

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: What is Lent?

Lesson 2: Ash Wednesday

Lesson 3: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

Lesson 4: Penance and Reconciliation

Lesson 5: The Stations of the Cross

An Introduction to the Lesson Plans

If you read [The Religion Teacher's Guide to Lesson Planning](#), then you know I recommend organizing a lesson into three parts: presentation, practice, and proof. The videos provided in this activity pack can be used as the presentation or to supplement what you share about each topic during Lent. The worksheets will help your students practice what they have learned in the videos and make personal and prayerful connections to the content of these lessons. Finally, short quizzes are provided for quick proof that students have mastered the learning objectives. The time suggestions are just estimates and the amount of time each activity takes will vary depending on the academic level of your students.

I also offer suggestions for opening prayers and lesson hooks, which are brief ways to creatively introduce the topic of each lesson that sparks interest and wonder into the minds and hearts of the students.

You will notice that there are two kinds of lesson objectives: a mental objective (Students will be able to / SWBAT) and an emotional objective (Students will feel / SWF). As religious educators our ultimate objective is to lead our students into an encounter with Christ. This requires both the head and the heart and, therefore, lesson objectives and activities that are both mental and emotional.

Don't hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, and feedback at www.thereligionteacher.com/contact/

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Lesson 1: What is Lent?

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to (SWBAT) explain the origin of the word Lent and the name that rest of the Catholic Church uses to refer to the season.

SWBAT summarize the stories of the Bible that reference the number forty.

Students will feel (SWF) determined to make Lent a season of renewal of their faith.

Time	Activities
1 min	Prayer: “Lord, as we begin this season of Lent help us to recognize the importance of your Son’s passion and death. May these forty days of devotion, lead us deeper into communion with you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.”
5 min	Hook: Search online for a video or audio recording of “These Forty Days of Lent.” Print out the lyrics or find a worship hymnal with the lyrics in it to discuss what this song tells us about the season of Lent. Have each student pick a verse that they think is the most important.
5 min	Presentation: What Does Lent Mean? Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/lent-meaning-video In this video students will learn the origin of the word Lent and the Latin word that the rest of the Church uses to describe this season.
10 min	Practice: The Meaning of Lent Worksheet Students will use what they learned in the video to complete the sentences.
10 min	Presentation: Video: The Number 40 in the Bible (and Lent) Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/40daysvideo Students will imitate the drawings from the video and summarize the stories in their own words using the video graphic organizer.
10 min	Practice: 40 Days in the Bible Word Search Students will recall the stories of the Bible that feature the number forty by finding the answers to the fill-in-the-blank statements in the word search.
20 min	OPTIONAL Practice: Research Assignment Assign each of the forty days stories (Noah and the Flood, Moses on the Mountain, Israel Wandering the Desert, Elijah on Mount Horeb, Jonah and Ninevah, Jesus’ Temptation in the Desert, and the Ascension) to a group of students for detailed reading. They should answer the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the main characters in the story? • What happened during the forty days (years)? • Why did God initiate the 40-day (year) period? • What happened at the end of the forty day (year) period? Group Presentations: Each group (or student) should present a summary of the story to the rest of the class. As other groups are presenting, students should use The Number 40 in the Bible (and Lent) graphic organizer to take notes on the stories.
10 min	Meditation: Jesus is Tempted in the Desert Worksheet

	Of all the stories in the Bible that feature the number forty, Jesus' temptation in the desert is the main inspiration for the forty days of Lent. Students will read and reflect on this story using this worksheet.
10 min	Prayer: St. Michael the Archangel Prayer Worksheet Pray the St. Michael the Archangel Prayer together as a class and use the questions in the worksheet to help the students consider the relevance of the words of the prayer to their daily lives.
5 min	Proof: Lenten Lesson 1 Quiz (Answers: 1. D, 2. A, 3. C, 4. D, 5. F, 6. F, 7. T, 8. F, 9. F, 10. T)
Key Ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lent = <i>lencten</i> = "Spring Time" • In other parts of the Church Lent is called "<i>Quadragesima</i>" = 40 Days • 40 Days Stories: Noah, Moses, Israelites in the Desert, Elijah, Jonah in Ninevah, Jesus in the Desert, Ascension 	

Lesson 2: Ash Wednesday

Lesson Objectives

SWBAT explain that the ashes were used as a sign of repentance in the Old Testament.
 SWBAT explain why we wear ashes on Ash Wednesday.

SWF determined to live out their Lenten commitments.

Time	Activities
5 min	Prayer: Read Psalm 51, which we hear and sing on Ash Wednesday. If possible, use the lectionary reading and response, “Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.”
10 min	Hook: Read Jonah 3:1-10 and ask, “What were the signs that the people of Ninevah used to show their repentance?”
5 min	Presentation: The Meaning of Ash Wednesday Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/ashwednesdayvideo Students will review the meaning of Lent and the way in which ashes were used in the Bible and why we wear them to begin Lent today.
10 min	Practice: From Ash Wednesday to Easter Worksheet Students will select a Lenten commitment (i.e. something to give up during Lent) and consider the reasons it may be challenging and how they will overcome those challenges.
10 min	Prayer: Repent and Believe in the Gospel Worksheet Students will reflect on the sins they should turn away from and then the Gospel-like things they should do instead.
5 min	Proof: Lenten Lesson 2 Quiz (Answers: 1. B, 2. A, 3. B, 4-5. We wear ashes on Ash Wednesday as a reminder that 1. All that we have is a gift from God and 2. Ashes are a sign of our repentance of sin.)
Key Ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We wear ashes 1) to remember everything is a gift from God and 2) as a sign of our repentance 	

Lesson 3: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

Lesson Objectives

SWBAT define almsgiving and fasting.
 SWBAT explain why fasting is an important part of our faith.
 SWBAT list the ways they can live out the three pillars of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving during Lent.

SWF determined to practice the three pillars of Lent.

Time	Activities
5 min	Prayer: The Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl website and support materials have wonderful prayers particularly related to almsgiving that would be perfect to begin this lesson. Check out the CRS website for these prayers.
5 min	Hook: Jesus warned his disciples to pray, fast, and give alms, but to do so without seeking admiration or approval from others. Find three objects to represent the three pillars of Lent (prayer, fasting, and almsgiving). Place them in a bag and have students guess the objects you brought in to represent the three pillars. OR, have the students bring in objects to represent the three pillars of Lent and have the class or a small group of students guess what the other students brought.
5 min	Presentation: Fasting, Prayer, and Almsgiving: The Three Pillars of Lent Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/pillarsoflentvideo Students will learn the three pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving and the most common ways we practice them during the season of Lent.
10 min	Practice: Scheduling Prayer Worksheet Students will look at their daily schedules and set specific times in which they will pray each day.
10 min	Practice: Finding Strength through Fasting Worksheet Students will reflect on the gifts from God that they can give up for a short time and the temptations they will need help resisting the most during Lent.
10 min	Practice: Preparing for Almsgiving Worksheet Students will think about specific items they can donate to the poor as a part of their commitment to almsgiving, especially during the season of Lent.
5 min	OPTIONAL Presentation: Why Don't We Eat Meat on Fridays during Lent? Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/videos/lent/nomeat-fridays Students will discover the brief history of abstaining from meat during Lent and why we eat fish instead. (Graphic Organizer Answers: 1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. F)
10 min	Prayer: Veneration of the Cross Adoration of or veneration of the cross is a common form of prayer during Lent. Place a cross or crucifix in the front of the room and have students prayerful come forth to kneel, touch, or even kiss the cross. Before they come up, suggest that they think about the sacrifices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving they will make during Lent. Have them silently unite these

	sacrifices to the cross of Christ in prayer.
5 min	<p>Proof: Lenten Lesson 3 Quiz</p> <p>(Answers: 1. We fast during Lent to strengthen our self-control and ability to resist temptation to sin and to recognize that all we have is a gift from God. 2. Almsgiving, which comes from the Latin word meaning “pity,” refers to the service or charity given to the poor. 3. Answer will vary, but may include the Stations of the Cross, daily devotions, Eucharistic Adoration, an Examination of Conscience, Sacrament of Penance, etc.)</p>
Key Ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. • Fasting consists in the abstinence from meat and the practice of giving something up for God. • Almsgiving consists in charitable acts of giving to the poor. 	

Lesson 4: The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Lesson Objectives

SWBAT make connections between the four parts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

SWBAT list the three components of contrition.

SWF contrition for the sins they have committed.

Time	Activities
2 min	Prayer: Begin the lesson by reciting the <i>Confiteor</i> , which we pray during the Penitential Act at Mass: “I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned . . .”
10 min	Hook: Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son as a class and discuss the reasons behind each character’s actions in the story.
5 min	Presentation: The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/sacramentofpenancevideo Students will learn about the four main parts of the sacrament.
10 min	Practice: Penance and the Prodigal Son Worksheet Students will make connections between the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the main parts of the Sacrament of Penance.
10 min	Presentation: The Act of Contrition Prayer Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/videos/actofcontrition-prayer/ Students will make connections between the common form of the Act of Contrition and the three main parts of contrition: 1) sorrow for the sin, 2) hatred for the sin, and 3) the resolution not to commit the sin again.
10 min	Prayer: Examination of Conscience & Act of Contrition Help your students prepare to make a good confession by providing for them the examination of conscience your parish or school will use during Lent. Then, as a way to prepare for the sacrament, have the students prayerfully read or make an Act of Contrition as a class.
5 min	OPTIONAL Presentation: The History of the Rite of Penitents and Lent Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/lenthistoryvideo Students will learn a brief history of Lent and the development of the ways we participate in the Sacrament of Penance.
10 min	OPTIONAL Practice: The Order of the Penitents Worksheet Students will read about the Order of the Penitents and its connections to the Sacrament of Penance.
5 min	Proof: Lenten Lesson 4 Quiz (Answers: 1. A, 2. C, 3. D, 4. C, 5. A)

Key Ideas

- The four main parts of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation are contrition, confession, absolution, and reconciliation.

- We are like the Prodigal Son and God is like the Father in the parable when we go to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- The way we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and the RCIA today has its roots in the Order of the Penitents in the early Church.

Lesson 5: The Stations of the Cross

Lesson Objectives

SWBAT list the fourteen Stations of the Cross.
 SWBAT describe the origin of the Stations of the Cross.
 SWF grateful that Christ suffered and died for them.

Time	Activities
2 min	<p>Prayer: Prayer Before a Crucifix Place a crucifix in front of the room or direct students' attention to one already on display. Open with the "Prayer Before a Crucifix," followed by an Our Father, Hail Mary, and a Glory Be.</p> <p><i>Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while before Thy face I humbly kneel and, with burning soul, pray and beseech Thee to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity; true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment. While I contemplate, with great love and tender pity, Thy five most precious wounds, pondering over them within me and calling to mind the words which David, Thy prophet, said of Thee, my Jesus: They have pierced My hands and My feet, they have numbered all My bones."</i></p>
5 min	<p>Hook: Continue to direct students' attention on the crucifix. Have them imagine that they had never heard of Jesus or Christianity before. If they saw a crucifix or an image of the suffering Christ, what would they think about our religion and why?</p>
5 min	<p>Presentation: The 14 Stations of the Cross Video & Graphic Organizer www.thereligionteacher.com/stationsvideo Students will trace the path Jesus carried the cross in Jerusalem and the stations we use to mark the main fourteen events of that walk.</p>
10 min	<p>Practice: Stations of the Cross Word Search Students will recall the names of each of the fourteen Stations of the Cross using clues from a word search.</p>
10 min	<p>Prayer: We Adore You, O Christ, and We Praise You Worksheet Students will compose prayers inspired by the Stations of the Cross and the two modes of prayer: adoration and praise.</p>
30 min	<p>Prayer: The Way of the Cross Journal Students will imagine they are speaking with Jesus. They will think about what Jesus might say about each Station of the Cross then respond to him in prayers of praise, thanksgiving, petition, or with questions.</p>
5 min	<p>Proof: Lenten Lesson 5 Quiz (Answers: 1. Condemned, 2. Cross, 3. First, 4. Mother, 5. Simon, 6. Veronica, 7. Second, 8. Jerusalem, 9. Third, 10. Garments, 11. Crucified, 12. Dies, 13. Body, 14. Tomb, 15. B)</p>
Key Ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We participate in the Stations of the Cross as a form of pilgrimage. We can walk along the Way of Cross united with Christ in prayer. 	