

# Unit Title: *Why is Lent so important?*

## Lesson 2:

To understand the idea of giving up for Lent.



# What Is Lent?

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is the day **after** Pancake Day. It is the start of a very important time in the Christian Calendar.

This year Lent began on Wednesday 17 February 2021.

## What does Lent lead up to?

Lent leads up to Easter, the time that Christians remember Jesus' death and resurrection.

Lent is 40 days long (not including Sundays).

## Why is Lent 40 days long?

# Jesus Goes into the Wilderness

Before Jesus began his teaching, he spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, to be with God. During this time, he had no food. Whilst Jesus was in the desert, the Devil appeared, trying to tempt Jesus.



The devil tried to tempt Jesus three times but three times Jesus resisted.



# Jesus Resisted Temptation

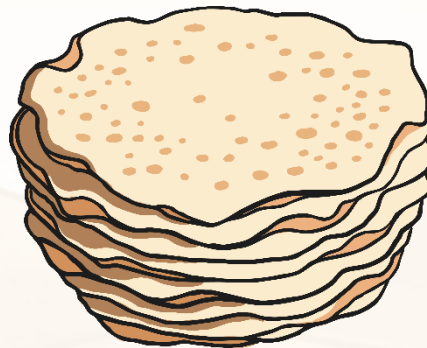
Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert. He had no food. Whilst he was in the desert, the Devil tried to tempt him with food. The Devil made Jesus many promises, but each time Jesus told him 'No!'.

Lent lasts 40 days, to remind Christians of Jesus' sacrifices when he was in the desert and also of his refusal to be tempted by the Devil.



# What Do Christians Do During Lent?

In the past, Christians would give up all 'rich' food and drink during Lent. This meant food such as meat, eggs, fats and milk products weren't eaten. People used up their 'rich' foods before Lent began, by making pancakes; this is why we have Pancake Day.



## What Do People Do?

Ash Wednesday in the United Kingdom is a day of penitence to cleanse the soul before fasting during the Lent period.

Some Christians may attend special church services to receive the ash in the sign of the cross on their foreheads as a symbol of being sorry and repentant for their wrongdoings.



Priests in many churches use the ashes from palms that were burned from the previous year's Palm Sunday. The ashes are mixed with blessed holy water and priests use this special paste by dipping their thumbs in it and using it to make the sign of the cross on individuals' foreheads. Priests in some churches also mix the ash with anointing oil to remind the congregation of God's blessings and of baptism.



Some Christians leave the mark of the cross on their foreheads after they leave the church service. This is so that they can carry the sign of the cross into the world. Others may choose to wash the ashes as a sign that they are now spiritually clean and their sins have been wiped away.



# What Do Christians Do During Lent?

Today, many Christians mark Lent by trying to 'give up' something they like. It might be chocolate or something like video games.

They do this to remember Jesus' sacrifice when he was in the desert and to test their own self-discipline: to see if they can say no to temptation, just as Jesus did.



Lots of churches hold special Lent services.



# When Does Lent Finish?

Lent ends at Easter, when Christians remember Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. This year Lent finishes on Saturday 3 April 2021.



# What Would You Give up for Lent?

Lent is a time for Christians to remember Jesus' sacrifice and how he resisted temptation.

**If you were giving up something for Lent, what would it be?  
Why would it be difficult for you to give it up?**



# Activity Time!

