

## **LENT MEAL**

### *What is lent?*

Like Advent, Lent is a contemplative season. A time of preparation for Easter, Lent is often regarded as a penitential season when we examine our lives and repent or gain a new perspective or path forward. Christians often take up special spiritual practices during Lent such as fasting and observing extra times of Sabbath, study, and prayer. The popular practice of “giving up something” for Lent really has nothing to do with exercising one’s self-control. Rather, it is a way to make space in our regular routines to allow God to do something new in our lives.

### *Lent Quiz*

- The official (liturgical) color of Lent is red. (False. It’s purple – representing royalty and repentance.)
- Lent lasts for 40 days, not counting Sundays. (True.)
- The word Lent comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning “midwinter.” (False. It translates “springtime” since that is the time of year the season generally falls.)
- The 40 days of Lent are a reminder of the Bible story in which Jesus spends 40 days alone in the wilderness and is tempted by the Devil. True or False? (True. It also recalls the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.)
- Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when people often have the sign of the cross made of ashes placed on their foreheads. Most often, these ashes are made by burning palm leaves from the previous year’s Palm Sunday service. True or False? (True.)
- The ash is supposed to represent the story in which Jesus places dirt or ash on a blind man’s eyes to make him see again. True or False? (False. The ashes represent humility and our own mortality – from dust we came and to dust we shall return.)
- Many people give up something during Lent. The point of this practice is to show your willpower. True or False? (False. It is a practice of self-denial that allows room in your life for God to do something new.)
- Fasting is a common practice in Lent but the one day people don’t fast during Lent is Sundays. True or False? (True. People traditionally do not fast on Sundays as Sundays are to be reminders or a foretaste of the coming resurrection.)

- The phrase “Glory to God” is traditionally never spoken during Lent and does not make its return until Easter morning. True or False. (False. “Alleluia” is the what many churches abstain from saying in worship during Lent.)
- The last week of Lent is known as “Holy Week.” True or False? (True.)
- On Maundy Thursday, the last Thursday in Lent, we recall the last night and meal that Jesus shares with his disciples. True or False? (True.)

### *Matthew 4: 1-11*

Help the group to explore this story where Jesus goes off on his own to do some soul-searching and, in a sense, confront his own demons. The journey Jesus takes into the desert -- the journey to be alone with God and to seek God’s guidance about our true identity -- is the journey we are all invited to focus on during Lent.

- What do you think Jesus might have had to give up to journey to the wilderness alone?
- The things the Tempter offers him are not intrinsically bad: food in a time of hunger, political power in a time of Roman oppression, a leap of faith. So why do you think Jesus resists these temptations?
- What memories do you have of times you faced choices that at the time seemed like good ideas but were ultimately led you in an unhealthy or unfaithful direction?
- Share what you do when you want time alone to think/pray/reflect. Where do you go? What do you do?
- What might be the benefit of spending time in Lent examining your life, considering your sins, thinking about what God wants for you?

*Eat meal whilst playing ‘I have never’ (YP’s use the points gained from their quiz score as points in this game)*

### *Meditation prayer – after meal*

Think back over the last week or month. Let your mind wander through the following questions as you pray: Thinking back over the recent past, focus on the moments when you were most grateful and the moments when you were least grateful. What were they? Which moments did you give and receive God's love the most? When did you give and receive love the least? When you were paying the most attention to the love of God in the world? When were you paying the least attention? Finish by

thanking God for the gift of today and ask for guidance in being more open to God's presence in your daily life.

### *Evaluation bit*

Thoughts? Reflections? Comments?

What did you enjoy? What didn't you enjoy?

One main thing you will take away from this experience?