

Celebrating Lent

Keep these ideas in mind as you study **Unit 3, Session 15**.

During Lent we come to a greater recognition of Jesus' dying and rising throughout our lives. The liturgical season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. We spend the 40 days of Lent by fasting, praying, and performing charitable deeds for others. Lent is a season of preparation for Jesus Christ's Resurrection at Easter and the promise of eternal life.

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Lent is an appropriate time to consider the beginning of our own faith at our Baptism. Saint Paul says the best way to embrace our Baptism is to imitate Christ.

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The word *compassion* means "to suffer with another person." Jesus truly became man and shared our human nature to take on the pain of our sins so that we might have life.

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The Gospels tell us many stories in which Jesus heals, forgives, or reconciles. These stories teach us that Jesus was a man of compassion, courage, service, and promises and that we are called to live the same way.

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Jesus is our model of faithfulness to promises. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to his disciples. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven, and the Church was born.

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On the first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel reading at Mass tells how Jesus was led out to the desert for 40 days and nights. Jesus reflected, fasted, and prayed in preparation for his public ministry of preaching, healing, and proclaiming the Good News.

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Repentance means turning away from sin and changing your life to live as God wants you to live. Repentance is the doorway to the Kingdom of God, but you must take action to reconcile your life with God.

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Jesus calls us to conversion, which is the movement of a contrite heart away from sin and toward the love of God and neighbor. Baptism celebrates our desire for conversion and our commitment to it.

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The Lenten practice of fasting is to limit the amount of food we eat on certain days. A part of fasting is choosing to abstain, or to avoid eating a particular food. Fasting and abstaining remind us that we are dependent on God for everything.

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Almsgiving is offering money, possessions, time, or talent to those in need. Following Lenten practices helps us to get ready for Jesus' Resurrection on Easter.

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