

- DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET -

Observing Lent each year offers us a fresh perspective on Jesus' sacrifice and the unique opportunity to go deeper in his love. We invite you to join us in this 40-day season of reflection as we prepare our hearts and minds for Good Friday and Easter.

Traditionally Lent is a time of repentance and fasting, a humble reminder of Jesus' journey in the wilderness. He was confronted with temptation, but did not give in to darkness. We follow his example, by denying the things that distract and separate us from growing in God's love.

There is somberness as we reflect on Jesus death, but there is also joy to be experienced as well. Sundays are not included in the forty days of Lent because they represent our hopeful anticipation of the Resurrection.

As we focus on Jesus' life, ministry, sacrifice and resurrection, we can narrow in on simplicity, release and prayer.

- **Simplicity**: Making space for fellowship with God and others.
- Release: Surrendering anything that negatively fills our life and interferes with our relationship with Jesus and others.
- **Prayer**: Sharing our concerns and celebrations with God.

These tools help us to be rightly-related with God and enable us to depend on him fully.

In Scripture we get powerful reminders of Jesus' purpose on the Cross and his overwhelming love for us. That is why this weekly devotional highlights specific verses on God's love. Before you dive in feel free to quiet your heart and minds with prayer.

Spirit of God, who led Jesus into the desert to fast and pray,

Lead us as we enter this time of Lent.

Give us courage to examine our hearts with honesty;

Give us strength to deal with what we find;

Give us love to forgive ourselves and each other,

So that, in peace and joy, we may celebrate at Easter

The death and resurrection of Jesus

And all that it means for each of us.

Amen.

OTHER RESOURCES

On our website you can access other resources that accompany this devotional:

- A Spotify playlist with contemplative music you can use while you're engaging with the weekly devotions
- A coloring book for kids

Just go to whchurch.org/lent-2021

LENT – WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21

READ: 1 John 4:16 And so, we know and rely on the love God has for us. What can you do to ensure that you are living God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and fully in God's love? God in them. (NIV) REFLECT How are you relying on God's love this week? What are some ways you can show Christlike love to coworkers, acquaintances, classmates or even strangers? How have you seen God's love in your life?

KINDNESS CHAIN ACTIVITY

We invite you to count down the days until Easter with acts of kindness.

- 1. You'll need 38 strips of paper with acts of kindness on them. If you're brainstorming your own and you can't think of enough, you can either repeat or use some of our ideas.
- 2. Circle the two ends of each paper strip together and tape, staple or glue.
- 3. For the next strip, place it inside of the first circle, then repeat.
- 4. Do this for all the remaining strips to create a paper chain filled with acts of kindness.

Each morning remove one of the strips from your chain and complete the act of kindness listed.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Feel free to use our Kindness Chain PDF on whchurch.org/lent-2021.
- Or, you can out out 38 strips of paper and write your own acts of kindness.

LENT – WEEK OF FEBRUARY 28

READ: John 14:23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my Spending intentional time reading God's Word teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come is a great way to start a new habit during Lent. to them and make our home with them." (NIV) You can start by reading a chapter a day in the book of Luke. REFLECT What does Jesus mean when he says, "obey my teaching?" Take a few minutes and invite Jesus to come and spend time with you. What did you experience after trying this? What does "obeying" Jesus look like in your life?

HYGIENE PRODUCTS ACTIVITY

We invite you to collect personal hygiene products for the Woodland Hills food shelf, or a homeless shelter in your area.

Buy or collect new unopened travel or full-size personal hygiene items.

Take a moment to pray for the people that will receive these products to be filled with the fullness of God's love and peace.

Suggested list:

- shampoo
- toothpaste
- body wash/soap
- toothbrushes
- · diapers (size 3, 4 or 5)
- · baby wipes
- deodorant
- feminine products
- · hand sanitizer
- · chapstick/lip balm
- shaving gel
- · laundry soap
- toiliet paper

LENT - WEEK OF MARCH 7

READ: 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love How has love helped you in your closest covers over a multitude of sins. (NIV) relationships? **REFLECT** Is there anything you feel the need to confess to Jesus?" Is there someone in your life who's demonstrated a strong ability to love others despite a multitude Is there anything you feel the need to confess of sins? What does that look like? How can you to someone? love others despite their sins or mistakes?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Forgiving others can be difficult, yet it is so important not only to mend a broken relationship, but also to free our heart of anything that hinders us from receiving the fullness of God's love in our own life.

Take a few moments to pray and ask God to suggest someone that you've been holding a grudge against, whether intentional or not. It can be for something big or little. Sometimes, we say things about that person that aren't loving or kind.

Then, state that person's name and say, "I forgive you." Sometimes we need God's help to do this and that's okay. Write out your thoughts and feelings about the experience:

LENT - WEEK OF MARCH 14

READ: Ephesians 4:2-3 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, What does "unity of the Spirit through the bond bearing with one another in love. Make every effort of peace" mean? to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (NIV) REFLECT What does humbleness look like in your life? What efforts can you undertake to keep unity and a bond of peace with the people you are in relationship with?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Is there someone in your life that is challenging to be around? Is there someone you've been neglecting due to the demands of life or work? Is there someone that you just haven't talked to for a while? Here's your chance to intentionally connect with that person and build the bond of peace in their life. You can send a note, call, Zoom, or drop off a small gift at their home. Be sure to express their importance to you and let them know that you value that person highly. Write down who you plan to connect with, and why. You may also want to make some notes about the experience after the fact:

LENT - WEEK OF MARCH 21

READ: Romans 12:9-10 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. How can you honor others in your interactions Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. with them? Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honoring each other. (NLT) REFLECT Have you ever felt like someone's love for you wasn't genuine-like they were pretending? How did that make you feel? What does it look to "hold tightly to what is good"?

CARD MAKING ACTIVITY

We invite you to think of someone you love with genuine affection and honor that person by writing an encouraging message to them. Let this person know that you care and delight in him or her. Be sure to build them up and spur them on in their faith journey as well.

Then, address the envelope and mail it (or drop it off). In the meantime, be sure to pray for your friend or send cards to others or reach out with a phone call.

LENT – WEEK OF MARCH 28

READ: 1 John 4:9-11 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent What are some ways you can receive God's love his one and only Son into the world that we might for you? live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NIV) REFLECT What stands out to you the most from this scripture and why? How does God's love motivate you to love others? What does it look like for us to "live through" Jesus?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

It can be difficult to experience God's love for us. We hear about it; we believe that God loves us and we know it in our minds, but sometimes it can be a struggle to receive that love on a heart level.

Find a place to be alone with God. You know the way that you're wired and how you connect best with God. Maybe it's in the silence. Maybe turning on some worship music is helpful for you. Maybe it's bundling up and going for a walk. Whatever the setting, focus on being with God and receiving God's love. Think about the sacrifice Jesus made for you and how that changes everything about your life.

| Write out your thoughts and feelings about the experience: |
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