

WHAT CAN I GIVE UP FOR LENT?



Every year at the beginning of Lent, you probably hear the question “**What are you giving up for Lent?**” Most people resort to the same old ordinary things that have been given up, it seems, forever: lollies, junk food, desert, TV (or more likely streaming or video/computer games these days). Or people make jokes, like giving up school, homework, house chores. These answers indicate that many people are not taking Lent very seriously and treat it as a negative time that can’t be over quickly enough.

You can make Lent an adventure and enjoyable by being creative about what you give up for Lent. Remember, giving up is supposed to be a sacrifice, something that is difficult and causes you some “hardship”. By being imaginative, your Lent can include sacrifices that are actually be fun, and it will be Easter before you know it!

The following ideas have been made up or borrowed from many sources too numerous to recount, so they may not be new to you at all. Here we go ...

1. **Don't buy anything that you don't really need.**



(laurengreutman.com)

How essential is it? Can it wait? How will it really improve my life? Is it necessary for my family? The fun part could be thinking about alternatives that can do the same job but are not “normal”. This might even give you a feeling of satisfaction.

2. **When you give up screen/device time, spend that time in prayer.**

Make this an interesting prayer time. Pray in a way that is not normal for you. Do it with family members or friends and discuss Lent with them. Read something from the Bible that you haven’t read. It might be interesting and you might learn something.



(libertylive.church)



(dreamstime.com)

3. **Do not gossip.**

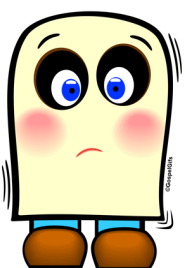
Guess what? Most of us gossip all the time and we don’t even realise it. All you have to do is comment judgmentally and negatively on something you see or hear someone do or say. You probably don’t even realise you are doing it. It is so easy to do! Try hard not to, and you will see how difficult it is. This will make it very interesting for you.

4. **Go out of your way to say something nice to family members, friends and others.**

We take most of the people we see everyday for granted. We don’t often really think about how we interact with them. Say something special to your mother or father. Possibly more difficult, do this to your sibling(s). How about saying something complimentary to someone you don’t particularly like? This might be difficult, but most sacrifices are.



(positivequotespic.blogspot.com)



(clipart-library.com)

5. **Don't hide your Faith from your friends.**

Many people do not take Lent or Religion seriously, so this action can be difficult. Do you tell your friends what you are doing for Lent, or are you embarrassed to do so? Can you decline an invitation to an event because it goes against what you are doing for Lent? Do your friends know that you go to Mass on Sundays? Do you openly wear a religious medal or chain or carry a Rosary? Sometimes, the best way to be a missionary is to let your friends know what you think and what you do. You should be proud to advertise your faith, not in an overbearing way, but just through your daily life.

6. Don't play the victim game.



(agilitypr.com)

When bad things happen, don't blame others. Be responsible for your life: for your actions; for your achievements; for your failures; for your successes. Of course, you often need help along the way, and you need to look for it in the right places when necessary. Every day, think about who you are and what you are doing. Talk to your parents. Talk to God! Don't blame them!

7. Give up your time.

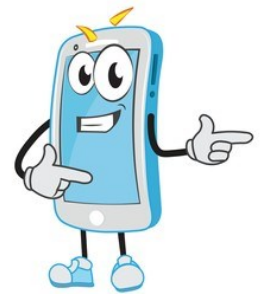
Everyone's time is precious and we can always make a case for being busy. But are you really so busy? Can you give up some unnecessary activities to help out somewhere? Volunteer in some capacity at the Church. Visit a home for senior citizens. Join a worthy cause organised at your school. Join a youth group and get involved. Do extra chores around the house. Help elderly neighbours.



(istockphoto.com)

8. Spending too much time on your phone.

We are all aware of the criticism about the amount of time most people spend using their mobile phones. One hears this especially of young people. Are you guilty of this? Try consciously not to use your phone during Lent except for emergencies. These might include: answering an important call, making a necessary call, finding some essential information. There really isn't much else that is essential. This may be very hard for some people, because it eliminates much social media use, but what a sacrifice!!



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9. Sitting around doing nothing. Exercise!!



(shutterstock.com)

We all hear about how it is important to get regular exercise, but do we do much about it? Take time every day during Lent to get at least 30 – 45 minutes of good exercise. What can you do? Run, walk, cycle, swim, play a team sport, hike, join a fitness club. Do it with friends, family or on your own. Use it as time to talk privately with God and pray. Taking care of your body is also good preparation for Jesus at Easter.

10. Do not complain or speak negatively.



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We often complain and whine about things but try to have a positive outlook on life. Try it and see how VERY hard it can be. You don't realize how much you complain until you give it up. Even St Paul agrees: "Do everything without grumbling or arguing..." (Philippians 2:14)

SEE HOW YOU GO! You can probably think of other creative things to give up or to do as sacrifices that will make your Lent interesting and even fun!



"I'm giving up Google for Lent."

GOOD LUCK!

(art.com)