



LENT DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

"Filled with the holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil."

Luke 4:1-2

Many of us are familiar with the various traditions and customs of Lent such as receiving ashes on your forehead (or sprinkled over your head if you are in Italy), giving up something for the season and abstaining from meat on Fridays, which gave rise to parish fish fries and even the fish fillet sandwich at McDonald's. Our parishes, too, are gearing up with various speakers and prayerful events, like the Stations of the Cross, to help the faithful enter Lent. However, many may not know the intention or history of many of the beautiful traditions of this sacred season.

It is from Jesus' fasting in the desert that gave rise to earliest traditions of Lent. We see in the writings of the spiritual grandson of St. John the Apostle, St. Irenaeus (130 AD), the mention of a pre-Easter fast in imitation of Christ's trials in the desert. Shortly after the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, widespread practices of a pre-Easter fast emerged throughout the church, beginning with new converts to the faith and quickly being adopted by all the faithful. It was Pope Gregory I, around 600 AD, who established the Lenten fast churchwide, beginning on a Wednesday, 46 days before Easter, with the ceremony of ash.

Lent is intended to help us imitate Christ in His life, and especially in His passion. The number forty in sacred scripture has an underlying theme of preparation and purification--such as the forty days and nights of rain with Noah and the flood (Genesis 7:12), Moses spending forty days on Mount Sinai before receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28), and the Israelites being purified in the desert for forty years (Exodus 16:35). As Jesus himself prepared to embrace His ministry, we too must continually prepare ourselves to embrace the Christian life.

IN IMITATION OF CHRIST

There are many things that can pull our focus off Christ. Temptations to sin are constant, and it is easy to be pulled back into the ways of the world, as St. Paul states in Romans 7:19, "for I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." **Lent is a sacred season that invites us to grow closer to God through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.**

"But when he saw how strong the wind was, he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"
Matthew 14:30

**Prioritize Family and Values.
Delay Social Media.**

**Delay the Smartphone.
No Phones Used in Schools.**

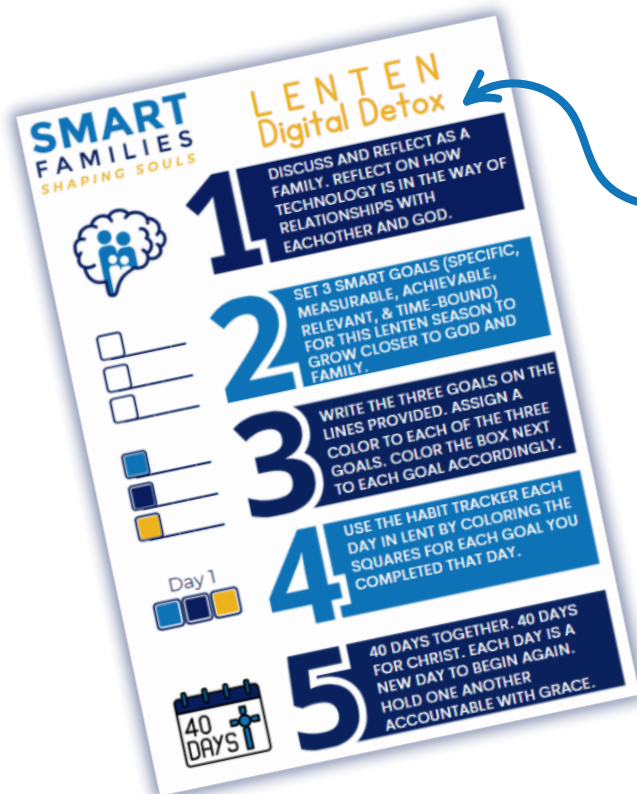


It offers us an opportunity to truly reflect and pray on what is pulling us away from God and the responsibilities of our state in life. As technology becomes increasingly prevalent in our society, we are called to further reflect on how it is impacting our faith and family life.

Technology is a gift meant to simplify our lives and draw us closer to God, family, and friends. Yet, it often leaves us overconnected, distracted, and disconnected from our faith and loved ones. It leads us into temptation and fractures family relationships. We desire strong family bonds, but we are often pulled from conversations into the glow of our devices. We long for a relationship with God but instinctively reach for our phones instead of turning to Him in prayer. **To improve our faith and family life, we have to change how we use smart devices.**



DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT: SMART FAMILIES LENTEN CHALLENGE



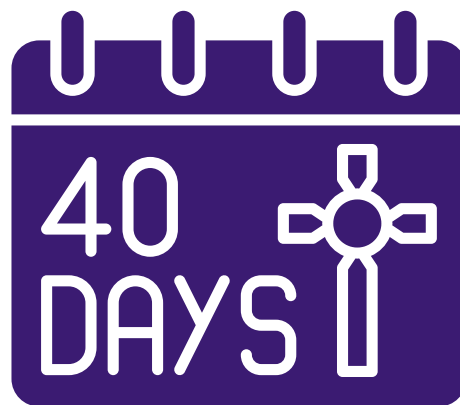
To help families disconnect from tech and reconnect with God and one another this Lent, we designed the following **Smart Families Lenten Challenge** (see at the end of this newsletter). Just as it is important to remove the distractions and sins in our lives, it is equally important to replace them with good and holy habits. Jesus reminds us in Luke 11:24 – 26: “When an unclean spirit goes out of someone, it roams through arid regions searching for rest but, finding none, it says, ‘I shall return to my home from which I came.’ But upon returning, it finds it swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits more wicked than itself who move in and dwell there, and the last condition of that person is worse than the first.”

During Lent, we encourage families to come together and discuss what steps they can take to reduce distractions from screens and social media and to cultivate a better faith and family life. Families should discuss what devices, notifications, apps, games, or other tech habits are negatively affecting their faith and family life and determine how they can fast from these distractions during the Lenten season. **Whatever is decided, the entire family should work together not only to maintain the fast but also to fill the tech void with activities that strengthen their relationships with God, one another, and their friends.**

Some suggestions to help guide your family's discussion could include limiting screen time and video games, replacing them with family game nights or a movie night that focuses on faith and family values. Families could delete social media and non-essential apps, replacing them with family prayer and scripture readings, and prioritizing in-person conversations or phone calls over text messages. Other meaningful activities could include creating faith-based crafts or projects, taking nature walks to reflect on God's creation, participating in parish Lenten activities, or volunteering as a family to help out someone in need.

As we embark on our Lenten journey, we know it can be difficult to keep our resolutions. While we may start off strong, it is easy to let our guard down and slip back into old habits. To help you and your family succeed in this challenge, we put together an [accountability calendar](#) (see at the end of this newsletter) to help track your progress and to for your to help support each other in keeping their Lenten goals.

**From all of us at Smart Families,
we pray that you have a blessed
and holy Lent.**



LET US PRAY

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.

Smart Families is partnered with your church and/or school to educate, encourage and empower your community about the importance of delaying smartphones.
To learn more, visit www.smart-families.org





1

Discuss and reflect as a family. Reflect on how technology is in the way of relationships with each other and God.

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2

Set 3 Smart goals (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, & time-bound) for this lenten season to Grow closer to God and Family.

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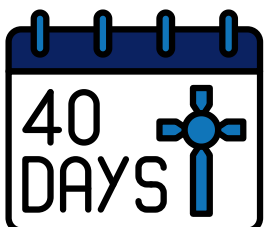
Write the three goals on the lines provided. Assign a color to each of the three goals. color the box next to each goal accordingly.

Day 1

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4

Use the habit tracker each day in lent by coloring the squares for each goal you completed that day.



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40 days together. 40 days for christ. Each day is a new day to begin again. Hold one another accountable with grace.

Lenten Digital Detox

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Day 1

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Day 2

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Day 3

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Day 4

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Day 40

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