



Prayer Service: Getting to the Heart of Lent

Leader/Reader Script

Provide a copy of this script to all readers. Encourage readers to prepare in advance.

In the front of your service space, set up a simple table, draped in Lenten purple, with a place for an enthroned Bible and six votive candles. There should also be a basket of holy cards and a cross set up for veneration either on the table or near it. Open the service with a reverent procession of seven volunteers: six with candles and one carrying the Bible. They will place these items on the table. During the procession, you may wish to play Lenten liturgical music.

Leader: We have gathered together as God's children of all ages. Let us remember that God is full of gentleness and compassion for us. God knows us for who we are; he knows our strong points and our weak ones. God gives us the strength to do good things, and he also forgives us if we make bad choices for which we are sorry.

Jesus has called us to follow him from the moment of our Baptism. As Lent begins, let us think about our faith: Are we living it as well as we can? Have we followed Jesus' call?

Reader One: For the times we forget that we are all brothers and sisters who should respect and help one another: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Reader Two: For the times we act selfishly, putting our needs before those of others: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy.

Reader Three: For the times we have hurt one another with angry words or actions: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

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Prayer Service

Leader/Reader Script (continued)

Reader Four: Listen to these words from the prophet Joel: “. . . even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, . . . return to the Lord, your God. For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, and rich in kindness.” (adapted from Joel 2:12–13)

Reader Five: Help us to meet you in prayer, loving God, during Lent and every day. For this we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader Six: Thank you for all the wonderful gifts you have given us, Lord, and help us not to take them for granted. May we share what we have with others. For this we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader Seven: May we fast from those things that separate us from you and one another this Lenten season. For this we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Leader: Let us all say the prayer of hope and forgiveness that Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

The service ends with families coming forward to venerate the cross. Adjust any instructions to fit your parish's traditions and preferences.

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Prayer Service

Leader/Reader Script (continued)

Leader: As we begin the season of Lent, let us ask the Holy Spirit to show us the way. After our days of preparation, may we know the happiness and hope of Easter.

As you leave this prayer service, please come bow (or kneel) before the cross, genuflect, and touch (or kiss) the cross. You are welcome to take a holy card from the basket as well.

We ask everyone to be as quiet as possible during this time.

Play quiet music as the families come forward.

