



ANSWERING
THE CALL:
PREPARING
FOR EASTER
DISCIPLESHIP
RESOURCES



How do we answer Jesus' call to be His disciple throughout the Lent and Easter seasons?

What is Lent?

Lent is the period of **40 days and 40 nights** that precedes Easter and is a time of preparation for the celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The season encourages us to remove the things that cause us to be distracted from our relationship with God and the contrast between the Lenten and Easter seasons help us to recognise that Jesus' resurrection is the biggest cause for celebration in our faith. Lent is an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Lent is observed in spring, when the days begin to get longer.

Lent is characterised by 3 pillars: **prayer, fasting and almsgiving** ([Matthew 6: 1-18](#))

The Liturgical Colour for the season of Lent is **violet** (apart from where feasts and solemnities specify white or red) which signifies the penitent and reflective atmosphere of the season. Purple (or violet) is associated with **mourning** and so anticipates the pain and suffering of the crucifixion, but purple is also the colour associated with **royalty**, and celebrates Christ's kingship and sovereignty.

Why 40 days?

40 is a significant number in Jewish-Christian scripture:

- In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain (Genesis 7:17)
- The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God.
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18)
- Twelve spies were sent to scout out the land of Canaan for 40 days (Numbers 13:25)
- Elijah spent 40 days journeying to the holy mountain of Horeb (1 Kings 19:8)
- Jonah warned Nineveh that it had only 40 days left before destruction (Johan 3:4)
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry.

Most Christians regard Jesus' time in the wilderness as the key event for the duration of Lent (Matthew 4:2)

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. On the 4th Sunday of Lent we celebrate **Laetare Sunday** - the liturgical colour is rose (pink) and some of the austerity of Lent is lifted to help encourage us on our Lenten journey towards the joy of the resurrection. The last week of Lent is called **Holy Week** and Lent ends on Maunday Thursday, when the Church enters into the three days (Sacred Triduum) of Jesus' passion, death, and finally resurrection, which marks the start of Eastertide. During Holy Week we commemorate the events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection including: Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), the Last Supper, with the command to wash the disciple's feet and Jesus' institution of the Eucharist (Maundy Thursday), Jesus's crucifixion and death (Good Friday), and then the stillness of Jesus' dead body lying in the tomb (Holy Saturday) until the glories of Jesus' resurrection are celebrated on Easter day.

Throughout Lent we are encouraged to reflect on the **Stations of the Cross** (prayers, images and reflections that depict Jesus': trial, journey to the cross, crucifixion and death) in order to truly appreciate the great sacrifice that Jesus made for all of us.

During the penitential season of Lent certain words and prayers are omitted from our celebrations. For example, the Ordo states that there is **no Penitential Act during an Ash Wednesday Mass**, the **Gloria is omitted** from all Masses (apart from feasts and solemnities as outlined in the Ordo) and **the word 'Alleluia' is always omitted.**



Lenten and Easter timeline 2021

Lenten Timeline 2023

Tuesday 21st February - Shrove Tuesday

Also known as Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras (French for 'Fat Tuesday').

The earliest date that Shrove Tuesday can fall is February 3; the latest is March 9.

Shrove is the past tense of the word shrive, which means to hear a confession, assign penance, and absolve from sin. In the Middle Ages, especially in Northern Europe and England, it became the custom to confess one's sins on the day **before** Lent began in order to enter the penitential season in the right spirit. In previous centuries the fast during Lent was quite severe. Christians abstained from all meat and items that came from animals, including butter, eggs, cheese, and fat. That is why Shrove Tuesday became known as Mardi Gras, the French term for Fat Tuesday. In the countries that speak Romance languages (languages derived primarily from Latin), Shrovetide is also known as **Carnivale** - literally, "farewell to meat." Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday as they were a dish that could use up all the eggs, fats and milk in the house with just the addition of flour.

Wednesday 22nd February - Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the Season of Lent.

Ashes are placed on the forehead of all those who wish to show that they are beginning upon their preparations during Lent.

It is encouraged to attend Mass on this day to receive ashes but ashes can also be distributed outside of the Mass as part of a Liturgy. The same readings are as at Mass.

The mark of ashes

During Ash Wednesday the congregation is offered the opportunity to be marked on the forehead with a cross of ashes as a sign of penitence and mortality whilst one of the following phrases is used:

Remember, that you are dust, and to dust you shall return

Or,

Repent, and believe in the Gospel



The ashes are made by burning blessed palm crosses or olive branches from the previous Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, so when the crosses used in the Palm Sunday service are converted to ashes, the worshippers are reminded that defeat and crucifixion swiftly followed earthly (but not Heavenly) triumph.

Using the ashes to mark the cross on the believer's forehead symbolises that through Christ's death and resurrection, all Christians can be free from sin. It is an outward sign of an inward change.



Lenten and Easter Timeline 2021

Friday 3rd March - CAFOD Fast Day

An opportunity to fast and to give up foods/ luxuries we might usually enjoy so that we can give that money to CAFOD instead to make a life changing difference to our neighbours around the world. See the [CAFOD website](#) for more information and resources about the focus of the Fast Day this year.

Sunday 19th March - Laetare Sunday

Liturgical Colour: Rose or Violet



On this Sunday the Entrance Introit (antiphon) in Latin is "Laetare, Jerusalem" which translates as '**Rejoice O Jerusalem**'. Much like Gaudete Sunday mid-way through Advent, the midpoint of Lent is the Thursday of the third week of Lent and therefore Laetare Sunday has traditionally been viewed as a day on which the austerity of Lent is briefly lessened. The passage from Isaiah continues, "rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow," and on Laetare Sunday, the purple vestments and altar cloths of Lent are set aside, and **rose** ones may be used instead. The point of both days is to provide us encouragement as we progress toward the end of each season.

Flowers may be used to decorate the altar and music can be used in more creative ways than throughout the rest of Lent.

Laetare Sunday is also known in the United Kingdom as **Mothering Sunday**. Historically, on this day, everyone paid a solemn visit to their mother church, (often the nearest large church or cathedral) and left an offering there at the high altar.

The word "mothering" came to have other associations; it became a feast day for the mothers of families. All the children who were away from home went back on that day to visit their mothers, taking with them "a present of money, a trinket, or some nice eatable, and they are all anxious not to fail in this custom."



Thursday 25th March - Annunciation of the Lord



The feast of the Annunciation of the Lord celebrates the angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary ([Luke 1:26-38](#)), his announcement that the Blessed Virgin had been chosen to be the Mother of Our Lord, and Mary's willing acceptance of God's holy plan.

We celebrate the Annunciation exactly nine months before the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. For more information about this solemnity go to the Liturgy Office website [here](#) or [here](#).

Lenten and Easter Timeline 2021

Sunday 2nd April - Palm Sunday



At Mass we commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and mark the start of Holy Week. At the main Mass in a parish the congregation may participate in a procession at the start of the celebration which ends in them entering the Church ready to begin Mass. Just as when Jesus entered Jerusalem and palm branches were waved, with the people shouting 'Hosanna!'. The congregation commemorates this in its processions by carrying palm branches (sometimes shaped as a cross) and singing hymns.

During Mass the Passion is proclaimed - this is the story of Jesus' betrayal, capture, trial and crucifixion. This is often read by different readers in the congregation who take on different parts (e.g. narrator, Peter etc) and there is the opportunity for all of the congregation to join in as the voice of the crowd. The voice of Jesus is usually proclaimed by the Priest.

'The Sacred Paschal Triduum'

Thurs 6th April - Maundy Thursday

The word "Maundy" is derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means "mandate." This word is used in the Latin text for John 13:34:

"Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos."

Or, in English:

"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you."

Holy Thursday is thus sometimes called Maundy Thursday because **it was on this day that Christ gave us the new commandment**- the new mandate -to love one another as he loves us.



Mass for this special day is always celebrated in the evening - just as Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover meal together. At Mass we commemorate: The Washing of the Disciples' Feet, The Last Supper, Jesus' praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus' Arrest.

After the Gospel and Homily the priest may wash the feet of those men, women and children who have been chosen. This demonstrates the humbling act of service that Jesus made towards his disciples and reminds each of us of that same call to service in our own lives.

Mass continues with the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion but instead of placing the remaining Blessed Sacrament into the usual tabernacle the priest and the congregation process with the Blessed Sacrament to another prepared area of the church where people are invited to spend some time in prayer and Adoration. This movement and time of prayer reminds us of the journey that Jesus and his disciples made to the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked them to stay awake and to pray with him during his time of need.

After some time in prayer the church is stripped of altar cloths etc. and all crucifixes are covered with veils in preparation for Good Friday (if this hasn't already been done at the start of Passiontide).

Lenten and Easter Timeline 2021

Friday 7th April - Good Friday



Good Friday is the only day on which **no Mass** is celebrated anywhere in the world. The only sacraments that can be celebrated on this day are Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick.

At **3pm** the Celebration of the Lord's Passion takes place which consists of 3 parts: the **Liturgy of the Word**, the

Adoration of the Cross and Holy Communion (using the hosts consecrated the day before during the Maundy Thursday Mass). It is a sombre celebration which begins and ends in **silence**. The priest will wear **red** to commemorate the death of Jesus that we remember on this day.

The Passion of the Lord is proclaimed again during this Service (today, always from the Gospel of Saint John) and specific intercessions (bidding prayers) are used for the needs of the world.

All of the congregation are invited to come forward and to **venerate the cross**. This usually takes the form of kissing the cross but other signs of respect may be offered such as genuflecting.

Good Friday is a day of fasting and traditionally those who are able will not eat meat and will limit themselves to one main meal and 2 other small dishes (at most) during the day.

Saturday 8th April - Holy Saturday leading into the Easter Vigil

Throughout the day the sombre atmosphere of Good Friday is kept and Mass is not celebrated during the day. Once night had fallen the first celebrations of Easter can begin in the form of the **Easter Vigil**. At this Mass the **Paschal Candle** is blessed, the congregation renew their **baptismal promises** and we celebrate the **resurrection of Jesus Christ**. For the first time since Ash Wednesday we can say 'Alleluia!' and from this point for the next 50 days we are in **Easter tide**.



In some parishes, those young people and adults who have been preparing for Baptism will be welcomed into the Catholic Church and will be baptised so that they enter into new life just as Jesus rose from the dead and brought new life.

Sunday 9th April - Easter Day, the Resurrection of the Lord

The celebrations that were started during the Easter Vigil continue!

This Sunday begins the 'Octave of Easter' - eight days of Easter celebrations where the Gloria is used in every Mass and at the end of each Mass there is a double 'Alleluia' at the dismissal. Each day uses the same prayers in the Divine Office, and in a very real way it's a whole week of Easters.

For all of the scripture used during the Sacred Triduum click [here](#).

Lenten and Easter Timeline 2021

The Season of Eastertide

Sunday 16th April, 2nd Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday

In a series of revelations to **St. Maria Faustina Kowalska** in the 1930s, our Lord called for a special feast day to be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. Today, we know that feast as **Divine Mercy Sunday**, named by Saint John Paul II at the canonization of St. Faustina on April 30, 2000.

St. Maria Faustina Kowalska recorded these words in her Diary:

'My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy.'

Sunday 30th April, 4th Sunday of Easter - Good Shepherd Sunday

The readings in all three cycles of scripture use images of sheep and shepherd to compare the relationship of Jesus and those who belong to him.

While Good Shepherd Sunday is certainly the perfect time to pray for our priests, bishops, and all those who shepherd the Lord's flock, it is also an opportunity to look at our own lives, and how we can be good shepherds to those in our care. We reflect on Jesus who is the Good Shepherd and reflect on how we can follow His example.



Thursday 18th May - The Ascension of the Lord, *Holy Day of Obligation*

40 days after we celebrate Jesus' resurrection at Easter we remember when Jesus ascended into Heaven.

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** explains why it is such an important celebration:

665 Christ's Ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain, whence he will come again (cf. Acts 1:11); this humanity in the meantime hides him from the eyes of men (cf. Col 3:3).

666 Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever.

667 Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday 28th May - Pentecost Sunday



Having celebrated Jesus' resurrection and ascension into Heaven we then celebrate the day on which the [Holy Spirit was sent as the promised helper to the disciples](#) in their mission to go out in the world and proclaim the Good News. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church.

This celebration marks the end of Eastertide and for the first time since the Easter Vigil the Paschal Candle is removed from the sanctuary and returned to its usual place, in the baptistry (near the font) within the church.

For the scripture for Pentecost Sunday click [here](#).

How do we answer Jesus' call to be His disciple throughout the Lent and Easter seasons?

See - for use in displays and Collective Worship.

- **Videos**

- Ash Wednesday and Lent in 2 minutes: Watch [here](#).
- You don't know Jack about Lent: Watch [here](#).
- '40 days' video showing Jesus in the desert: Watch [here](#).
- Holy week in 3 minutes: Watch [here](#).

- **Art for Displays or Website**

Roman Missal p232:

'During Lent, it is not permitted to decorate the altar with flowers... Nevertheless, Laetare Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts are exceptions to this rule.'

- **Stations of the Cross** - These could be artwork/ photographs of freeze frames that the students have created.
- Using the **liturgical colour violet or purple** wherever possible and appropriate.
- Put up **Lenten pledges** that pupils have made to remind them of their promises.
- **Veiling of religious images and cross at Passiontide** — From the 5th Sunday of Lent it is an old tradition to cover statues and crosses with a cloth. The idea of this is a fasting of our eyes, so that on Good Friday when the Crucifix is unveiled it is as if we are seeing it anew. We can very easily get used to how shocking an image it is, how great God's love for us is. The unveiling of the statues reminds us of the promise of heaven that awaits us all, again we can take this for granted.
- **Symbols of Eastertide** include eggs, lambs and various other symbols of new birth and new life linking both with Jesus' resurrection and with the calendar season of Spring. Eggs are particularly significant as when they are broken open they resemble the empty tomb after Jesus' resurrection.
- **The Paschal Candle** can be seen in the church sanctuary throughout the whole of the Easter Season and each of the images and symbols on the Candle represent a deeper meaning in our faith.



Hear— *try to show how this helps us see the connection between Lent and being Jesus' disciple.*

Scripture

To find even more scripture you can use the Topical Bible Search on OpenBible.info Just remember to change the Bible translation to '**Good News Translation**' when you visit the references on Bible Gateway

- **Seven Last Words of Jesus** - Focus on the final words of Jesus before He died and how important people's last words normally are. Get them to find Jesus' 7 [last phrases/words](#) before His death.
- **Seven Sorrows of Mary** - is a devotional way of praying where seven sorrowful moments from Mary's life are read, reflected upon and then a Hail Mary is prayed. The scripture quotations are:
 1. The Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34-35)
 2. The flight into Egypt (Mark 2:13-14)
 3. The loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:43-45)
 4. The meeting of Jesus and Mary on the way to the Cross (Luke 23:27)
 5. The Crucifixion (John 19:18, 25-27)
 6. The taking down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross (Mark 15:43-46)
 7. The Burial of Jesus (John 19:41-42)
- **St John Paul II's Scriptural Way of the Cross** - In 1991 St John Paul II, as is the annual traditional; led the Stations of the Cross in the Coliseum in Rome. However he presented a different version focusing on different scenes. The traditional 14 stations are taken from both scripture and tradition, these are taken only from [scripture](#).
- **During Lent you won't hear...**
 - ♦ A Penitential Act during an Ash Wednesday Mass
 - ♦ The **Gloria** during Mass in Lent (unless specified by the Ordo for Mass on days which are feasts or solemnities). The Gloria is a song/ prayer of exaltation and joy so during the penitential season of Lent it is omitted.
 - ♦ The word '**Alleluia!**'. The word comes from the Hebrew 'Praise be the Lord' and was translated by St Jerome for use in the Latin Vulgate (now used all around the world). As praise and celebration are associated with the joy of Easter we deliberately do not use the word 'Alleluia' as we prepare during Lent. In contrast, at the Easter Vigil, and throughout Eastertide, we can't stop saying it! For some **alternative Gospel Acclamations** that you can use during Lent go to the Liturgy Office website [here](#). Perhaps you and your students could put these to music to use during Collective Worship throughout Lent?



Hear— *try to show how this helps us see the connection between Lent and being Jesus' disciple.*

Roman Missal p232:

'During Lent, ...the use of musical instruments is allowed only so as to support the singing. Nevertheless, Laetare Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts are exceptions to this rule.'

Worship Music and Hymns — *more can be found on www.worshiptogether.com (modern worship music) or www.ocp.org (hymn more commonly found in hymn books)*

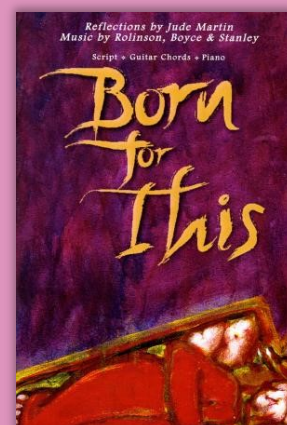
- *Amazing Grace* by John Newton
- *When I Survey the Wonderous Cross* by Edward Miller/ Boyce & Stanley
- *Make Way, Make Way* by Graham Kendrick
- *40 Days* by Matt Maher
- *Give us clean hands* by Chris Tomlin
- *Servant King* by Graham Kendrick
- *These are the days of Elijah* by Robin Mark
- *Once Again* by Matt Redman
- *Lord I need you* by Matt Maher
- *I will offer up my life* by Matt Redman
- *At the Cross* by Chris Tomlin
- *The Cross Stands* by Tim Hughes
- *O come to the altar* by Southside Worship

Born For This by CJM Music

Born for This is a moving and powerful depiction of the **Stations of the Cross** in words, music, and drama. The style of presentation can range from a full-scale production involving drama, dance, narrators, chorus, soloists and orchestra to a simple, equally-powerful presentation involving slides, one or two readers and a music player.

Although the various elements of Born for This have an indisputable synergy when used together, the songs and reflections work well independently also – a rich pool of ideas for Lenten, Holy Week, Triduum or Easter liturgies.

To visit the CJM Music website to find out more about this production click [here](#).



Think — *to help reflect on how God may be calling us through different vocations to be a better disciple.*

- **Pope Francis' [10 tips on Lent](#)**. How many could you commit to?
- **Examen Prayer** - a daily prayer routine that helps us think about how we have lived as Jesus' disciple this day. Resources to support you in this can be found [here](#). Thanks to St Martin's academy in Stoke Golding for providing these. Further information can be found on the [Ignatian Spirituality Website](#).

- **Sorry Prayers**

The heart of preparing for Easter is being penitent, sorry. Encourage times of writing, or sharing sorry prayers, thinking about how we have not lived up to what is expected when being a disciple of Jesus.

For support preparing Sorry Prayers for Collective Worship visit the NDCYS website [here](#).

- During each Liturgical season there is a **cycle of prayer** - you might like to include some of these themes during your Collective Worship to harmonise with the prayers of the wider Diocese and Church:

- Cycle of Prayer during **Lent**:

Candidates for the Sacraments;
Women;
the Needy and Hungry of the World;
Penitents and Wanderers.

- Cycle of Prayer during **Easter tide**:

New Members of the Church;
Vocations;
The Right Use of the Media;
The Church;
Human Work



- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

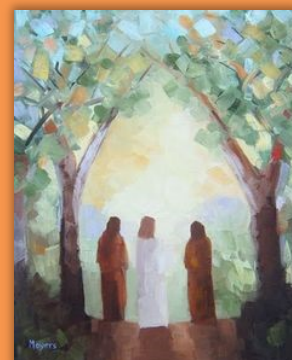
Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent is an important part of this penitent season and gives us an opportunity to change our lives so that we can become better disciples of Jesus.

Although the Sacrament of Reconciliation in schools is only available to those who have undergone the preparation and catechesis for their First Reconciliation (usually in parishes) you can discuss with your priest if he would be happy to simply talk with those who feel they would like to participate but who are unable to receive the Sacrament at this time.

A video explaining the Sacrament of Reconciliation can be found [here](#) and further resources can be found in the **[Reconciliation Lent Resources](#)** booklet.

Do

- Create your own [Pascal Candle](#), at school or at home.
- Consider organising and leading a **Reconciliation service** in your classroom or chapel. Have a look at the [Reconciliation Lent Resource](#) book for more ideas
- Support **CAFOD** in its Lenten campaign focussed on providing water to those who need it. You can find their latest campaign [here](#).
- **Give extra time** - if we gave an extra 1% of our day to prayer that would be 14 minutes and 24 seconds. Could we break this time down across the school day? At the beginning or the end or even before or after lunch?
- Create a '[Lenten chain](#)' in your classroom or chapel.
- Run the '[desert experience](#)' with your young people
- [Pray the Rosary](#) with a focus on the **sorrowful mysteries** during Lent and then the **glorious mysteries** from Easter Day.
- **Sorry prayers** - perhaps you could ask your young people to write their sorry prayers (mentioned in the 'Think' section earlier) on scraps of paper and they could be burnt in a fire pit in the playground or a courtyard to signify our prayers going to God and to remind us that God absolves us of our sins in Reconciliation. Alternatively, they could be written on soluble paper, like [this](#), and placed in a bowl of water during a Reconciliation service to signify our sins being washed away.
- **Live out Holy Week**: there are a number of events from Holy Week that are represented for us in the liturgies, sadly lots of our pupils will not see this so we can make them present in school:
 - **Palm Sunday** - Students could create palm leaves of their own and decorate them with things they are proud of and want to celebrate, as a reminder of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem being celebrated. These could even be used in your own Procession of Palms during a liturgy.
 - **Maundy Thursday** - When Jesus washed the feet of His Disciples, showing us the importance of serving others. How could your young people think about serving others? Could you link it with the water from the story too?
 - **Good Friday** - Veneration of the Cross; this could be a bow to the cross in a liturgy or perhaps you could spend a bit more time thinking and talking about the 'Sign of the Cross', what it means, why it is important and how it is a blessing in itself. [Here](#) is a video explaining the importance of the Sign of the Cross.
 - **Easter Day** - Emmaus Walk at break time or during lesson time: pair up pupils and give them questions to discuss as they walk, exploring their faith, how they are, and what is on their mind at this time. This activity links to the Gospel scripture where two disciples meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24: 13-35](#)).

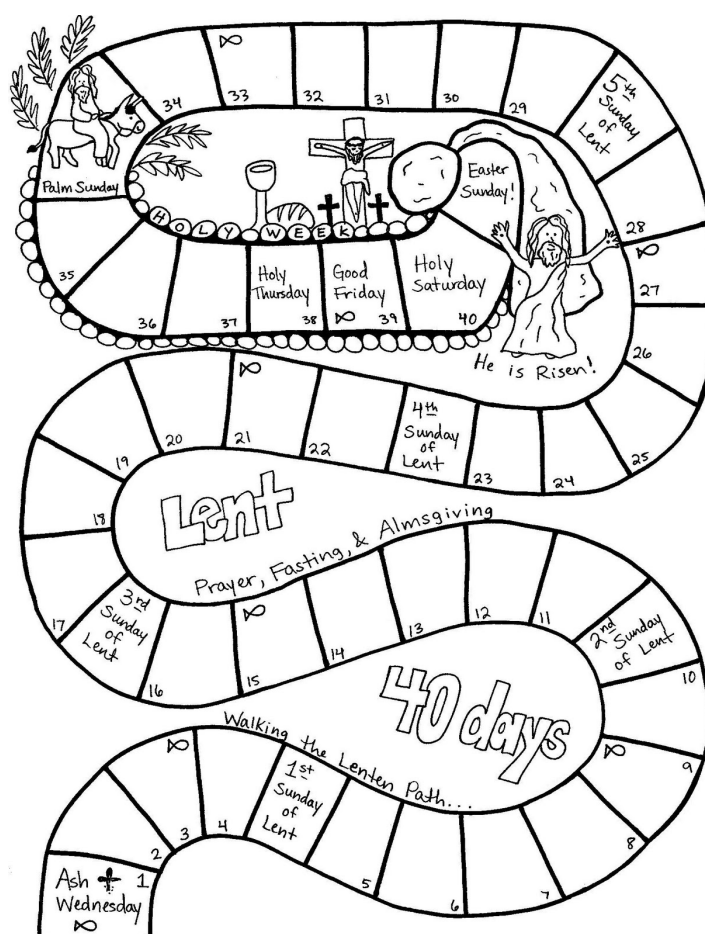


R.E. Links

- GCSE:
 - You can link our Lenten fast and suffering with Pope St John Paul II's teachings in *Salvifici Doloris*, on how the profound mystery of suffering can unite us with God, particularly Christ's Passion on the Cross.
 - Key quotation: John 3:16 — The aim of Lent is to help us prepare for this great gift of love from God. Our calling as a disciple is to respond to this love offered to us on the Cross.
 - The Pieta sculpture is a great visual witness of Jesus giving all, and Our Lady (the perfect disciple) receiving the gift of His sacrifice for all of us.
- Come and See — Topic 6 is of course the Lent/Easter topic and links well with suggestions in this booklet. Try also highlighting how what is being covered in RE lessons links to our term's theme of Discipleship.

Remember!

It can be easy to get carried away with doing things (or giving up things) in Lent but it is important to remember that our focus isn't just about preparing for Easter but is a way of responding to the call of discipleship. So at the forefront of what we do should be the question: How will Lent help our community better answer Jesus' call to be his disciple today?



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