

Permission to Pause

Lent is a time of permission.

Here is a list of 40 suggested activities to allow yourself to pause, take time to care for your soul, and find the way that God is speaking to you.

Choose what appeals to you or try something new. Feel free to repeat your favorites.

We Are Stardust	Breathe Deep	Be the “Bad” Guy	Dance!	Nourish the Body
Go outside at night, take a blanket to lie on, and look at the stars.	Take time to find a comfortable spot. Sit still, close your eyes, and breathe deeply for several minutes	Pretend to be a person you dislike, and write a letter to you explaining why that person is okay.	Put on some music you like and dance. Fast or slow, alone or with a partner. Just move to the music.	Make some treats or a meal for a neighbor, or for yourself. Be creative. Try a new recipe.
Write	Walk	Watch a movie	Say You’re Sorry	Divest yourself
Write a poem, or a story, or a journal entry, or a note to someone you love.	Take a walk around the block or go to a park or nature preserve.	Or a concert or a play and talk about it with a friend.	To someone you’ve hurt or someone you just haven’t talked to in a while.	Clean out a closet or cupboard. Throw out the unusable and give away the unwanted.
Get up early	Do a chore	Listen to birds	Sleep	Do Nothing
Watch the sun rise, or greet the new day with hope.	Take satisfaction in it being done.	Go to a park or your backyard, and listen!	Take a nap. (Hint: Breathe Deep can lead to this.)	Sit, gaze into space, and let your mind wander.
Volunteer	Forgive . . .	Build something	Grieve	Watch the Sunset
Make phone calls, read to others, and give of yourself.	Someone else or yourself. We all need some grace.	A shelf or a doghouse, a sandcastle, or a blanket fort.	Write to someone you’ve lost or about something you’ve lost. Offer it to God.	Take time to watch the dying of the light. Reflect on where God has been in this day.
Reconnect	Remember	Converse	Read	Donate
Call a friend you haven’t talked to in a while.	Tell a story about yourself to someone who didn't know you then.	Turn off TV, phones, and computers. Talk to family or to God. Then listen.	Pick a new book or an old favorite and revel in the words.	Drop some change in a jar at the store or write a check and mail it to help save the world.
Listen	Plan a garden	Sing a song	Repent	Cheer up
Ask someone you know to share a memory with you.	Draw a plan, order the seeds or plants. What will summer bring?	Sing to someone else or just to yourself, just make a joyful noise!	Make a list of your failings. Give them to God. Tear up the list.	Count your blessings—make a list. Give thanks.
Exercise	Create Art	Learn	Spread goodwill	The Nice List
Stretch, walk, jog, lift weights. Move and get your heart going.	Paint a picture, make a collage, sculpt some clay. Create!	Plan to learn a new skill or piece of knowledge.	Pay a compliment to someone every day for a few days.	Choose a person and make a list of all the good things you notice about them. Tell them.
Play with a pet	Pray	Console	Meditate	Smell the Roses
Spend time with your dog/cat/frog. Give them affection and time.	Open your heart to God and speak.	Talk to someone who is in pain or grief and walk with them in their sorrow.	Take some daily time (there are apps to help) and still yourself.	Give thanks for what you can smell, see, taste, feel, or hear.

This chart shows the 40 days of Lent in 2021. Notice that the Sabbath days are not counted. This is because Sunday is always a feast day—the day of the Lord—so Sundays are in Lent, but not of Lent. Use your Sundays to rest, or do something you especially liked again.

		2/17 Day 1 Ash Wednesday	2/18 Day 2	2/19 Day 3	2/20 Day 4	2/21 Sabbath
2/22 Day 5	2/23 Day 6	2/24 Day 7	2/25 Day 8	2/26 Day 9	2/27 Day 10	2/28 Sabbath
3/1 Day 11	3/2 Day 12	3/3 Day 13	3/4 Day 14	3/5 Day 15	3/6 Day 16	3/7 Sabbath
3/8 Day 17	3/9 Day 18	3/10 Day 19	3/11 Day 20	3/12 Day 21	3/13 Day 22	3/14 Sabbath
3/15 Day 23	3/16 Day 24	3/17 Day 25	3/18 Day 26	3/19 Day 27	3/20 Day 28	3/21 Sabbath
3/22 Day 29	3/23 Day 30	3/24 Day 31	3/25 Day 32	3/26 Day 33	3/27 Day 34	3/28 Palm Sunday
3/29 Day 35	3/30 Day 36	3/31 Day 37	4/1 Day 38 Maundy Thursday	4/2 Day 39 Good Friday	4/3 Day 40 Holy Saturday	4/4 Easter Sunday