcresources.net/resource-library/guides/seasons). Read more about fasting below.

WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDES

For each week of Lent, this Discipleship Kit also includes prayer prompts focused around the scripture and themes of the week. You can read them aloud as a family or use them as inspiration to write out your own prayers.

HUNGER & THIRST STICKER CHART

This sticker chart will help your family stay accountable as they complete the 40 days of Lent. Put a sticker on the chart after you complete each day's Bible reading.

HUNGER & THIRST BOOKMARKS

These bookmarks are intended to help you keep your place in Luke or Psalms as you continue your daily readings and serve as an "on-the-go" progress tracker. Check off each day of Lent as you complete your assigned reading.

Please use this kit in whatever way is helpful to your own spiritual development. God has given us the spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, and Bible reading, in order to help us grow closer to him. By the Holy Spirit, he uses these practices to grow our faith, hope, and love. May God bless you as daily seek God's face.

WHAT IS FASTING?

The word "fasting" (or "to fast") means the willing abstinence or reduction from some or all food, drink, or both, for a period of time.

Calls to fast, and descriptions of fasting, are common in the Bible. The Scriptures associate fast with godly sorrow, confession, repentance, and pleading with God. When King Xerxes issues a decree to destroy the Jews Mordecai and the rest of his people called out to God for help. They mourned, fasted, and wore sackcloth (Esther 4:3). Daniel also pleaded with God in prayer while fasting and confessing his sin and the sin of his people (Daniel 9:3ff). When the prophet Joel called the people to repentance he said: "Even now," declared the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning" (Joel 2:12).

Jesus himself fasted for forty days in the wilderness and, in his teaching, he assumed the practice would continue. In the Sermon on the Mount he said, "when you fast..." (Matthew 16:16). In Acts we see that fasting continued in the early church. When Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders in the church, they did so with prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23).

Fasting can be misused. The prophet Isaiah criticizes those who fast and pray and perform religious duties while at the same time exploiting their workers and committing violence (Isaiah 58). Isaiah wants his people to distinguish between true fasting accompanied with justice and false fasting done to manipulate God, accompanied with disobedience to God's law. Jesus also warns against the fasting of the Pharisees who do it so that other people would see impressed by their piety (Matthew 6:16-18).

Fasting is traditionally practiced during Lent. We have named this Lenten "Hunger and Thirst" in order to get at one of the primary goals of Christian fasting today. We all understand that inherent hunger and thirst that we have when we have gone without food for just a short time. Even if we're not hungry, we still crave our favorite foods. Even simple commercials on TV can make our mouths water. As creatures, God has given us a healthy longing for food. We should thankfully accept God's daily provision.

If we hunger for God's good gift of food, how much more should we desire the Giver, God himself. The psalmist perfectly captures this longing: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2). The purpose of fasting is to turn our hearts from the gift to the Giver. It is not simply about giving something up, but about replacing that thing with something better. Therefore, when we fast, we should devote the time we would normally spend to that activity to prayer, to seeking after God.

IF WE HUNGER FOR GOD'S GOOD GIFT OF FOOD, HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD WE DESIRE THE GIVER, GOD HIMSELF. As in the biblical pattern, fasting should continue to be coupled with confession and repentance. After all, preoccupation with the things of this world often suppresses our longing for God. As in the parable of the sower, our spiritual life can be choked out by wealth and the worries of this world. We make God's good gifts into idols and daily need to tear them down and subject our lesser desires to the Lordship of Christ.

While people in the Bible always fasted by giving food or drink, the same principle of giving up the good for the best can be applied to other things. One could fast from television, social media, or anything which could distract you from full

fellowship with God. Fasting is a spiritual discipline, and one that should be taken up voluntarily. It doesn't make you acceptable before God. It doesn't turn you into a "super Christian" but, by God's grace, it can help turn our minds and our hearts towards Jesus.

To that end, feel free to adapt the suggested fasts included within this Discipleship Kit to fit the needs of your life and family. We encourage you to seek a challenge, but urge you to not feel guilty if you are unable to do everything perfectly. Remember that we stand fully justified before the Father – not for what we have done, but what Jesus did on the cross.

WEEK 1: MARCH 6 - 9

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
1	MARCH 6	PSALM 1	LUKE 1:1-38	PSALM 1:1-2	GOD BLESSES THOSE WHO READ THE BIBLE	WHAT IS ONE WAY THAT GOD BLESSES US THROUGH READING THE BIBLE?
2	MARCH 7	PSALM 2	LUKE 1:39-80	LUKE 1:46-49	GOD IS FAITHFUL TO THOSE WHO SERVE HIM	WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD IS "FAITHFUL"?
3	MARCH 8	PSALM 3	LUKE 2:1–21	PSALM 3:5	GOD GIVES US WHAT WE NEED FOR EACH DAY	WHAT HAS GOD GIVEN US TODAY?
4	MARCH 9	PSALM 4	LUKE 2:22-2:51	PSALM 4:7	GOD FILLS OUR HEARTS WITH JOY	HOW DOES GOD BRING US JOY?

SUGGESTED FAST: FOOD

Consider fasting from lunch this week and spending that hour in prayer, reading the Word or praising the Lord through music. Or, choose a specific type of food—candy, soda, meat, etc.—to fast from for the week. Or choose one day to fast from dawn until dusk, again spending the time you'd usually be eating to sit in God's presence.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: We glorify you, God. We rejoice in you, Jesus, our Savior. You have remembered us. You are mighty, and you have done great things for us. Your name is holy. (Luke 1:46-49)

Confession: The only reason we wake up every morning is because you have sustained us. Forgive us, Father, for claiming independence from you. We need you every hour. (Psalm 3:5)

Thanksgiving: Thank you, Father, for filling my heart with joy, for filling my cup to overflowing, and for satisfying and nourishing my heart so fully. (Psalm 4:7)

Supplication: Help us to delight in the Bible. Help us to think about scripture day and night. Help us to consume the Bible with a ravenous urgency. (Psalm 1:1-2)

WEEK 2: MARCH 11 - 16

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
5	MARCH 11	PSALM 5	LUKE 3	LUKE 3:8	REPENTANCE MEANS TURNING AWAY FROM OUR DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD	HOW CAN WE SHOW GOD WE ARE SORRY FOR SIN?
6	MARCH 12	PSALM 6	LUKE 4:1-13	LUKE 4:1-4	WE NEED FOOD FOR PHYSICAL LIFE AND GOD'S WORD FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE	WHY DO WE NEED GOD'S WORD FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE?
7	MARCH 13	PSALM 7	LUKE 4:14-44	LUKE 4:18-19	GOD GAVE JESUS THE MISSION BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS	WHAT HAS JESUS DONE FOR US THAT WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR?
8	MARCH 14	PSALM 8	LUKE 5:1-31	LUKE 5:31-32	JESUS COMES TO THOSE WHO ARE HUMBLE AND RECOGNIZE THAT THEY NEED HIM	WHAT DO WE NEED JESUS FOR?
9	MARCH 15	PSALM 9	LUKE 5:33-38	LUKE 5:34-35	JESUS' FOLLOWERS FAST WHEN HE IS NOT WITH THEM	WHAT'S A GOOD REASON TO FAST? WHAT COULD YOU FAST FROM?
10	MARCH 16	PSALM 10	LUKE 6:1-26	LUKE 6:20-21	IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, GOD SATISFIES THE HUNGER	WHAT FOOD ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

SUGGESTED FAST: TELEVISION, MOVIES & VIDEO GAMES

This week, think about unplugging your televisions or devices and spending that time soaking in the Lord's presence. If your family typically watches a show or movie together, consider exchanging that hour or two each day to open God's Word, pray and discuss the reality of sin in our hearts and in our world.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: Jesus, you proclaim good news to us! You set us free from the prison of sin. You have healed us from spiritual blindness. You have brought us into God's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Confession: We need Your word to nourish our hearts, just as we need food to nourish our body. We need your word, Father. (Luke 4:1-4)

Thanksgiving: Thank you, God, for blessing the poor. Thank you for satisfying the hungry. Thank you for giving joy to those who mourn. (Luke 6:20-21)

Supplication: Please give us a special awareness of your presence during this season of fasting. (Luke 5:34-35)

WEEK 3: MARCH 18 - 23

SCRIPTURE READINGS

	_	PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
11	MARCH 18	PSALM 11	LUKE 6:27-49	LUKE 6:46-49	THE WISE PERSON LISTENS TO JESUS AND DOES WHAT HE SAYS	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LISTEN TO AND OBEY JESUS?
12	MARCH 19	PSALM 12	LUKE 7	LUKE 7:40-43	WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE FORGIVEN A LOT, YOU LOVE JESUS A LOT	WHAT HAS GOD FORGIVEN YOU OF?
13	MARCH 20	PSALM 13	LUKE 8:1-21	PSALM 13:1, 5	EVEN IF IT TAKES A WHILE, GOD'S LOVE NEVER FAILS	WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU ARE WAITING FOR?
14	MARCH 21	PSALM 14	LUKE 8:22-56	PSALM 14:7	WHEN GOD RESTORES, HIS PEOPLE REJOICE	WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GOD TO "RESTORE"?
15	MARCH 22	PSALM 15	LUKE 9:1-17	LUKE 9:3-5	GOD PROVIDES WHAT WE NEED FOR THE JOURNEY	WHY DO YOU THINK GOD TELLS HIS DISCIPLES TO "PACK LIGHT"?
16	MARCH 23	PSALM 16	LUKE 9:18–56	LUKE 9:23-24	FOLLOWING JESUS REQUIRES SELF-DENIAL	WHAT MIGHT WE HAVE TO GIVE UP TO FOLLOW JESUS?

SUGGESTED FAST: SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET

As we continue in the season of Lent, think about exchanging the time you would normally scroll through social media or browse the internet for a time of intentional prayer, Bible reading or worship. Consider staying off certain platforms at certain points of each day or for the entire week, deleting the apps off your device or blocking those websites as you fast.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: God, your love never fails. Your salvation makes us rejoice! (Psalm 13:5) You restore us. (Psalm 14:7)

Confession: It is wrong when we seek to fulfill ourselves and chase after the approval of other people, or the temporary pleasures of this world. (Luke 9:23-24)

Thanksgiving: Thank you, Father, for forgiving our great debt of sin. (Luke 7:40-43)

Supplication: Help us to hear your words and put them into practice. (Luke 6:46-49)

WEEK 4: MARCH 24 - 30

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
17	MARCH 25	PSALM 17	LUKE 9:57-62	PSALM 17:7	GOD'S LOVE IS WONDEROUS	WHAT IS WONDERFUL ABOUT GOD'S LOVE?
18	MARCH 26	PSALM 18	LUKE 10:1-24	PSALM 18:27	GOD SAVES THE HUMBLE AND HUMBLES THE PROUD	WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMBLE?
19	MARCH 27	PSALM 19	LUKE 10:25-42	LUKE 10:41-42	THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO SPEND TIME WITH JESUS	HOW DO WE SPEND TIME WITH JESUS?
20	MARCH 28	PSALM 20	LUKE 11:1-36	LUKE 11:2-4	PRAY LIKE JESUS TAUGHT US TO PRAY	ACCORDING TO THE LORD'S PRAYER, WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?
21	MARCH 29	PSALM 21	LUKE 11:37-54	LUKE 12:42	DON'T NEGLECT JUSTICE AND LOVE FOR GOD	WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ACT JUSTLY?
22	MARCH 30	PSALM 22	LUKE 12:1-34	LUKE 12:31	SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD	WHAT CAN YOU DO TO "SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD"?

SUGGESTED FAST: CAFFEINE AND SWEETS

Consider fasting from your favorite caffeinated beverages or candy this week. Think about placing sticky notes with Scripture or prayer requests on or near where you keep those items so you are reminded to refocus your heart and mind on the Lord throughout the day. Consider setting aside the money you would typically spend on those beverages and pray about where you could give it to help those in need.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: May your name be regarded as holy. May your kingdom come. (Luke 11: 2)

Confession: Our pride is sin. Humble us so that we can be saved. (Psalm 18:27)

Thanksgiving: Thank you for your wonderful love. Thank you for saving us and protecting us. (Psalm 17:7)

Supplication: Help me to sacrifice the good for the sake of the best. Help me to focus my life on what matters most. (Luke 10:41-42) Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, and help us to forgive those who have sinned against to us. (Luke 11:3-4)

WEEK 5: APRIL 1 - 6

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
23	APRIL 1	PSALM 23	LUKE 12:35-59	PSALM 23:5-6	GOD'S GOODNESS AND MERCY FOLLOW HIS PEOPLE	WHAT IS ONE WAY THAT YOU HAVE SEEN GOD'S MERCY OR GOODNESS TODAY?
24	APRIL 2	PSALM 24	LUKE 13	PSALM 24:5-6	GOD VINDICATES THOSE WHO SEEK HIM	WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "VINDICATED"?
25	APRIL 3	PSALM 25	LUKE 14:1-24	PSALM 25:6-7	BECAUSE OF GOD'S MERCY, HE FORGETS OUR SINS BUT REMEMBERS US	OUR SINS?
26	APRIL 4	PSALM 26	LUKE 14:25-34	LUKE 14:27	THERE IS A COST TO BEING JESUS' DISCIPLE	WHAT MIGHT IT COST YOU TO FOLLOW JESUS?
27	APRIL 5	PSALM 27	LUKE 15	LUKE 15:11-24	GOD LOVES WHEN HIS CHILDREN RETURN TO HIM	WHY DO YOU THINK THE FATHER WELCOMED BACK HIS WAYWARD SON?
28	APRIL 6	PSALM 28	LUKE 16	LUKE 16:13	YOU CANNOT SERVE BOTH GOD AND MONEY	HOW COULD LOVING MONEY KEEP US FROM SERVING GOD?

SUGGESTED FAST: RADIO, PODCASTS AND MUSIC

This week, consider trading your favorite podcast or your daily dose of music or talk radio for silence and solitude. Instead of turning on something when you get in the car, use this time to ask God to fill your heart and mind with His presence and to hear His voice more clearly. Consider choosing a few verses to memorize and use the time you'd normally spend listening to music, the radio or a podcast in thoughtful meditation of God's Word.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: God, you are good! You give blessing. You vindicate us. (Psalm 24:5-6)

Confession: We, like the sons in the parable, have sinned against you by loving money more than we love you (Luke 16:13) We are no longer worthy to be called your children. And yet – you are a forgiving father. (Luke 15:11-24)

Thanksgiving: Thank you for blessing me so richly. Thank you for your goodness. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your presence. (Psalm 23:5-6)

Supplication: Please forget about our sin and rebellion. But do not forget about us. (Psalm 25:6-7) Help us to take up our cross and follow you. (Luke 14:27)

WEEK 6: APRIL 8 - 13

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
29	APRIL 8	PSALM 29	LUKE 17:1-19	LUKE 17:3-4	FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST YOU AND REPENT	HOW DOES JESUS HELP US FORGIVE OTHER PEOPLE?
30	APRIL 9	PSALM 30	LUKE 17:20-37	PSALM 30:11-12	GOD TURNS SORROW INTO JOY SO THAT WE WILL PRAISE HIM	WHEN DID GOD TURN YOUR SORROW INTO JOY?
31	APRIL 10	PSALM 31	LUKE 18:1-14	LUKE 18:7-8	GOD BRINGS JUSTICE TO THOSE WHO SEEK HIM	WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU ALWAYS ASK GOD FOR?
32	APRIL 11	PSALM 32	LUKE 18:18-42	PSALM 32:3-5	GOD FORGIVES THOSE WHO CONFESS THEIR SIN	WHY SHOULD WE CONFESS OUR SIN TO GOD?
33	APRIL 12	PSALM 33	LUKE 19:1-27	PSALM 33:20-21	WAIT IN HOPE	WHY CAN WE HAVE HOPE WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR GOD?
34	APRIL 13	PSALM 34	LUKE 19:37-38	LUKE 19:37-38	JESUS IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD	HOW CAN WE WORSHIP JESUS AS THE KING?

SUGGESTED FAST: SHOPPING FOR NON-ESSENTIALS

Consider fasting from shopping for anything that is not absolutely necessary this week. Reflect on the ways that God has provided for your every need. You could choose to start a list of God's provision in your life, spend time praying for God to help you remember that He is your ultimate sustainer and giver of life or find small ways to be generous toward others in gratitude for what the Lord has given to you.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: Father, we used to cry, but now we dance. You have wrapped us in joy. We will never stop singing your praises. (Psalm 30:11-12) You are our help and our shield! We trust you. (Psalm 33:20-21)

Confession: The guilt of our sin hangs heavy on us, so we will stop hiding. We will confess our sins so that we can be forgiven. (Psalm 32:3-5)

Thanksgiving: Thank you for hearing our cry, and bringing justice for us. (Luke 18:7-8)

Supplication: Help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. (Luke 17:3-4)

WEEK 7: APRIL 15 - 21

SCRIPTURE READINGS

		PSALM READINGS	LUKE READINGS	KEY VERSE	KEY IDEA	DISCUSSION QUESTION
35	APRIL 15	PSALM 35	LUKE 20:1–26	PSALM 35:10	GOD RESCUES THE WEAK	HOW DOES JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS "RESCUE THE WEAK"?
36	APRIL 16	PSALM 36	LUKE 20:27-45	PSALM 36:7-9	GOD IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE	HOW DOES THE CROSS OFFER US LIFE, LIGHT, AND REFUGE?
37	APRIL 17	PSALM 37	LUKE 21	PSALM 37:18-19	GOD CARES FOR THE BLAMELESS	HOW DOES JESUS' DEATH MAKE US BLAMELESS?
38	APRIL 18	PSALM 38	LUKE 22:1–65	LUKE 22:19-20	JESUS GAVE HIS BODY AND BLOOD FOR OUR SALVATION	HOW DOES JESUS' DEATH SAVE US?
39	APRIL 19	PSALM 39	LUKE 22:66-23:49	LUKE 23:34	GOD FORGIVES US BECAUSE JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS	WHY DID JESUS NEED TO DIE ON THE CROSS?
40	APRIL 20	PSALM 40	LUKE 23:50-56	PSALM 40:1-2	WAIT PATIENTLY FOR GOD, HE WILL RESCUE US FROM THE PIT	WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DISCIPLES WERE THINKING ON THE SATURDAY WHEN JESUS WAS IN THE TOMB?
EASTER SUNDAY	APRIL 21	PSALM 41	LUKE 24	LUKE 24:5-6	JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD TO ETERNAL LIFE	HOW WILL WE CELEBRATE EASTER?

SUGGESTED FAST: SLEEP

As we approach the end of Lent, think about getting up an hour earlier than usual or staying up an hour later to intentionally spend time with the Lord. Whether that be in prayer or confession, consider giving up a portion of your sleep to focus your heart and mind on God, specifically the passion of Christ.

PRAYER GUIDE

Adoration: No one is like you, God. You are a champion for those who are weak, poor, and oppressed. (Psalm 35:10)

Confession: Father, forgive us. We do not know what we are doing. (Luke 22:34)

Thanksgiving: Thank you for being our fountain of life. (Psalm 36:7-9) Thank you, Jesus, for pouring out your blood so that we could enjoy the blessings of God forever. (Psalm 37:18-19; Luke 22:19-20)

Supplication: Lift us out of whatever pit we find ourselves in. Set our feet on a rock. Help us stand. (Psalm 40:1-2)