

LENTEN

M·I·C·R·O

PRACTICES



# ABOUT LENTEN MICROPRACTICES

Lent is a 40 day season of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus. We mark this time as different through our actions. The days are counted from Ash Wednesday through the Saturday before Easter. Sundays are not counted in Lent's 40 days.

We begin by being marked with ashes as a reminder of the uncertainty of human life. We continue throughout the 40 days by making room in our hearts and lives for Christ's resurrection.

In this booklet, you'll find a new practice to guide you each day on your journey. Some practices can be done on the spot, some during the day, and others will take some time and/or preparation.

Traditionally, there are three pillars of Lent: praying, fasting, and alms giving, which come to us from Matthew 6:1-18. The practices in this booklet rotate through these themes, along with additional practices that don't fit neatly in one of those categories ("more").

Engage with the practices when and how you can. There is no right or wrong way to do them. You are no more or less holy by doing them all or only a few. Feel free to adjust the practice of the day to better fit yourself or the members of your household.

## **Bonus Tips:**

- + Read the daily practice in the morning so you have a chance to engage with it during the day.
- + Set an alarm on your phone as a reminder.
- + Review the day's practice at dinner.
- + Mark your favorite practices to make a regular part of your faith life.



## PRAYER PRACTICES - DAY 1 - ASH WEDNESDAY PRAY

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” • Matthew 6:5-6 •

**What does prayer mean to you?**

## FASTING PRACTICES - DAY 2 FAST

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” • Matthew 6:16-18 •

**What does fasting mean to you?**

## GIVING PRACTICES - DAY 3 GIVE

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

• Matthew 6:2-4 • **What does giving mean to you?**

## MORE PRACTICES - DAY 4 MORE

There are many wonderful spiritual practices that don't fit neatly into the categories of pray, fast or give, so they are included as “more” practices. **What do spiritual practices mean to you?**

## PRAYER RHYTHM - SUNDAY 1

PRAY

Pick something that happens regularly - like brushing teeth, taking a walk, or washing dishes. **Say a prayer every time you do this action.**

## PRAYERFUL ENCOUNTERS - DAY 5

PRAY

**Pray for others you encounter in your day** - whether you know them or not. Did you pray for someone unexpected?

## QUIET TIME - DAY 6

PRAY

**Spend 10 minutes today in silence and prayer.**  
Is that easy or hard for you?

## PRAYER WALL - DAY 7

PRAY

Use a large piece of paper or sticky notes to **write or draw prayers of joy and concern.** Visit the wall regularly and continue to pray for the prayers that have been posted.

## FINGER PRAYER - DAY 8

PRAY

Use your fingers to guide your prayer.

**Thumb:** Those close to you.

**Pointer:** Those who point the way.

**Tall finger:** Those in authority.

**Ring finger:** Those who are sick, poor, in need.

**Pinky:** Your own needs.

## LORD'S PRAYER - DAY 9

PRAY

Say the Lord's Prayer before or after breakfast, lunch and dinner today. **Try praying different versions than the one you typically pray to help you pay even more attention as you pray.**



## ON THE MOVE - DAY 10

PRAY

**Be intentional about silencing your phone and radio when in the car alone.** Instead, use that quiet time to talk to God.

## TRADITIONAL FAST - SUNDAY 2

FAST

**Partake of only one full meal today.** Some food is permitted at breakfast and around midday or in the evening—depending on when you choose to eat your full meal.

## BE INCONVENIENCED - DAY 11

FAST

**Cut out a modern convenience that you use regularly (digital devices, microwave, coffee maker, etc.) for the day.** How does this change your daily activities?

## DETACH - DAY 12

FAST

**Set aside what you find yourself attached to for the day.** It could be your phone, books, video games, etc. What space does this open up for you?

## DISCONNECT - DAY 13

FAST

For the rest of the day, disconnect from your social media networks. **How does this change your day?**

## PRESS PAUSE - DAY 14

FAST

**Press pause on videos, shows, movies, and streamed content.** What can you fill this time with instead?

## SPEAK KINDNESS - DAY 15

FAST

Refrain from gossip and other unkind words. **Only speak what is positive today.** Bonus: add a quarter to a giving jar if you say something negative.

## BUY LESS - DAY 16

FAST

When we can buy with the click of a button, it's easy not to pause and think. **Take a day to refrain from purchasing anything unless it's truly needed.**

## BIBLE READING - SUNDAY 3

MORE

**Read one chapter in your Bible today.**

## ACT OF KINDNESS - DAY 17

MORE

**Perform a random act of kindness for another person today.**

If you need ideas for what to do check out [randomactsofkindness.org](http://randomactsofkindness.org).

## MUSIC DAY - DAY 18

MORE

**Spend your day singing and listening to religious music.**

After all, "when you sing you pray twice."

(Quote attributed to Augustine.)

## COLOR - DAY 19

MORE

We can connect with God when we're doing something that doesn't use our full concentration like coloring. **Color a mandala or search out other meaningful coloring pages.**

## LEARN A SONG - DAY 20

MORE

**Find a psalm or a hymn text that is meaningful to you.**

Write out the words, learn more about the song, and read/sing it throughout the day.

## GOD SIGHTINGS - DAY 21

MORE

At the end of the day ask yourself **"Where did I see God today?"** Make a list.

## MEMORIZE - DAY 22

MORE

**What scripture do you want to hold close to guide you today and in the future? Write it out and repeat it throughout the day.**

You can even set a timer on your phone as a reminder.

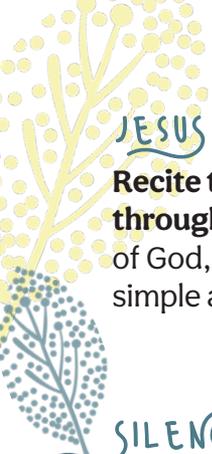
## DIFFICULT PRAYERS - SUNDAY 4

In Matthew 5:43, **Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.** A simple but transformative reminder for yourself is:

God loves my enemies the same as  
God loves me.

PRAY





## JESUS PRAYER - DAY 23

PRAY

**Recite the Jesus prayer 10 times, either in one sitting or throughout the course of the day:** “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” For children, it can be as simple as “Jesus loves me and my neighbor.”



## SILENCE - DAY 24

PRAY

**Find a quiet place, close your eyes and let your thoughts go.** As they come to you, imagine that they are floating by you on a river. Let them go.

## PRAYER OF ST. PATRICK - DAY 25

MORE

One way to feel Christ’s presence with you is to pray this portion of the Prayer of St. Patrick throughout the day.  
**Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ in me.**



## PRAYER WALK - DAY 26

PRAY

**Walk around your neighborhood and pray for what you see, hear, touch, and smell.**



## FOLDING PRAYER - DAY 27

PRAY

**Fold paper cranes (or other origami) and pray for someone.** If you are able, give them what you created. Follow the link [bit.ly/Folding-Prayer](https://bit.ly/Folding-Prayer) (or scan the qr code) for some easy origami instructions.



## BREATH PRAYER - DAY 28

PRAY

On each inhale, say a phrase that helps you feel God's presence. On your exhale, say a phrase that helps you give God's presence to others. Example: **Breathe in God's mercy. Breathe out God's grace.**

## CLEAR OUT- SUNDAY 5

**Donate personal possessions such as clothes, books, shoes, to live a second life.** Take time to figure out what is essential and what is extra.



GIVE

## GIVE TIME - DAY 29

GIVE

**Schedule time for serving others during Lent.** It doesn't matter whether the project is big or small, it matters more that you share your time.

## SAVE + SHARE - DAY 30

GIVE

**Buy one or two extra non-perishable foods each week at the grocery store or set aside 10¢ a meal.** At the end of Lent, share what you've saved to help feed others.

## NOURISH - DAY 31

GIVE

**Cook a meal for a friend or neighbor.** We never know what people are going through, and even a simple meal can make a big difference in someone's life.

## SUPPORT - DAY 32

GIVE

**Support a local school or teacher with a note, goodies, or supplies.** You can go to [donorschoose.org](https://donorschoose.org) to support specific school projects.

## SAY THANKS - DAY 33

GIVE

We receive help from others in big and small ways all the time. Who has helped you along the way? **Write a letter of thanks to someone who has made a difference in your life.**

## A NEW GIFT - DAY 34

GIVE

**Find a new charity or organization to support that energizes you.** Share their mission with friends and family.

## PLACE PALMS - PALM SUNDAY

MORE

**Be part of the parade by placing or coloring palms or other branches outside.** Take time to celebrate the hope found in Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.

## BE UNCOMFORTABLE - DAY 25

MORE

Growth happens in places where we are uncomfortable, and it's easy to stay in the places of comfort. **Push yourself to find new opportunities to live your faith, especially if it means doing something new.**

## CHURCH STAFF - DAY 36

PRAY

Lent and Holy Week are especially busy times for church staff.  
**Pray for their well-being.**

## SIMPLIFY - DAY 37

FAST

**What is overcomplicated in life that can be simplified?**

What are the simplest meals you can eat? Rice and beans is a simple, nutritious meal found in most cultures around the world that would make a great lunch or dinner.

## SUSTAIN - DAY 21 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

GIVE

**Write a note of thanks to those who work to keep us healthy (doctors, nurses, etc.).** Your words of thanks and appreciation will sustain them through difficult times.

## UNPLUG - DAY 39 - GOOD FRIDAY

MORE

**Unplug as much as you can - perhaps even the wifi router!**  
Make room for connection with those close to you.

## PRACTICE GRACE - DAY 40

PRAY

**Practice grace in everything you do today.** Extend some to your family if they irritate you, to the slow people in your checkout line, or to the cars that pull out in front of you. Notice where you need grace extended to you, too.

## PRESENCE - EASTER SUNDAY

MORE

**Reach out to someone in your church or neighborhood who could use a call or visit.** This might include an elderly church member, a stay at home parent, someone who has recently lost their job, or someone who is grieving.

## REFLECT

**What practices have been meaningful for you?**

**How can you incorporate them into your daily life now that Lent is over?**

**How have you been changed by engaging with these practices over the last six and a half weeks?**

