

## The Meaning of Lent



As Christians, we participate in the season of Lent in varying ways. Let's take some time to examine more fully the background and meaning of Lent and how it can enrich your life.

### For

Families with Adolescents

### Season

Spring/Lent

### Needed

Computer for two YouTube clips, Bible, Quiz + Answer Sheet (see below), Pens, Paper

### Prepare in Advance

- Videos: See Chuck Knows Church - Ash Wednesday & Lent OR Busted Halo - Lent in 3 Minutes
- Open Bible to Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
- Copies of Quiz
- Copy of Answer Guide
- A "prize" for the winners of the quiz (optional)

Have marked second Youtube clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vnqb7Vn4AEE>

### Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

Loving God, we gather today to learn more about the season of Lent. Open our minds and hearts to the wisdom of this special time to pray, fast, and serve in a more intentional way. Help us to remember your ways and how you emptied yourself to give us the greatest gift: new life. Amen.

2. Start your time together by viewing the YouTube video that gives a basic background of Lent.
3. Take a few minutes to chat about your reactions to the video.
  - Was the information new?
  - Adults, what has been your experience of Lent? Take time to share any meaningful experiences you've had whether at church or in your own personal commitments.
  - Teens are also welcomed to share any of their experiences.

4. Form two groups, preferably with an adult in each group. Explain that you will now have a Lenten Knowledge Face Off. Each group will have 5 minutes to complete the quiz: *Wait! Wait! Don't Tell Me! About Lent*. The most knowledgeable group will win...(to be determined in advance). Ready, set, go!
5. After 5 minutes, reconvene and take turns going through the answer guide, inviting discussion as you go.
6. Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. Follow the reading with a few moments of quiet reflection/writing to brainstorm some personal Lenten practices.
7. Close by listening/watching the YouTube clip of Michael W. Smith singing *Open the Eyes of My Heart*. (Since this video is rather long, feel free to end the song early).

### Activity Plan

- Adults challenge yourself to not look at the answer sheet so you can fully participate in the “quiz.”
- Have the “winners” decide on a family practice for Lent
- Begin this family time with a simple meal to kick off your Lenten practices.
- Invite family members to share their Lenten practices and take time weekly to check in with each other.



## Wait! Wait! Don't Tell Me!

### About Lent

1. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencton* meaning?
  - a. Desert
  - b. Forty
  - c. Spring
  - d. Lectionary
2. Lent officially begins with...
  - a. Ash Wednesday
  - b. Easter Sunday
  - c. Mardi Gras
  - d. Holy Thursday
3. Lent is often characterized by a time of intentional prayer, fasting, and...
  - a. Isolation
  - b. Service
  - c. Resting
  - d. Chastity
4. Lent lasts...
  - a. 40 hours
  - b. 30 days
  - c. 40 days
  - d. A fortnight
5. Where do the ashes come from that are used on Ash Wednesday?
  - a. Jerusalem
  - b. The palms from last year
  - c. A fireplace
  - d. Burnt sacrifices
6. A common Lenten practice is to...
  - a. Give something up
  - b. Start a practice to better yourself
  - c. Do acts of service
  - d. All of the above
7. The Catholic Church invites its members to abstain from \_\_\_\_\_ on Fridays in Lent.
  - a. Meat
  - b. Work
  - c. Alcohol
  - d. Eating out
8. The three holiest times of the year for Christians are Holy Thursday, Good Friday and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Easter Vigil
  - b. Christmas



- c. New Years
  - d. Easter night
9. What colors are typically used in churches during the season of Lent?
- a. Blue and white
  - b. Yellow and black
  - c. Red and orange
  - d. Purple and pink
10. Lent can be seen as a call to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Conversion
  - b. Sacrifice
  - c. Church
  - d. Family

\*Bonus Question!!!

11. Lent as a season developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century from three merging sources. The first was from the ancient paschal two day fast that was observed before Easter. The second was part of an intense period of preparation for those who were coming into the church at Easter. The third called \_\_\_\_\_ to preparation because the new members were being received into a \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Children, family
  - b. The entire community, living community of faith
  - c. Those separated from the church, a faith community
  - d. Answers b & c.



## Answer Guide

1. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencton* meaning?
  - a. Desert
  - b. Forty
  - c. **Spring**
  - d. Lectionary

***The word Lent can also be translated from the Latin word quadragesima meaning “forty days.”***

2. Lent officially begins with...
  - a. **Ash Wednesday**
  - b. Easter Sunday
  - c. Mardi Gras
  - d. Holy Thursday

***The Ash Wednesday service is one of the more highly attended church services where people are marked with ashes on their forehead representing repentance and a reminder of our mortality.***

3. Lent is often characterized by a time of intentional prayer, fasting, and...
  - a. Isolation
  - b. **Service**
  - c. Resting
  - d. Chastity

***One of the three traditional pillars of Lent, service or almsgiving is essential practice of our Christian life, calling us to acts of charity and justice.***

4. Lent lasts...
  - a. 40 hours
  - b. 30 days
  - c. **40 days**
  - d. A fortnight

***40 days coincides with Jesus’ forty days in the desert where he spent time preparing for his ministry and experiencing temptations. Sunday’s are not counted in the 40 day’s since they celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Lent officially ends on Holy Thursday.***

5. Where do the ashes come from that are used on Ash Wednesday?
  - a. Jerusalem
  - b. **The palms from last year**
  - c. A fireplace
  - d. Burnt sacrifices

***Palms are traditionally given out during Palm Sunday (the start of Holy Week) when Jesus’ celebrated arrival in Jerusalem is recalled. The palms that were used from the previous year’s celebration are burnt and used for the ashes on Ash Wednesday.***

6. A common Lenten practice is to...
  - a. Give something up
  - b. Start a practice to better yourself
  - c. Do acts of service
  - d. **All of the above**

***Often times people associate Lent with giving something up, such as candy or pop. However, people are realizing the significance of digging deeper and instituting practices that help them grow closer to God, be a better person, and live more like Jesus.***

7. The Catholic Church invites its members to abstain from \_\_\_\_\_ on Fridays in Lent.
  - a. **Meat**
  - b. Work



- c. Alcohol
- d. Eating out

***In the early church, people spent the entire forty days fasting. Gradually, the Catholic Church diminished days of fasting to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Members are also invited to give up meat on Friday's. Other churches encourage people to give up alcohol, sweets and other food luxuries regularly. Fasting not only develops self-control, but can be an aid to prayer and an experience of solidarity with those who rarely have the luxury of eating meat or eating whenever/whatever they choose.***

8. The three holiest times of the year for Christians are Holy Thursday, Good Friday and \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Easter Vigil
  - b. Christmas
  - c. New Years
  - d. Easter night

***We experience Jesus' last supper, sentencing, crucifixion, and dying in these three most important days. Our faith as Christians is summed up in these three days by reminding us that through death and dying we can come to new life.***

9. What colors are typically used in churches during the season of Lent?
- a. Blue and white
  - b. Yellow and black
  - c. Red and orange
  - d. **Purple and pink**

***The colors of purple and pink symbolize both the pain and suffering that lead up to Jesus' crucifixion and the suffering of all humanity. However, purple is also seen as the color of royalty, which reminds us that through Jesus' death and dying we are left with hope and new life.***

10. Lent can be seen as a call to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. **Conversion**
  - b. Sacrifice
  - c. Church
  - d. Family

***Although all of these answers could be true, the season of Lent truly calls us to experience conversion in our life; to be intentional about opening our heart and our life to God. The practices of fasting, prayer, and service all work towards this idea of conversion—of choosing God in all aspects of our life.***

\*Bonus Question!!!

11. Lent as a season developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century from three merging sources. The first was from the ancient paschal two day fast that was observed before Easter. The second was part of an intense period of preparation for those who were coming into the church at Easter. The third called \_\_\_\_\_ to preparation because the new members were being received into a \_\_\_\_\_.
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  - d. **Answers b & c.**

