

Faith in 5
Lent: Week 2
Adults

1. **What is Lent?** Lent is a season of 40 days where we recall Christ's teachings and the events leading up to his death and resurrection at Easter. During this time, we are drawn to a deeper reflection of Christ's love and sacrifice for us. The 40 days is reminiscent of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness for 40 days, where he was challenged by Satan. Jesus used this time in prayer and in close communion with God, and we are encouraged to do the same.

2. **Why is the color purple used during Lent?** Purple is associated with being penitent or sorrowful. It also signifies royalty - Christ was called out during the Passion as "King of the Jews" and we acknowledge him as Christ the King in our faith. Additionally, some churches may drape the cross and holy statues in purple cloth. This is to help us focus solely on Christ and encourage our deeper connection with Him.

3. **What three activities are associated with Lent?** There are three main activities we are encouraged to participate in: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.
 - Prayer: this is time spent with the Lord God, communicating with Him and learning what He wants us to do. Prayer is not always speaking to God, it is important that we spend time in silence (away from distractions), be open to the Lord's presence and to hear His voice. We are also encouraged to pray for others and especially those in need.
 - Fasting: abstaining from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Fridays during Lent is a form of self-denial. In addition to fasting, it may be common for people to 'give up' something for Lent as a sacrifice for the Lord.
 - Almsgiving: This is another form of self-denial, where the focus on your own needs is second to the needs of others, especially to the poor. We help alleviate the burdens of others and learn compassion through the suffering of others. Compassion and mercy were hallmarks of Christ's ministry on earth.

4. **What are some things to give up for Lent?** People will give things up for Lent as a demonstration of sacrifice. For some, it may mean giving up something that is fun, indulgent or tempting like cookies or candy. Others may choose something like not watching their favorite TV show or not going to the movies.

To make this practice more meaningful, ask yourself what is getting in the way of a closer relationship with God. Is it watching too many YouTube videos, being on the cell phone or playing too many video games? Whatever you decide to give up, do it joyfully and in the name of the Lord. Use the time you would have spent in those activities in prayer, engaging in works of charity or reading holy books. Lent will be more significant if we work on our relationship with the Lord.

5. **How can I make this the best Lent for me?** Lent is not a season of sorrow, (yes, Holy Week and the Passion have their important place during this season) but of spiritual growth and getting closer to God. Engage in activities that help promote this. What new thing or habit can you do daily to get closer to God? Is it reading the Bible, attending daily Mass, serving in a ministry at church? Challenge yourself to do something outside of your comfort zone, as a sacrifice. Make certain it is something you can accomplish and are happy to do in the name of the Lord!

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