

Lent Questions
and answers
for families

What is Lent?

- The word "Lent" comes to us from old German and English words for "springtime." Lent is one of the 5 seasons in the liturgical year.
- In the Catholic Church tradition, we have liturgical seasons like Advent, Christmas, Easter, ordinary time, etc. Lent is one of these seasons. The Latin equivalent is "Quadragesima" a word meaning "forty days".
- Spring is a time of change and renewal. "new birth"
- The winter is over life begins to grow again

What is Lent?

- **Lent is a spiritual spring, a time for spiritual growth and renewal.**
- **Lent is the liturgical season in which we prepare for Easter through prayer, penance, and fasting.**
- **It is made up 40 days modelled in part on the 40 days Jesus spent in desert before he started his public ministry.**
- **Lent starts on Ash Wednesday.**

How Long is Lent?

- **Lent runs from Ash Wednesday to Easter Vigil.**
- **It is actually 46 days long but Sundays are not counted because Christians regard Sundays as a day of resurrection (a mini Easter).**
- **So when we remove the Sundays it becomes 40 days.**
- **Lent is 40 days because 40 is a biblically symbolic number.**
- **The Israelites wander the desert for 40 years before they entered promised land.**
- **Jesus spent 40 days in the desert in preparation for his ministry.**

How Long is Lent?

- **So 40 days in this instance symbolizes a period of preparation and purification for the resurrection of Christ (New life in Christ).**
- **It is important to note that early Christians used lent period as part of the process of becoming a Christian, candidates prepared for their rite of initiation through a retreat lasting 40 days.**
- **This period became known as "Lent".**

How Long is Lent?

- **For those already baptized and members of the Church, it was a time to fast, encourage and to pray with the candidates and to renew baptismal promises usually done on easter vigil.**
- **At some stage, the focus of Lent shifted from Baptism preparation to penance, prayer and almsgiving.**

When does Lent begin?

**The season
of Lent
begins on
Ash
Wednesday**



Why is it called Ash Wednesday?

This day is called Ash Wednesday because Catholics receive the ashes on their foreheads as an invitation to repentance.

Why do we wear Ashes on our forehead on Ash Wednesday?

- The prayer that is said as ashes are given explains it very well. The words are a reminder of our origins, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Or "Repent and believe the Good News".
- The ashes and the whole season of Lent are a time to refocus on our relationship with God and others.
- It reminds us that we depend on God for our very existence.

Why do we wear Ashes on our forehead on Ash Wednesday?

- To recall that only with the breath of God can we have life is motivation to reconcile whatever part of our life and relationships that needs it
- To recall that only with the breath of God can we have life is motivation to reconcile whatever part of our life and relationships that needs it.
- As God breathed life into the dust at the beginning, he can breathe new life into those who have fallen into sin and came sorrowfully to ask for forgiveness.
- The ashes are a sign of mortality and a sign

Where do these ashes come from?

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the blessed palms left over from the previous year. The palms are burnt to produce the ashes. Ashes are considered sacramentals and are blessed with Holy water before their use.



Why is the ashes on our forehead like sign of the cross?

- **It is a sign of the cross.**
- **It is a reminder to us of our believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**
- **It reminds us of the cross of Christ and his unconditional love for us though his death on the Cross so that we will be saved.**

How do we prepare spiritually during lent?

- **By letting go of our sinful behaviours**
- **By seeking conversion (interior change)**
- **By practicing Penance**
- **By following the teachings of Christ. (Discipleship)**
- **By practicing the three pillars of Lent.**

What is Penance?

- **Penance is making amends.**
- **Amends is making up for the wrongs we have done.**
- **Lent is a time to “clean up the mess” and fix our lives and our relationships with God and our neighbours.**
- **It is us reconciling with ourselves, our God, and our neighbours.**

What is Sacrament of Penance or Confession or Reconciliation?

- The Sacrament of Penance is the liturgical celebration of God's forgiveness of the sins of the penitent.**
- Conversion from sin, confession of guilt, forgiveness of the wrong done, and reconciliation with Christ and His Church.**

What is Sacrament of Penance or Confession or Reconciliation?

•We should come to the Sacrament of Penance at least once each year during Lent or Eastertide and as often as necessary when conscious of serious sin to receive God's forgiveness.

What are the three pillars of Lent?

- **What are the three pillars of Lent?**
- **Prayer, Fasting (giving up something), Almsgiving (charity).**
- **These three pillars are also known as Lenten disciplines.**

Why do we give up things during Lent?

- **We give things up during Lent as another way of practicing discipline.**
- **By exercising self-control, we can free our minds from desires for material possessions and pleasures and focus on the true happiness that can only come from faith and Jesus Christ.**

Why do we give up things during Lent?

•So, we give up things that are obviously unhealthy for us such as smoking, too much sugar or excessive eating and drinking, or swearing, and things like that.

Why do we give up things during Lent?

- **But we can also give up things that aren't bad in and of themselves such as watching TV, excessive use of mobile phones, gambling, shopping, and so on.**

- **These can distract us from focusing on what is important this season of lent that is renewing and building our relationship with Jesus Christ.**

What is discipleship?

Discipleship is a learning to be a disciple. The word disciple means "student". Student is the one who learns from the master.

Discipleship is learning to be like Christ.

How do we learn to be like Christ?

Study Christ's teachings by reading the scripture.

Follow Christ's teachings.

Witness Christ's teachings in our life and in the world.

Why do we pray the Stations of the Cross during Lent?

This practice is traceable back to the early Church, Christians would make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to retrace the steps of Jesus on His way to the cross. And of course, as the Church grew and such a pilgrimage became unrealistic for many people, they began to retrace the steps of Jesus on His way to the cross by reflecting on events that took during that journey.

Why do we pray the Stations of the Cross during Lent?

Well during Lent, especially on Fridays when we reflect on the crucifixion of Jesus, praying on the stations of the cross has become a time-honoured devotion.

What is the Colour of Lent?

**The colour of Lent is
purple.**

**Purple is a symbol of
Penance.**

Why is purple the colour of Lent?

Purple has always been associated with sorrow and mourning. And during Lent we recall the suffering and death of Jesus.

Purple is also the colour of royalty and through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we come to recognize him as our king.

What is Holy Week?

The height of the season of Lent is Holy Week.

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday and ends with the Holy Triduum.

Triduum means: three days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

What is the meaning of Holy Triduum?

The Triduum is a celebration that highlights the Paschal mystery.

Through these three days the Church remembers that Christ suffered and died, but that he also came to life.

The Triduum is the celebration of the Church's salvation through Christ.

What is the meaning of Holy Triduum?

Lent officially ends on Holy Thursday. The Holy Triduum begins on Holy Thursday. On Holy Thursday there is only one Mass. The Mass of the Lord's supper which is celebrated in the evening and includes the washing of the feet. No morning Masses are celebrated on this day.

What is the significance of Holy Thursday?

The faithful gathers in church to celebrate the institution of the Eucharist and priesthood. Washing of the Feet - a reminder of Jesus' command to serve one another. The Blessed Sacrament is moved to a chapel. The faithful is invited to stay in the chapel to pray before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight. The sanctuary is cleared. All decorations are removed from the church.

What happens on Good Friday?

This is a holy day of fasting and abstinence. A Mass is not celebrated on this day. The liturgy of the Lord's passion is celebrated, followed by a homily, the General intercessions, communion, and the veneration of the cross. We also pray and reflect on the stations of the cross on this day.

What is the veneration of the Cross?

What is the veneration of the Cross? The veneration of the cross is the last section of the Liturgy of Good Friday. The faithful are presented with the cross, then the faithful venerate the cross with a kiss, as a sign of respect and devotion.

What happens on Holy Saturday?

The Easter Vigil is the highest point of the Easter Triduum. The Easter Vigil begins on Holy Saturday. This is the longest celebration in Catholic worship. The celebration proclaims Jesus' triumph over the powers of evil and death.

The Easter Vigil begins at night with the blessing of the fire and the exulted.

What happens on Holy Saturday?

The exultet is a song sung by the deacon or cantor proclaiming the salvation of the risen Christ.

The fire is blessed, from this fire the Paschal (easter) candle is lit. The priest blesses the candle reminding people that Jesus is the alpha and the omega, the beginning, and the end.

The Paschal candle is carried by the deacon into the darkened church.

What happens on Holy Saturday?

As the procession progresses the lights of the church are gradually turn on. People light their own candles from the Paschal candle carried by the deacon. At the end of the procession the deacon sings the Exultet or exultation song. The people hold their candles during the song.

What happens on Holy Saturday?

The darkened church, the procession, the paschal candle, the fire, and the exultet are all symbols that remind us that Christ's resurrection defeated the darkness of evil. This ceremony reminds us the power of Christ cannot be defeated nor those who have his power.

What other things happen on Easter Vigil?

After the homily, the baptismal water is blessed with the Paschal candle. The catechumens and candidates are initiated with the sacraments of initiation. The congregation renews their baptismal VOWS.

What other things happen on Easter Vigil?

After the baptismal ceremony, the second part of the Mass, the liturgy of the Eucharist, continues as usual. This is the first Mass of Easter day, and the beginning of the Easter season, fifty days of celebration that ends on Pentecost Sunday.

What do we say during the Renewal of Baptismal Promises?

Do you reject Satan? I do.

And all his works? I do.

And all his empty promises? I do.

**Do you believe in God, the Father
Almighty, creator of heaven and
earth? I do.**

What do we say during the Renewal of Baptismal Promises?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only

**Son, our Lord, who was born of the
Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was
buried, rose from the dead, and is now
seated at the right hand of the Father? I
do.**

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the
holy Catholic church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and life
everlasting? I do.**

What do we say during the Renewal of Baptismal Promises?

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

I do.

When does the Easter season begin and end?

The season of Easter begins with Easter Sunday and ends with Pentecost . Symbols associated with Pentecost are: Dove, tongues of flame, and wind, Red vestments and decorations, which symbolizes the intense love and fire of the Holy Spirit

A Children's Prayer for Lent

**Lord, please show me
what I should give up for Lent
And when I've given it up
Remind me to pray to You instead
To thank You
To love You
To hear from You
Each and every day in Lent.
Amen.**