

Prayer Ideas

1. Daily Mass

Whether you are already a daily Mass goer or not, resolve to go during Lent. To add an element of specific intercession and self-gift, pick someone in your life to offer your Mass up for each time you go. Afterwards send them a simple, but personalized note or text letting them know about it.

2. Liturgy of the Hours

Pray the Liturgy of the Hours, which is the official prayer of the Church and is actually not just for monks and nuns at all. The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office, is the daily prayer of the Church, marking the hours of each day and sanctifying the day with prayer. (learn more here <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours>). Perhaps you can start with just morning, daytime, evening, or night prayer. Maybe you want to go big and dive into all of them. Don't have a breviary? No problem. There's an app for that: <https://catholicapps.com/ibreviary/>

3. Daily Scripture Readings

The Church has mapped out an order of reading the Bible so that if you follow the daily readings each day, you will read almost the entire Bible over the three year course. Try finding a time to read the daily readings each day and see what patterns you notice, what things God is speaking to you as the stories develop from day to day. It's ideal to read them early in the day so that His words can echo throughout your day, if possible. Reading God's Word helps us come to know the Good Shepherd's voice; it helps keep our prayers from becoming one-sided where we do all the talking and instead teaches us to listen. Find the daily readings here <https://bible.usccb.org/readings/calendar>

4. Adoration

Eucharistic adoration is the beautiful practice in the Roman Catholic tradition in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and adored by the faithful. Adoration is a sign of devotion to and worship of Jesus Christ who is truly present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, under the appearance of the consecrated host. As a devotion, Eucharistic adoration and meditation are more than merely looking at the Blessed Host, but are believed to be a continuation of what was celebrated in the Eucharist.

It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to His Church in this unique way. Since Christ was about to take His departure from His own in His visible form, He wanted to give us His sacramental presence; since He was about to offer Himself on the cross to save us, He wanted us to have the memorial of the love with which He loved us "to the end," even to the giving of His life. In His Eucharistic presence He remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave Himself up for us, and He remains under signs that express and communicate this love.

Learn more about adoration at St. Augustine at <https://staugustinestedward.org/our-ladys-adoration-chapel/>

5. Daily Examen

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is a practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience. It was developed by St Ignatius of Loyola.

6. Surrender Novena

A novena is a 9 day prayer, where you pray a portion of the prayer, or a repeating prayer, each day for 9 days. Jesus Christ revealed the Surrender Novena to Fr. Dolingo Ruotolo, an Italian priest, to teach us to turn our troubles over to Him and surrender them to His will. Pray from the print version or listen to/download it to pray along with here: <https://www.discerninghearts.com/catholic-podcasts/surrender-to-the-will-of-god-novena-mp3-audio-and-text-podcast/>

Prayer of Contrition Ideas

7. Act of Contrition

An Act of Contrition prayer expresses to God our sorrow for our sins and asks for His forgiveness. There are typically two versions of the act of contrition:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen. (A traditional version)

or:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. (from the Rite of Penance)

or:

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. (from the Rite of Penance)

8. Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. The stations are commonly used as a mini pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station. At each station, the individual recalls and meditates on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited, then the individual moves to the next station until all 14 are complete. There are many versions of the stations of the cross that include meditations for various ages and perspectives, and can be prayed at home or at the church alongside the images. Check out these ways to pray the stations: <https://aleteia.org/2021/03/20/8-different-ways-to-pray-the-stations-of-the-cross/> <https://www.shrineofdivinemercury.org/stations-way>

9. Psalms of Contrition

During times when we wish to express repentance and especially during Lent, it is customary to pray the seven penitential psalms. The penitential designation of these psalms dates from the seventh century. Prayerfully reciting these psalms will help us to recognize our sinfulness, express our sorrow and ask for God's forgiveness. Look up and read slowly through Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

10. Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

The Rosary is a way of pondering the mysteries of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The Sorrowful Mysteries are especially appropriate to pray with during Lent.

11. Chaplet of Divine Mercy

The chaplet is a prayer that is recited using ordinary Rosary beads of five decades. The Chaplet is preceded by two opening prayers from the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska and is focused on asking God to pour out His mercy on us and the world. It is a powerful prayer that can take place in the span of ten minutes or so on a commute, during a lunch break, or whenever the opportunity arises.

12. Examination of Conscience

Before celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, one should prepare oneself with an examination of conscience, which involves reflecting prayerfully on one's thoughts, words, and deeds in order to identify any sins.

There are various types of examinations of conscience but regardless of which one you use to prepare yourself for the Sacrament it should be rooted in Scripture; particularly, the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes.

Several versions can be found here: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance/examinations-of-conscience>