

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION & HOW TO	Page 5
WEEK 1 The Week of Ash Wednesday	Page 11
WEEK 2 The First Week of Lent	Page 17
WEEK 3 The Second Week of Lent	Page 29
WEEK 4 The Third Week of Lent	Page 41
WEEK 5 The Fourth Week of Lent	Page 51
WEEK 6 The Fifth Week of Lent	Page 73
HOLY WEEK CHALLENGE	Page 87
CONCLUSION	Page 89

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture passages have been taken from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotes are taken from the English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church for the United States of America (indicated as CCC), 2nd ed. Copyright ©1997 by United States Catholic Conference - Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

©2022 Life Teen, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book, including interior design, cover design, and/or icons, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from the publisher.

The information contained herein is published and produced by Life Teen, Inc. The resources and practices are in full accordance with the Roman Catholic Church. The Life Teen® name and associated logos are trademarks registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Use of the Life Teen® trademarks without prior permission is forbidden. Permission may be requested by contacting Life Teen, Inc. at 480-820-7001.

Design: Casey Olson

Content: Collaboratively written by Life Teen Staff

Copy Edit: Rachel Peñate

Published by Life Teen, Inc. 2222 S. Dobson Rd. Suite 601 Mesa, AZ 85202 LifeTeen.com
Printed in the United States of America. Printed on acid-free paper.

INTRODUCTION

8 HOW TO

By: Rachel Peñate

I will never forget the day I drove through my garage wall.

I've always been clumsy. But, I couldn't believe that December morning I had actually made the mistake I had always tried to avoid (#NotAGreatDriver). Knowing for sure I put a hole in the plaster, yet hesitant to look, my body language spoke volumes to my husband upon entering the house. And, knowing me better than I know myself, he figured out the cause for my shame. I did as I usually do — I asked for forgiveness immediately. After a long silence, I asked again, and again... until my husband looked me in the eye, with a smile on his face, and said, "Rachel, I've already forgiven you."

How often do we think we need to earn God's love? Or that something we do might end up losing His love instead? What I realized that day I put a hole in our garage wall was that my husband's love for me wasn't conditional upon what I did or didn't do. He knew on our wedding day just how terribly clumsy I was, and yet he still said, "yes" to my good days as well as my bad ones. Our Lord's love for us is even deeper than that! He knows how terribly sinful we are, yet His deep love for us doesn't change.

So, why is it that Lent is a time when we think this is different? How many times do we decide upon what we're going to fast from for Lent because it makes us "look good," or because we think it will make up for all that we haven't done the other 325 days of the year?

The truth is this: we can never earn or lose God's love. He knows our hearts; He knows our sins, our weaknesses, and our sorrows. He sees us, knows us, and loves us perfectly. That never changes, but it is how we respond to His love that makes all the difference.

WHY A CHALLENGE BOOK?

This Lent Companion is meant to be an opportunity to grow more deeply in God's unconditional love for you. Contained within these pages are 40 challenges — one for each day of Lent (plus a bonus Holy Week Challenge). If you're reading this book, you're obviously taking ownership of your spiritual growth, and this journal is meant to be a practical guide for engaging in the three pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving.

PLUS: PRAYER

Throughout these next 40 days, you'll see challenges with a "+" sign next to them. These are challenges meant to deepen your prayer and deepen your friendship with God. The great theologian and philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, once said, "The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." Do you view prayer as a way to change God's mind, or a way to be changed? I encourage you; be changed this Lent.

MINUS: FASTING

Throughout these next 40 days, you'll see challenges with a "-" sign next to them. These are challenges meant to grow your capacity to make sacrifices for others. So often, it is easy to get caught up in what "I want" and forget completely how to support and care for someone else. Fasting gives us the opportunity to temporarily remove ourselves from earthly comfort in order to embrace a wider perspective of what really matters.

MULTIPLY: ALMSGIVING

As I mentioned above, "almsgiving" is a "big Catholic word," so let's break it down: Almsgiving or "to give alms" is a practice we've had in the Church for centuries. It simply means "to give food or money to the poor." The Catechism defines it as "a work of justice pleasing to the Lord" (CCC 2447). We engage in almsgiving in a variety of ways, but at its very heart it means to give.

Throughout these next 40 days, you'll see these almsgiving challenges with a "x" sign next to them. These are challenges meant to increase your generous heart. No matter where we are at in life, God has given us so many gifts that are meant to be given away to others in love and friendship. Almsgiving is about sharing God's love with others in a very practical way.

JOURNEY WITH FRIENDS

Challenges are always better when done in unison with those who will hold us accountable to them. Find a friend or two — or perhaps a whole small group from Life Teen — to participate in this challenge journal alongside you!

Some suggestions for completing this Challenge Journal as a group are as follows:

- Meet up before Ash Wednesday to talk about the challenges of this upcoming Lent Season. Tell each other what you need prayers for and perhaps pair up as "accountability partners" to remain each other's particular prayer intercessor throughout the entire season of Lent.
- Meet up regularly and/or have a group text thread going to discuss the highlights and hardships of each challenge.
- Buddy up (or participate as a group) on as many of the daily challenges as possible. (Day 4 is a perfect example of a challenge tailor-fit to a group.)

Encourage each other daily and keep one another grounded in the intention of this whole practice: Deeper love of Christ!

BE ENCOURAGED

Lent is not a time for fasting, almsgiving, and prayer because we have something to prove to God. **What you do will not make Him love you any more or any less.** We fast, give alms, and pray because **it is through these actions that we allow God to be more present in our every moment.** It is through these actions that we allow the space in our lives to hear Him more clearly, and see His work in us more clearly.

We are happy you have chosen this Lent Challenge Journal to be a part of your prayer this season. We pray that these challenges do not encompass your entire Lenten experience but that each and every one leads you to a deeper encounter with Our Lord.

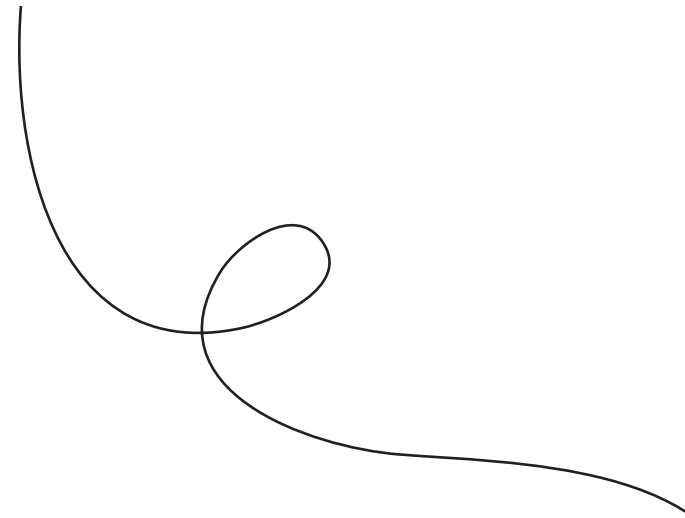
Be encouraged to **pray** with great trust that *God is listening*,

be encouraged to **fast** with great confidence that your fasting is noticed and matters in heaven,

be encouraged to **give** with great hope that the Lord is transforming your heart through these actions,

and know that our efforts to grow more closely to Him are being recognized by the only one that matters.

This challenge journal is our gift to you, inspired by your Father in heaven. May He bless your Lent with abundance! And as always, know of our prayers for you.



WEEK ONE

The Week of Ash Wednesday

DAY 1

Ash Wednesday

Don't wipe off your ashes! Wear them proudly. Prepare an answer ahead of time for anyone that asks what is on your forehead, or use the following:

“Today is Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent) and as a Church, we take ownership for our sins and repent — which means to turn away from sin. We wear the ashes as an outward sign of that repentance.”

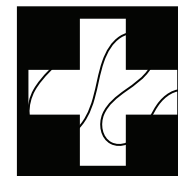
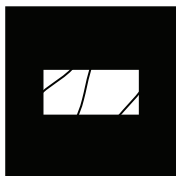
DAY 2

Thursday

Pray a decade of the rosary and offer each Hail Mary for a follower/ friend on your Instagram (or other social media platform) that you wish to pray for.

Before you begin, list the names of those you wish to pray for here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



DAY 3

Friday

Today, choose your least favorite household chore and do it with joy — uniting your service to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

DAY 4

Saturday

This weekend, find a good friend or a few friends, exchange prayer intentions, and commit to praying for one another to grow in holiness every day in Lent.

Once every Sunday, exchange a Scripture passage that has been meaningful to you during the week. Then spend time praying with the passages that are sent to you. If you are in a prayer group, rotate who each person sends their passage to.

