

Lenten Spiritual Practices

Devotions - The discipline of setting aside time each day during Lent to read, contemplate, and pray is an old one. Try one of the devotionals listed below to focus your study and prayer time this Lent.

- [Stephen Rozelle](#) – Reverend Stephen Rozelle leads us through the Lenten exercise of “Taking on Being Joyful.” He reminds us that we do not have to wait for Easter to claim God’s gift for us.
- [The Lent Project](#) by Biola University’s Center for Christianity, Culture and the Arts. “If the church is indeed a hospital for the sick and wounded, then it follows that Lent is its yearly physical and annual tune-up.” This daily devotion, which you may subscribe to and have delivered to your inbox each day, “will offer a guided reflection--though Scripture, words, poetry, music, film or visual art--to help us focus in on the beauty of Christ’s story.”
- [Lent Devotional](#) by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Read and listen online, subscribe to a daily email, follow on Facebook or Twitter, or download an app to see these daily devotions written by members of the seminary community.
- And if you’d like a familiar voice for your Lenten studies this year, try “[Finding Yourself in God’s Story](#)” by Dr. Keith Curran, now the interim pastor at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Kilmarnock, VA.

2. Praying in color - The discipline of prayer can be a hard one when our minds ramble everywhere and cannot seem to focus on Jesus, no matter how hard we try. Author Sylvia Macbeth found that she could harness her wild thoughts better when she focused on drawing and doodling as she prayed. She has designed a couple of calendar templates for Lent 2017. She says, "On the calendar template I choose a word or name for each day, write the word in a space, and draw or doodle around it. As I draw I let the name or word fill my heart and mind. If words come to me I pray them. If not, I am quiet."

- Two templates can be found [here](#).

3. Random acts of kindness in Jesus' name - the ancient discipline of almsgiving during Lent harks back to Jesus' instructions to take care of the needy around us. Sometimes that means giving money to organizations which take care of the poor. Sometimes that merely means being kind to those who could use a dose of compassion. If you'd like a challenge, sign up online for 40Acts, a group of over 100,000 people who have taken the challenge to be generous in their communities for the forty days of Lent. Or, if you'd just like some suggestions for kind things to do, try some of these.

- The [40acts Challenge is here](#)
- And here is a [list of random acts of kindness](#).

4. Reading - Introduce yourself to some of the most interesting voices in Christianity today by reading Christian blogs. Here are a few places to start.

Christian Blogs

[A Church for Starving Artists](#) – Jan Edmiston, a pastor and a co-moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA), writes about “trying to follow Jesus in the thick of things.” For interesting insights into what the church might be in these days, try this.

[Ann Voskamp](#) – a farmer’s wife, a mother of seven, and an evangelical Christian, writes lyrical prose about what it means to be aware of a life lived under the grace of God.

[Grow Christians](#) is an Episcopal blog on faith formation in families. Writers speak to various ages and stages.

[Parker Palmer](#) is a Quaker and is the founder of the Center for Faith and Renewal. He writes for the blog On Being on issues of faith formation, community, social change, and spirituality.

[Sarah Bessey](#) comes from a Canadian Evangelical background but speaks to a much larger community of faith about what it means to be a Christian, a parent, and a feminist in the world today.

5. Prayer station - Some people need a *place* that is set aside for prayer. If that appeals to you, consider setting up a home prayer station of your own. You might include a candle to focus your mind on God’s light, some shells or beautiful rocks to remind you of the miracle of creation, your Bible and your current devotional reading ... whatever you think will help you sit in communion with the God who yearns for your companionship. For other ideas of home prayer stations, read [this post](#), and for a lovely idea for a traveling altar, try [this one](#), both in the blog *Grow Christians*.

6. Lord's Prayer labyrinth - When you can't get outside to walk St. Andrew's large labyrinth, try tracing a cross while you repeat the Lord's Prayer. This small tactile act will help you focus your thoughts on Jesus during this Lenten season.

- [Here's](#) the link to the cross pattern for this activity.