

A One-Day-at-a-Time Lenten Discipline with a Calendar

Using a calendar template is a simple, daily prayer practice for making the journey through Lent. Each day choose a word to ponder or a person to pray for. Write the word or name in the allotted space with a pen and draw or doodle around it. Add color with colored pencils or markers. Let the word or name speak to you. If words come to you as you draw, pray them. If not, just continue to draw, stay quiet, and let the word or name burrow into your mind and heart. Returning to the calendar each day establishes a hallowed time and a place to be present to God and listen.

Think of each mark of the pen or stroke of a colored marker/pencil as a small non-verbal prayer. The goal of the doodling and drawing is not to make a beautiful work of art, but to create a visual prayer. Drawing/doodling invites the body into the prayer, gives the eyes and hand something to do, and helps to focus attention on the word or person.

Praying on the calendar is a visual and kinesthetic Lenten discipline. The accumulation of words or peoples' names on the calendar creates an emerging tapestry of your spiritual journey through the forty-plus days of Lent.

Ways to Use the Calendars:

- 1) ***Pray for a person*** each day of Lent.

- 2) ***Use a daily book of Lenten meditations.*** Read the meditation for the day and select a word that jumps out at you. Meditate on the word as you draw and color around it. Let it enter your heart and mind. Ask God what you need to hear from the word.

- 3) ***Follow a daily lectionary*** and choose a word from one of the Scripture readings.

- 4) ***Read the same Psalm each day*** and choose a daily word. Psalm 51, for example, is a penitential Psalm with lots of juicy (sometimes depressing) words in it.

- 5) ***Read a different Psalm*** each day and choose a word.

- 6) Use nouns or adjectives that ***describe the nature and character of Jesus***: savior, redeemer, healer, radical, obedient, forgiving,...

- 7) Since Lent is a time for ***reflection and self-examination***, scatter your confessions, character defects, regrets, worries, fears, and sorrows on the template. Ask the Holy Spirit to be present as you reflect on these. This is not meant to be an exercise in self-flagellation, but a way to be honest with yourself and draw closer to God and God's unconditional Love. Mix in some dreams, hopes, and thanksgivings.

- 8) Create a visual ***gratitude list***. Each day add a word or an image. The items on your gratitude

list can be important and profound or simple and fleeting: a cup of coffee, a walk around the block, a smile from a child....