



SIMPLY

LENT

LEADER'S GUIDE

LISA FAHEY

Leaders Guide for Week One

Ash Wednesday Reflections - Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting

Group Overview:

This week marks the beginning of Lent, a season for deep reflection, energetic commitment to spiritual growth, and disciplines of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. This small group session aims to cultivate sincere conversations focused on personal, communal, and spiritual challenges that we face during this sacred season.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week.

Introduction to the Theme (2 minutes)

Genuine almsgiving involves giving without desire for recognition. This Lent, focus on others' needs, cultivate daily prayer habits, and consider the Lord's Prayer. Fasting can enhance our relationship with God and can be done in various forms, including non-traditional fasting.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What does genuine almsgiving look like in our lives?
- How can we shift our focus from ourselves to the needs of others this Lent?
- How do you typically approach prayer? What challenges do you face?
- How can we cultivate a daily habit of prayer?
- How can fasting enhance our relationship with God during Lent?
- What non-traditional forms of fasting can we consider this year?

Reflection on Humility (5 minutes)

Discuss the importance of humility as a foundation for the practices of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Read the definition of humility and the quote by Rick Warren.

Journaling Activity:

Ask members to spend a moment journaling their thoughts on how humility may impact their spiritual journey this Lent.

Group Sharing (15 minutes)

Encourage individuals to share their reflections (journal insights, thoughts on humility, and breakthroughs in understanding how almsgiving, prayer, and fasting can transform their lives).

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Close the session by reiterating the importance of taking time over the weekend to reflect on the questions provided:

- What burdens or distractions am I holding onto that may be keeping me from fully experiencing God's love?
- In what ways have I experienced God's presence in my life, and how can I cultivate gratitude for these moments?
- What fears or uncertainties do I need to surrender to God, trusting in His divine plan for my life?

Encourage each group member to find quiet time over the weekend for journaling and reflection.

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- Encouragement: Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
- Flexibility: Be willing to adapt the conversation based on the group's dynamics and the spiritual needs that arise.
- Follow-Up: Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Two

Group Overview:

Lent is a sacred season for reflection and preparation for Easter. It reminds us of our mortality and earthly life, capturing our humble origins and inevitable return. During Lent, we engage in deeper reflection, confession, and repentance, confronting our shortcomings and seeking forgiveness. The season's message is that God longs for a renewed relationship with His creation, and Christians trust in Jesus Christ's selfless love to reunite with Him in Heaven. This journey of faith and reconciliation reminds us that God always welcomes us back into His loving arms.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week.

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Discuss whether they find any of the virtues challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What “take time to” call to action stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **Psalm 51:1–12** – What sins or burdens do you need to bring to God in confession today?
- **Joel 2:12–13** – What does it mean to “return to the Lord with all your heart”?

- How does this passage challenge you to examine areas where you've drifted from God? Encourage each group member to find quiet time over the weekend for journaling and reflection.

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- **Encouragement:** Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
- **Flexibility:** Be willing to adapt the conversation based on the group's dynamics and the spiritual needs that arise.
- **Follow-Up:** Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Three

Group Overview:

Lent is a time for self-reflection, repentance, and renewal, encouraging us to confront our imperfections and shortcomings. It encourages humility and allows God's grace to work within us. The journey may involve struggles, but deepens our relationship with God. Fasting teaches control, almsgiving demonstrates love, and prayer is our direct line of communication. The invitation to surrender and make sacrifices represents an opportunity for transformation, requiring us to let go of preconceived ideas and remain open to God's intentions.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week.

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Discuss whether they find any of the virtues challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What "take time to" call to action stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **Matthew 16:24–26** – What is God asking you to lay down or surrender this Lent?
- **Isaiah 58:6–9** – How can you practice fasting in a way that aligns with God's heart for justice and mercy?

- In what ways does this Scripture encourage you to align your priorities with God's will?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

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- Encouragement: Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
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- Follow-Up: Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Four

Group Overview:

Despite our imperfections and sins, we often struggle to embody this reality. God's ultimate sacrifice, the giving of His only Son, Jesus, reveals His love and provides a pathway for renewal and transformation. The challenge lies in accepting and internalizing this fundamental truth that God loves us so deeply that He willingly sacrificed everything for our sake (John 3:16). This acceptance is crucial for restoring our identity and reconnecting with our true selves.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week.

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Discuss whether they find any of the virtues challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What "take time to" call to action stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **Romans 12:1–2** – What areas of your life need renewal or transformation?
- **Ezekiel 36:26** – How does God's promise of a new heart and spirit bring hope to you today?
- What steps can you take to let the Holy Spirit renew your mind during this season?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- Encouragement: Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
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- Follow-Up: Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Five

Group Overview:

As Easter approaches, there is often a sense of unease when witnessing suffering. This feeling reflects the gravity of Jesus' journey to the cross, where He endured immense pain—not for Himself, but for all of humanity. We are the reason He chose that path. Despite His divinity, Jesus fully embraced humanity, taking on flesh, blood, and the pain of suffering. His journey shows that He deeply understands our struggles, and in moments of suffering, there is comfort in knowing He relates to our experiences, having walked through the same pain Himself.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week.

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Discuss whether they find any of the virtues challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What “take time to” call to action stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **Mark 10:45** – How does Jesus' example of serving and sacrificing challenge your own walk with Him?
- **John 13:12–17** – How can you practice humility and serve others this Lent?

- **Luke 22:39–46** – How does Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane shape your understanding of surrender to God’s will?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- **Encouragement:** Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
- **Flexibility:** Be willing to adapt the conversation based on the group’s dynamics and the spiritual needs that arise.
- **Follow-Up:** Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Six

Group Overview:

The promise of eternal life in John 14:2 is a source of reassurance, as Jesus is preparing a place for us. Reflecting on Jesus' suffering deepens appreciation for His Resurrection, as he overcame death and returned to life. This victory over death provides assurance that our loved ones are not lost, but waiting for us in the eternal home He promised. This message of hope and resurrection sustains believers through times of sorrow, reminding us that death does not have the final word. Jesus' Resurrection is a beacon of hope, reminding us that love transcends mortality and that one day, we will be reunited with those we love.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Have a discussion about whether they find the virtue challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What “take time to” call to actions stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **John 11:25–26** – How does this promise of eternal life give you hope during Lent?
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – What does it mean for you to live as a new creation in Christ? How does this Scripture encourage you to look forward to the joy of Easter morning?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- Encouragement: Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
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- Follow-Up: Consider establishing a follow-up mechanism (like group texts or a shared document) to encourage ongoing reflections and prayers throughout Lent.

Leaders Guide for Week Seven

Week of the Triduum leading up to Easter.

Group Overview:

The Triduum commemorates the final days of Jesus' life, marking His death and resurrection, and signifies the end of Lent and the start of the Easter season. Known as the "Paschal Mystery," it fulfills the ancient Jewish Passover. The Triduum includes Holy Thursday, which celebrates the Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Last Supper with His disciples; Good Friday, a day to reflect on Jesus' passion; Holy Saturday, a day of preparation for Easter; and the Easter Vigil, celebrating Christ's Resurrection. The Triduum is significant as it offers a time to reflect on God's intercession for humanity and to celebrate His presence and work in our lives.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week

Reflections On the Daily Virtues (20 minutes)

Ask the small group what stands out to them about each daily virtue. Have a discussion about whether they find the virtue challenging or not.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- What "take time to" call to actions stand out to them?
- Share with each other some insights from the Scriptures at the end of each day.

Weekend Reflection and Questions (10 minutes)

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflections.

- **John 11:25–26** – How does this promise of eternal life give you hope during Lent?

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – What does it mean for you to live as a new creation in Christ? How does this Scripture encourage you to look forward to the joy of Easter morning?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Finish with a prayer, asking for strength, clarity, and the grace to embrace both the challenges and blessings of this Lenten season. This is also a great time to invite any prayer requests before the closing prayer.

****Additional Notes for Leaders:**

- **Encouragement:** Create a safe environment where every person feels comfortable sharing. As a leader, be attentive to individual needs and create space for voices to be heard.
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Leaders Guide for Week Following Easter

Make this small group meeting a celebration by serving muffins or snacks, along with tea, coffee, or juice. You could also ask everyone in the group to bring a treat to share.

Group Overview:

Jesus Has Risen!!!!

The belief in Jesus Christ's Resurrection provides immense reassurance, reminding us that death does not have the final say. John 14:2 promises a future filled with hope and belonging, as Jesus is our bridegroom. Reflecting on Jesus' suffering deepens appreciation for His Resurrection, as he overcame death and returned to life. This victory over death gives us the assurance that our loved ones are not lost, but waiting for us in the eternal home promised by Jesus. This message of hope and resurrection sustains believers through times of sorrow, reminding us that love transcends mortality and that one day, we will be reunited with those we love.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Allow the group to enter into a space of prayerful reflection. Ask for God's presence and guidance as you explore the virtues for the week

Reflections On the *Simply Lent* (20 minutes)

- Ask small group what stood out to them about their Lenten journey.
- What was difficult?
- What was different for them this Lenten season and why?

Discuss the questions from the weekend reflection.

- What does the Resurrection mean to you personally?

- Is there an area of your life where you need God's resurrection power to bring new life and hope?
- How can you live in the joy and freedom of Easter every day?

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

Wrap up with a prayer, asking for strength, wisdom, and the ability to apply the virtues you've learned while trusting in God's promises. Celebrate with joy—He has risen! This is also a great moment to invite any prayer requests before the final prayer.

See you at Advent – A Newly Revised version coming next Advent!