



Lent is the time in the Church year when we prepare for Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection. The purpose of Lent is to help us grow in our faith and become spiritually stronger. We have the opportunity during Lent to spend time in the desert with Jesus.

Three parts of Lent

Pray Prayer is communication with God. Take time to look at how you communicate with God in your life right now. Is your prayer life currently what you want for it to be like? What changes can you make to improve your prayer life? You don't need to make a big change for it to be a worthwhile one. Is there a prayer you have been wanting to pray, but have never prayed? Lent may be the perfect opportunity for you to begin praying it.

Remember, the purpose of prayer is to bring you closer to God. You keep our mind and heart turned to Him when you pray. Even 5 more minutes a day is helpful. Make sure your prayer goal is going to help draw you closer to God, not cause extra frustration or feelings of being overwhelmed in your day. Set a reasonable plan in place that may be a bit challenging, but not overwhelming or unrealistic for you.

Fast The Church requires the faithful who are in good health and not nursing or pregnant from ages 18-59 to fast from eating between meals on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We are also asked to avoid meat on these days and on all the Fridays during Lent. **The idea is that your fast will help you to draw closer to God and to think of God more.** The idea of a fast is to offer a sacrifice to God of something that is currently part of your life. Fasting's aim is to bring you closer to God. Think about what sacrifice will help you to draw closer to God.

Almsgiving When you give alms, you give part of your time, talent, or treasure to help someone in need. You give up something for the good and benefit of another. Giving of your time may mean taking a senior friend to the grocery store. It may mean not watching your favorite show so you can call a lonely friend or do an act of service for someone. Be creative. Almsgiving does not just mean giving money. It means giving of part of your treasures-your time, talent, and money-to help others in need. Almsgiving reminds us that all we have comes from God; it does not really belong to us. God gave you the gifts and talents He did so that you can grow in faith and help others.

Final thoughts on preparing for Lent.

In preparing yourself for Lent, remember to set yourself up for success. You don't have to have **BIG, HUGE** plans. You can, if that is where God leads you, but a successful Lent is measured by how close you are to God and how often you turn your minds and hearts to Him. A successful Lent allows you to live out your vocation well as your journey with Jesus through the desert to His passion, suffering, and death on the cross so that you can truly experience the transformation that comes with His Resurrection from the dead-on Easter.