

40 Lenten Ideas for Changing, Growing and Living as Disciples

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If Lent is about conversion – changing to become kinder, more compassionate, healthier and holier – what might our Lenten resolutions be?

Listed here are just a few of the many possibilities. Some of them might be ideas for every day of Lent; some of them might be chosen for one (or two or three) days.

- 1) Get up 15 minutes earlier in order to begin your day in quiet with God.
- 2) Try Coloring Prayer during Lent: <https://prayingincolor.com/tag/lent>.
- 3) Decide on a simple – but significant action – to do each day: 40 days of letter writing, 40 acts of kindness, 40 phone calls to the important people in your life, etc.
- 4) Write some sincere, kind Post-its to put around the workplace or at home. Or, write one to someone specific, with words and compliments that mean something and show them they matter.
- 5) Spend time crafting an intentional message telling an old friend about their impact on you. What might you write on a really sincere thank you card to a good friend? Send that.
- 6) Today, take a break from phubbing (that's 'phone snubbing' – ignoring others in favor of your phone).
- 7) Plan one weekend or evening to volunteer. Serve a meal at your local soup kitchen. Visit the elderly. Stock shelves at a food pantry.
- 8) Remember a holy ancestor. We have the gift of faith because of the faithful people who have gone before us. Think about an older relative or family friend, living or deceased, who has inspired your faith.
- 9) Buy two of everything (or some things) on your grocery list; give the duplicates to your local food pantry.
- 10) Participate in a carbon fast (<http://www.ecofaithrecovery.org/carbonfast/>).
- 11) Give away 40 things that you don't really need – one thing each day.

- 12) Make a commitment to read the Sunday scriptures before you go to Mass. (If you don't have time for all three and the Responsorial Psalm, read the Gospel.
- 13) Put your phone on airplane mode for 1–2 hours (or as long as is practical). When you go to reach for your phone, let that moment be a prompt to think up a generous act for someone.
- 14) Go on a Prayer Walk. Walk slowly around your neighborhood, noticing what's around you, and praying: for peace, for problems in the community, for community relationships. If you're feeling bold, pop a card through a neighbor's door to let them know you're praying for them.
- 15) Participate in a spiritual book club or small community of faith. Check out what's already going on at your parish or pick a book and start your own.
- 16) Make a notebook of prayer. List all the people in your life who need prayer; pray for them each day. Add someone new every day.
- 17) Take some Lenten time to learn more about a particular current issue (immigration, human trafficking, racism, the environment, poverty). Give money to an organization related to your chosen issue that supports the dignity of the human person.
- 18) Choose one book of Scripture. During Lent study it; pray with its words.
- 19) Use the CRS Rice Bowl app to reflect on the realities of people in need around the world and take time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to changing the lives of the poor: <https://www.csricebowl.org/about/app>.
- 20) Don't mention the weather.
- 21) Pray that the best will happen to the public person you dislike the most.
- 22) Write poem of praise for each person in your family.
- 23) Compliment the person who you think needs it the least.
- 24) Use technology for prayer: <https://www.sacredspace.ie/>; <http://www.prayingeachday.org/>; <https://pray-as-you-go.org/ie.php>.
- 25) Seek reconciliation with estranged family and friends. Spend Lent in prayer for them. Examine not went wrong or who hurt whom, but pray deeply – and then reach out.

- 26) Decide on a TV show that you believe is of high quality. Write to the network and thank them.
- 27) Ask yourself: If you knew you were to die in an accident tomorrow, what would you do today? Do it today.
- 28) Give up some unnecessary work today to have more time for people.
- 29) Instead of listening to the radio when you drive, take the time for quiet prayer.
- 30) Try an electronic fast. Give up TV, Facebook, texting, tweeting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week. (Or everyday of Lent!) Use the time to read & pray.
- 31) Save up all your change (and maybe even your singles) and give them to charity.
- 32) Take someone to lunch every week—a lonely coworker, a neighbor you don't always pay attention to, one of your children.
- 33) Start a gratitude journal – each day, write about three things for which you are grateful.
- 34) Find a written biography of a Saint that particularly appeals to you, and read it during the Season of Lent.
- 35) If there is a widow or divorced person living in your neighborhood, invite that person to your home for dinner, a cup of coffee or a glass of wine.
- 36) Listen more intently; don't interrupt people.
- 37) Leave something anonymously for someone you know: a coffee on a desk, an encouraging letter taped to a car, a box of pastries left in the shared kitchen.
- 38) Follow the advice of Pope Francis: “We must be careful not to practice a formal fast, or one which in truth ‘satisfies’ us because it makes us feel good about ourselves. Fasting makes sense if it questions our security, and if it also leads to some benefit for others, if it helps us to cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan, who bends down to his brother in need and takes care of him.” – *Homily, March 5, 2014*
- 39) Take a chunk of time to chat to someone you might not usually 'see': the street vendor, the window-cleaner, the station attendant, the homeless person who sits in the doorway.

40) When Easter comes, don't drop the new ideas and practices you've begun during the Season Lent. Make them a permanent feature of a deeper, richer, healthier life of faith.

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