

*On Ash Wednesday, the church marks an important transition, beginning the great cycle of Easter that extends from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost. The season of Lent is not primarily a meditation on the suffering and cross of Christ; this is saved for Holy Week. Rather, it is a season of penitence and prayer, reflection and renewal, all designed to prepare the worshiping community for the remembrance of Christ's death and celebration of his resurrection during Holy Week. More specifically, Lent is preparation for baptism. For new Christians who are baptized on Easter, Lent is a time to prepare their new identity in Christ. For those who have been baptized, it is a time of self-examination so that they might reclaim their identity as those who have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him to new life.*

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## Self-Examination

### **Pride**

Putting self in the place of God as the centre and objective of our life. Pride is the refusal to recognize our status as creatures, dependant on God.

### **Irreverence**

Deliberate neglect of God's worship, or contentment with a perfunctory participation in it. It is manifested in cynicism toward the holy or use of Christianity for personal advantage.

### **Sentimentality**

Satisfaction with pious feelings and beautiful ceremony without striving for personal holiness.

### **Distrust**

Refusal to recognize God's wisdom and love. Undue worry, undue anxiety, scrupulosity, or perfectionism. Attempts to gain or keep control of our life by spiritualism, astrology, undue timidity, or cowardice.

### **Disobedience**

Rejection of God's known will. The refusal to learn God's nature as revealed in Holy Scripture. Breaking confidence by irresponsibility, treachery, and the unnecessary disappointment of others. Breaking legal or moral contracts.

### **Impenitence**

Refusal to search out and face up to our sins, or to confess them before God. Self-justification by believing our sins to be insignificant, natural, or inevitable; by refusing to apologize; by being unwilling to forgive ourselves.

### **Vanity**

Failure to credit God and others for their part in our lives. Boasting, exaggeration, ostentatious behaviour, undue concern over "things."

### **Arrogance**

Being overbearing, argumentative, opinionated, and/or obstinate.

### **Resentment**

Rejection of talents, abilities, or opportunities God and people give us. Rebellion, hatred of God or people. Cynicism.

### **Envy**

Dissatisfaction with our place in God's order of creation. Manifests itself in jealousy, malice, and contempt for others or others' "things."

### **Covetousness**

The refusal to respect the integrity of other creatures, expressed in the accumulation of material things to prove self-worth, the use of others to personal advantage, or in the quest for status and power at the expense of others.

### **Avarice**

Manifested in inordinate ambition or domination of others. The waste of natural resources or personal possessions. Extravagance or living beyond our means. It is also manifested in undue protection of our "things." Stinginess.

### **Gluttony**

Overindulgence of natural appetites for food and drink, and by extension the inordinate quest for pleasure and comfort. Manifests itself in intemperance and lack of discipline.

### **Lust**

Misuse of sex. It includes unchastity, immodesty, prudery, and cruelty. Lust does not recognize marriage as the God-ordained relationship for sexual intercourse.

### **Sloth**

The refusal to respond to our opportunities for growth, service, or sacrifice. It includes laziness in spiritual, mental, or physical duties. Neglect of family. Indifference to injustice or the world's suffering ones. Neglecting the needy, lonely, or unpopular.

Sloth also involves spiritual failure. It fails to give attention to the maturing of one's family and/or self. It fails to grasp and live out the missionary enterprise of the Christian life.

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# Worksheet for the Development of a Lenten Rule of Discipline

Lent is a time to do spiritual inventory. Below are some time-honoured disciplines to help you in this season of growth. Sundays are not counted as part of the Lenten season. Sundays are feast days and never fast days. Sundays at any time of the year, including Lent, celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

## Prayer in Public

I  will or  will not worship God on the Lord's Days (Sundays) of Lent.

## Prayer in Private

I plan to pray daily:  yes or  no.

If "yes" here is the time I commit myself to be at prayer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Here is the place I will pray:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Fasting

Definition of fasting: to eat or drink no calories or diet beverages. Definition of abstinence: to not eat or drink specific types of food or beverage; for example, meat. Fasting and abstinence are good disciplines which may be used in combination. Some days are good for one discipline and other days for the other.

Here is the food or food group I will not eat during Lent: \_\_\_\_\_ (except on Sundays).

On  M  T  W  Th  F  Sat. I will not eat solid food until sundown.

I will eat vegetarian all through Lent:  yes or  no.

Here is another aspect of my food intake I wish to discipline this Lent: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Study

Here are the books I want to read this Lent:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I need to ask \_\_\_\_\_ for suggestions.

I will do that (date/time)  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I plan to devote \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day to study.

## Mercy

In scripture, mercy, almsgiving, fasting, and prayer are sometimes tied together. Lent is a time to inventory our generosity. I plan to pray, and ask God to show me a person toward whom I can show mercy:  yes or  no.

I plan to give \$\_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_.

(persons/organizations).

## Exercise

I plan to pay attention to my body this Lent:

yes or  no.

Here is how:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I need a physical:  yes or  no.

## Scripture

I plan on following Northview's Lenten Devotional:

yes or  no (see bulletin, web or Facebook for details).

## Solitude

Definition: A time spent in silence away from the demands of people and events. I will dedicate myself to solitude on the following schedule  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Here is where I will seek the solitude:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Thanks, but no thanks

Frankly, I am so exhausted, so weary, so depressed, that I need to be free from discipline. My gift to myself is to do just that. For me, that will free me for a Holy Lent:  yes or  no.

I will call another Christian to discuss this:

yes or  no.

I will call \_\_\_\_\_ on  
\_\_\_\_\_.