

# Lent Guide



Calvary  
CHURCH

## Purpose of Lent

Lent is a season in the Church Calendar, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding with the celebration of Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday, that offers opportunity for us to reorder our spiritual lives. Too easily we forget God as our Maker and Redeemer, replacing Him with things and ambition (Robert E. Webber). Lent is a time to return to the basics, to orient ourselves around the spiritual realities of life. Lent is a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey wherein we choose to die with Christ and be buried with Him, so we can be raised in the resurrection of new life.

## Lenten Disciplines

The aim of this Lent Guide is to help you develop or return to intentional spiritual rhythms as you prepare to celebrate Easter. Each week you'll focus on developing in the disciplines of prayer, meditation, fasting and giving.

You can choose to follow one of two tracks. Track A is brief and direct. It's a great entry point into spiritual disciplines and includes Scripture readings tailored to families with young children. Track B includes longer Scripture readings and deeper questions around fasting and meditation. Both can be tailored to be a weekly or daily rhythm throughout the season of Lent.

## Prayer

During Lent, we set aside extra time to pray. Our hope is that by taking this intentional step as a congregation in this season, we will come to Easter having developed or deepened a habit of prayer. For it is through prayer that God transforms our lives, it is an avenue through which His character is made evident in us.

**Track A** | The Lord's Prayer is a familiar passage of Scripture wherein Jesus teaches us how to pray. Consider using the season of Lent to memorize this prayer by making it part of a regular rhythm in your life. It offers a framework for acknowledging the Lord's control over our lives, confessing our sin, accepting forgiveness, and entrusting our daily needs to Him. You could pray this every morning when you wake up, before dinner as a family, or on your morning commute. One way to develop a habit is to tie it to another existing habit. Perhaps you could post it in your mirror and pray as you brush your teeth!

**Track B** | This longer option for prayer is a framework to walk through examining a span of time in your life (such as the day that has passed) with God as your guide. As you see things through His eyes, you'll be led to confess the ways in which you fell short of His ideal, then repent and turn from those sins. This prayer then closes with a receiving of His grace and mercy to continue on in the way of godliness. Whether this becomes a prayer that you use daily before you fall asleep, or to end one week and begin another, it's a helpful framework for bringing yourself before the Lord and growing in communion with Him.

## Meditation

Meditation is said to be, “the ability to hear God’s voice and obey His word” (Richard Foster). During this season we want to draw near to God and soak ourselves in His Word. The idea is that by the time we arrive at Easter we will have become more familiar with the sound of His voice by developing this spiritual discipline.

**Track A** | We have chosen verses for each week of Lent that are foundational to building your faith. Whether you are new to following Christ or new to meditating on Scripture, these are beautiful words to meditate on. Stick them somewhere that you will see them often. Read them over and over, seek out new meaning and connection as you repeat them. We have also included a story from the Jesus Storybook Bible that follows along with the Scripture passages on Track B. This is an opportunity to journey through the life of Jesus as we walk toward Easter.

**Track B** | Throughout the season of Lent we want to become more familiar with Jesus. Meditation is an opportunity to sink down deep into the life of Christ and grow in friendship with Him. We’ve selected a series of stories from His life, leading up to His death and resurrection, for you to read through and meditate on each week.

## Fasting

Lent is a time for self-examination and contemplation. To facilitate this, Christians often set aside certain foods or non-essential

activities. Fasting is not meant to be deprivation or a means of earning grace. Rather, fasting is meant to provide spiritual focus. By setting aside something that is normally a part of your daily life, you are creating space for God. As you voluntarily deny yourself, you are reminded of Jesus as the source of your true sustenance.

Fasting is not limited to food (though many people may choose a meal or specific food group from which to fast). Abstaining from certain practices can help us loosen the grip that unhealthy appetites and destructive addictions have on our lives. You may consider fasting from buying books, wearing makeup, listening to the radio /podcasts or eating processed foods. To abstain from these things, things that are not in and of themselves bad, helps us resist subtle idolatry and refocus our lives on God.

On Sundays, we set aside our fast as we spend time gathered as a church, feasting in the presence of the Lord.

**Track A** | If you're following this track, we suggest you choose one fast for the entire season of Lent. Some suggested fasts are included above, and on Track A side of the fasting card.

**Track B** | If you're looking for a new or deeper experiencing of fasting, consider setting aside a different fast or non-essential activity each week of Lent. We've included questions on the Track B side of the fasting card that will help you examine your fasting practice. Fasting is a way to identify what may have a stronghold on your life and pull you from the way of the Lord. Our hope is that developing this spiritual discipline will help you

to identify that and bring that area of your life back under the control of God.

## Giving

During the season of Lent we are spending extended time in prayer. As part of this practice we seek to know how God would have us deepen our giving. Consider ways that you can express your faith by following Jesus's example of sacrifice both in His life and ultimately in His death.

As a church we use this season in the church calendar to focus on the Jonathan Fund. This is our church's fund set aside to encourage those who are suffering. Consider giving to this fund or finding other ways to encourage those who are suffering that they may persevere through trial.

## Advice for Practicing Lent

**Take it slow and simple.** If this is your first introduction to the spiritual disciplines, consider just beginning with prayer and fasting. Don't get overwhelmed with adding on all the things at one time. Pick one discipline and develop that habit before moving forward.

**Don't be afraid to try again tomorrow.** Accept that the Lord's mercies are new every day and don't allow yourself to get discouraged if you miss a step along the way.

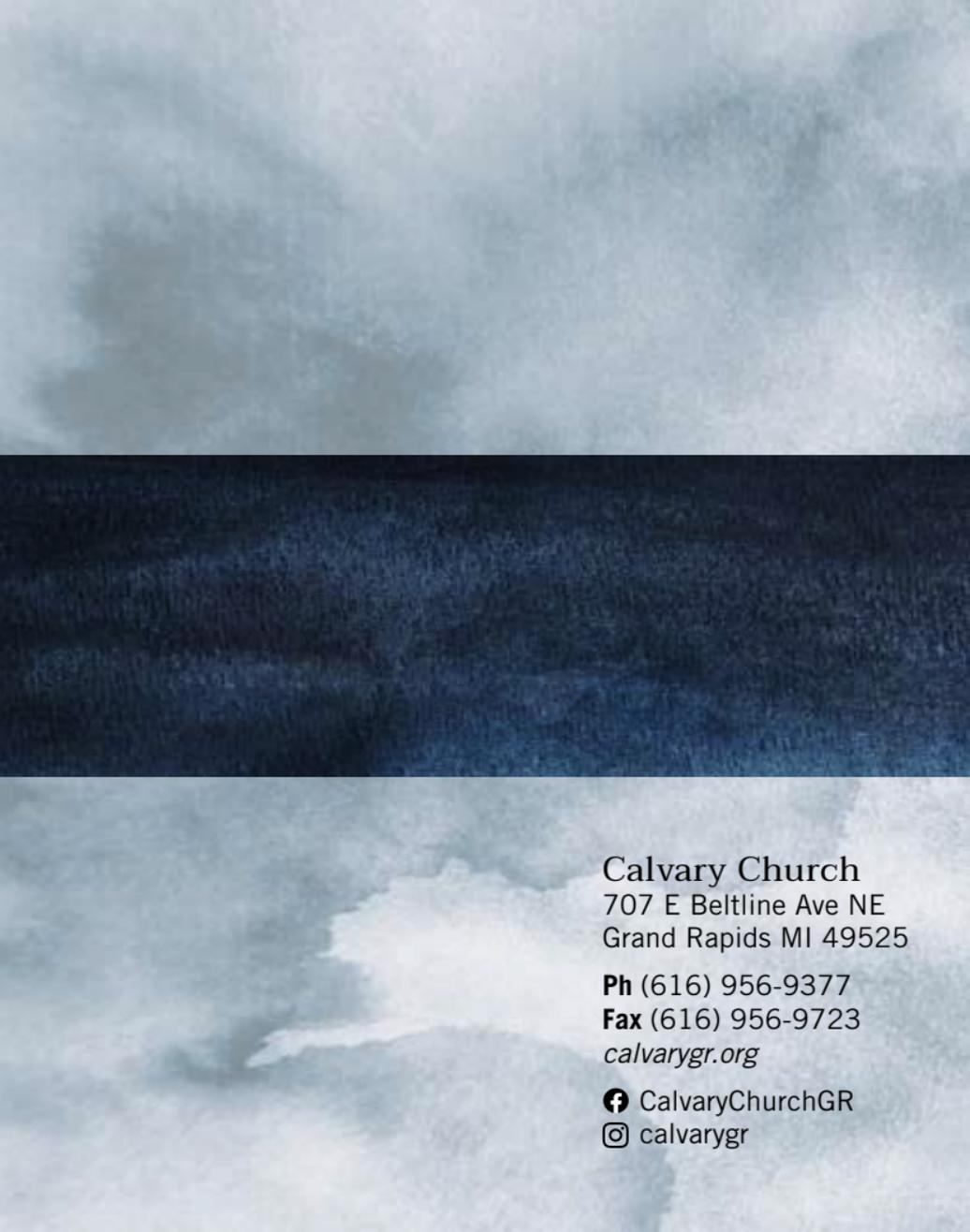
**Find a community to practice Lent with.** Whether it's a group of co-workers, friends you eat lunch with at school, or your own family—Lent is a great opportunity to encourage one another in your walk with Jesus. Tell a friend what disciplines the Lord is highlighting for you to pursue, and consider asking them to hold you accountable to continue in that practice.

While the practice of fasting is very personal, it's helpful to know that we're doing this together as a church community.

**Use our online resources and community.** We've set up a page on [calvarygr.org](http://calvarygr.org) with additional resources to guide your Lenten practice. We'll also be talking you through Lent on our social channels (Facebook & Instagram). Connect with us online, we'd love to spur you on in this season!

## **Baptism**

In the early centuries of the church, the forty days before Easter came to be recognized as the season of Lent (a Latin word that means “spring”), when new converts were prepared for baptism. This preparation included biblical instruction, prayer, repentance and fasting. In time, the practices of Lent were embraced by the entire church. We continue to mark this season by celebrating baptism during our Easter services. If you are ready to make a public proclamation of your faith in Jesus, to publicly turn your back on sin and take on the new life of Jesus, consider being baptized. Contact [info@calvarygr.org](mailto:info@calvarygr.org) to sign up, or receive more information about baptism at Calvary Church.



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