# **Putting Together a Lenten Plan**

Lent is a season for prayer, scripture reading and reflection, for asking and giving forgiveness, for making an effort to spend less time on your personal wants/desires and instead focus on the needs of others. Take some time to put together your own Lenten plan. The following may help with that plan.

Start with an examination of conscience.

Examine your relationship with God:

1. What steps am I taking to help myself grow closer to God and others?
2. Do I turn to God often during the day, especially when I am tempted?
3. Do I participate at Mass with attention and devotion on Sundays and Holy Days?
4. Do I pray often and read the Bible?
5. Do I use God’s name or the name of Jesus, Mary, and the saints with love and reverence?

If you feel your relationship with God could be improved, consider what you can do during Lent to strengthen this relationship.

Examine your relationship with Others

1. Have I set a bad example though my words or actions?
2. Do I treat others fairly?
3. Do I spread stories that hurt other people?
4. Am I loving of those in my family?
5. Am I respectful to my neighbors, friends, and those in authority?
6. Do I show respect for my body and for the bodies of others?
7. Do I keep away from forms of entertainment that do not respect God’s gift of sexuality?
8. Have I taken of damaged anything that did not belong to me?
9. Have I cheated, copied homework, or lied?
10. Do I quarrel with others just so I can get my own way?
11. Do I insult others to try to make them think they are less than I am?
12. Do I hold grudges and try to hurt people who I think have hurt me?
13. Do I spend my money (or that of my parents) on material goods for myself (special clothes, games, etc.) or on food or drink that I could do without?

If your relationship with others needs improvement, what are you going to do about it during Lent?

Lent is a season of penance, fasting/abstinence, almsgiving with a goal of strengthening your relationship with God and your community. So your Lenten plan should include all of these.

Take a few minutes to figure out your Lenten plan. It should not just be something like “giving up chocolate”; it should include:

* Spend less time on “pleasurable” pursuits and more time improving your relationship with God. Limit time spent watching TV, playing games, etc. and instead, spend your time:
  + Read from Gospel of \_\_\_\_\_\_ every day throughout Lent
  + Pray and reflect on what I am reading
  + Pray for/with others
* Do something positive (something you can do regularly, throughout lent, at work/school or at home) to improve the happiness of someone else or some group; without regard to whether you “get anything” for it
* Give up some material thing that you currently pay for and put the money you save in the rice bowl..

Keep a calendar throughout Lent to indicate how you are doing on your plan. On every day, mark whether you read the Gospel, prayed, selflessly did something for someone else, did without something to be able to put money in the rice bowl…