

40 in 40

Clearing Out Space for God Practices for Lent 2025

40 Things	Clean out or donate 40 things	This could look like cleaning out clutter, giving things away, or throwing things away.	Give
40 Days	Read the scriptures every day for 40 days	Whether it's for 10 minutes or an hour—for any length of time—simply practice opening your Bible and reading it. (See the special Holy Week reading guide for the week before Easter.)	Read
40 Hours	Fast for a total of 40 waking hours	This could be accomplished by fasting for 4 Tuesdays from the time you wake until 10 hours later. (Choose any day, but City Life will use Tuesdays as a day of encouragement for fasting.)	Fast
40 Minutes	Pray for 40 minutes this month	This could look like praying for 10 minutes, 4 times.	Pray
40 Seconds	Take 40 seconds to invite an unchurched person to come to church with you	Spring Celebration is a specific tool to help you do this.	Invite

Holy Week Scripture Reading Plan

Palm Sunday, April 13	Matthew 21:1-11
Monday, April 14	Matthew 21:12-20 & John 12:1-14
Tuesday, April 15	Matthew 21:20-27
Wednesday, April 16	Luke 22:1-6 & Mark 14:1-11
Maundy Thursday, April 17	John 19:1-16 & Isaiah 54:7
Good Friday, April 18	Mark 14:53-15:41; Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Peter 1:18-21
Silent Saturday, April 19	John 19:38-42 & Romans 6:22-23
Resurrection Sunday, April 20	Mark 16:1-7 & Matthew 28:1-20

Where Did Lent Come From?

(Notes adapted from the book, *The Good of Giving Up: Discovering the Freedom of Lent*, by Aaron Damiani)

Over the first 300 years of Christianity, three major types of discipleship schools rose up. These three types of discipleship schools were designed to take young disciples and put them through a process of spiritual formation to help them toward spiritual maturity and Christian truth. These discipleship schools focused on new Christians, yes, *but*, they also served pagans, sinners, those who brought shame on the church, those who publicly had renounced Jesus, and people who had simply acted very badly.

The three major types of discipleship schools varied in how they were run, but they all had three essential parts to the curriculum: Fasting, Prayer, and Generosity.

Discipleship School Type 1: was the Roman baptism process, called the Catechumenate. This was a three-year long intensive discipleship process. You were required to go through this three year process before you could be baptized and officially be considered a follower of Jesus. There was a heavy emphasis on fasting.

Discipleship School Type 2: They focused on the “Easter fast.” This was a fast that happened before Easter. This fast was observed from the very earliest days of Christianity. Eventually it stretched into a 40-day period.

Discipleship School Type 3: Christians in Syria, Armenia, and Egypt practiced a 40-day fast *after* their baptisms. This was to imitate Jesus, who was baptized and then spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness.

Eventually, at the Council of Nicaea in 325, they decided to take the three overlapping fasts and turn them into one universal season leading up to the Easter feast.

- This was before “Catholic” and “Protestant” churches existed. This was just “church.”
- They decided to call this season the *Quadragesima*, which is Latin for “fortieth.”
- Probably because that was a big word, and because this always happened in the season that bridged winter-to-spring, people eventually stopped calling it the *Quadragesima* and simply called it, “spring.” The Old English word for “spring” was “Lent.” And so Lent was born and received its name.

The purpose of this season of Lent is an invitation to discipleship. It’s a time to repent of sins, to reengage with the church, and specifically, to seek openness to the Spirit through the means of fasting, prayer, and generosity: three core Christian practices.