




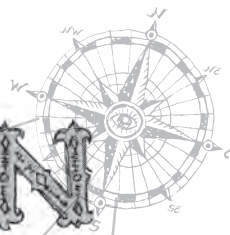
LENTEN
Survival
Guide
FOR KIDS





WHATEVER HAPPENS.
DON'T LOSE THIS BOOK
BEFORE
ASH WEDNESDAY.

LENTEN



Survival Guide

FOR KIDS

by PETER CELANO

I'M SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?!



PARACLETE PRESS
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Lenten Survival Guide for Kids: I'm Supposed to Do What?!

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This book is dedicated
to faithful followers of
Lent everywhere.

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What's the Purpose of Lent?

You may have heard about this thing called Lent. This is your guide to not only surviving it, but also—dare we suggest?—loving it. Wait. Allow us to explain . . .

There are no ghouls, vampires, and ghosts in Lent. Whoever told you there were, never listen to what they say ever again.

Lent is a season of the year, a time that comes around on the calendar a little while after the Christmas decorations are taken down. It can be a bit frightening how quickly the days of “Joy to the World” and “Away in a Manger” turn to giving up stuff we love . . . hearing words like “repentance” . . . and ideas such as *fasting*. More on fasting later.

In your imagination, Lent is most of all probably the time of year when your mother or father starts to talk about how everyone has to give something up. Something you really, really like—you have to steer clear of during Lent.

Now, keep in mind that many kids smarter than you have tried to be clever about this in the past. For example, you may have already thought of this

one: giving up something that you'd be happy to give up just about anytime. It's an old trick. The conversation goes something like this:

You: I have thought and prayed about what to give up for Lent, Mom. [Pausing to place your hand over your heart, or to look quickly up toward heaven.] Here's what I've decided—I think I'll give up making my bed and taking out the trash. How's that?

Mom: I see. Okay, in that case, I will give up giving you an allowance.

You: Um. Never mind.

Why do we do Lent every year anyway? Sure, it comes around on the calendar, but why do it?

Why—for instance—would anyone willingly give up something that seems so good throughout the rest of the year? Who does that help?

Who are we kidding—Lent *is* a bit frightening. That is, if you take it seriously, it can be frightening. And since you are reading this book, we are going to assume that you're willing to take it seriously.

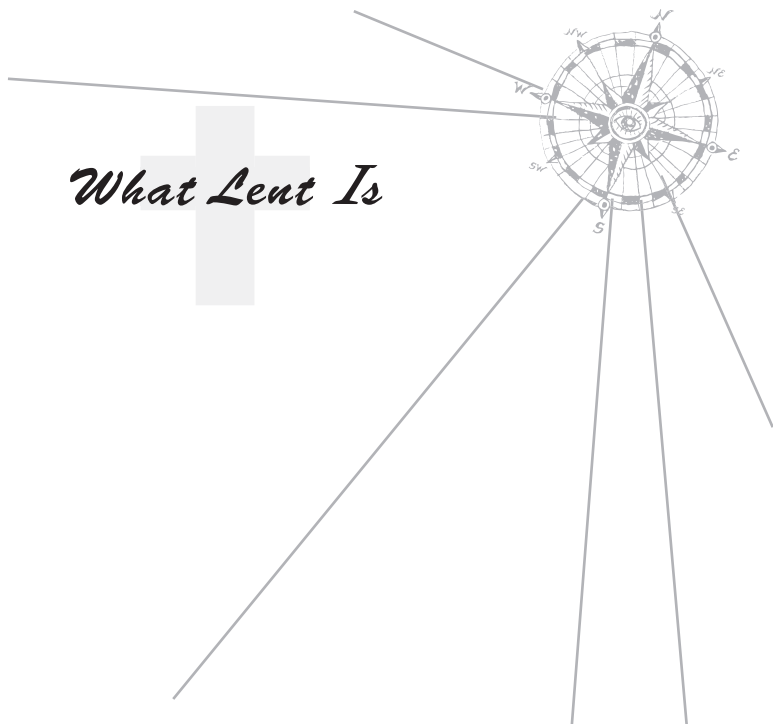
But, in addition to giving things up, this is also the time of year when your pastor may start talking about getting more serious about prayer, about dedication to God, about going to confession, about reading the Bible, about identifying sin in your life, and about doing more good for others. So to answer the question, *what's the point?* The point is: getting serious.

There are other baffling words as well. What in the world, for instance, is “penitence” all about? Stay tuned.

The common denominator in all of this is what?
Seriousness. So tell us, have you gotten serious?
Are you ready?



What Lent Is



Okay, this is what Lent is. Nitty gritty stuff.

ON THE CALENDAR

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for either thirty-eight or forty days, depending on



how you count them. (Everybody always excludes Sundays during Lent, because Sundays are “feast days,” or times of celebration, all year round, since it was on a Sunday that Christ rose from the dead.) In the Roman Catholic Church, Lent continues until Holy Thursday, ending that evening. So for Catholics, you count thirty-eight days starting with Ash Wednesday. In most other churches that observe Lent, you count forty days and the final day of Lent is Holy Saturday, the very last day before Easter.

So no matter who you are, Lent will carry you through the approximately six weeks just before Easter.

There can be no Easter without Lent.

And Easter Sunday makes no sense without Ash Wednesday, those thirty-eight to forty days of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

So settle in. Get ready to fully participate in these important days ahead.

For the next few years, this is when Ash Wednesday falls on the calendar. Make a note of it. This is when Lent begins.

2014: Wednesday, March 5

2015: Wednesday, February 18

2016: Wednesday, February 10

2017: Wednesday, March 1

Then, mark every weekday and Saturday until at least Holy Thursday. Those are the days of prayer and discipline for anyone intending to observe the season of Lent. And unless we're mistaken, that's you!



ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is the day when many Christians go to church to have ashes put on their foreheads in the shape of a cross. That alone makes it pretty unusual! Why do this? Because Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, and we begin with this stark reminder of our mortality, which means simply that every human being will someday die. When you understand that fact clearly, the importance of being “right” with God begins to feel much more urgent!

Ash Wednesday reminds us that we will someday meet God face-to-face.

On Ash Wednesday, your pastor will say to you, while placing ashes on your forehead, “You started out as dirt, you’ll end up dirt” (Genesis 3:19, *The Message*), or perhaps: “Repent, and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15).