

Lent 2021

Marriage Challenge

Celebrating the Year of Amoris Laetitia. Family

Lent is a time when we recommit to our Christian calling and vocation; to prayer, fasting and alms giving. The primary vocation of every marriage is to be a witness of God's love in the world through a personal, life-long commitment to loving our spouse. Lent is a great time to recommit to our vocation of marriage. Take the Lenten Marriage Challenge and recommit to the vocation Christ has set before you.

Each day, pray this prayer:

Father, this Lent, help my spouse and I to embrace more deeply the vocation of marriage you have called us to. Help us to grow closer to one another in love. Amen.

Each Sunday ask your spouse these two questions:

1. Was there a time for you in the past week when you felt most loved by me?
2. This coming week, is there something specific you need from me, a way I can support you?

Ash Wednesday
February 17

Resolve to be more patient with your spouse this Lent. When you feel irritable or cranky, or you feel criticised, try to give them the "benefit of the doubt" start practicing this today.

Thursday
February 18

Do something for your spouse today in secret because you love them and which you hope they won't notice.

Friday
February 19

Do some small act of kindness for your spouse today that communicates, "I care about you."

Saturday
February 20

Find time today to ask your spouse, with a sincere heart, "How they are going?"

Sunday
February 21

Find time today to share with your spouse something that you sincerely appreciate about them.

The sacrament of marriage is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses.
Pope Francis (Amoris Laetitia)

Monday
February 22

Ask you spouse (while resisting defensiveness), "What is one area of our relationship I could work on this Lent; and what kind of difference would that make for you in our marriage?"

Tuesday
February 23

Today, come up with a plan for how you can begin, in a small way, to regularly work on the area identified in yesterday's discussion. Think of a few simple steps.

Wednesday
February 24

Together with your spouse, or privately, lift them up in prayer today. Express your appreciation for them to God, and ask for His grace in an area of life they might be struggling with.

Thursday
February 25

Identify an area in your marriage where you are holding onto bitterness, hurt or resentment. Offer this up to Jesus today and ask for His help with healing and forgiveness.

Friday
February 26

Identify something in your marriage you need to apologise for. Take the important step today of making yourself vulnerable and saying, "I'm sorry."

Saturday
February 27

Make a point of offering to help your spouse with something they are doing today (eg. the dishes, gardening, cooking dinner, clothes washing, etc.). Do it with them, respectfully allow them to direct what they need from you.

Sunday
February 28

Reflect on your wedding day. Share with your spouse a cherished memory of the day on which you pledged your commitment to one another in love.

Monday
March 1

Identify one area of communication that you personally need to work on in your relationship. Resolve to strengthen it this week (eg. listening, expressing needs, not interrupting, making time, etc.)

Tuesday
March 2

Throughout today, practice listening deeply with a sincere desire to understand. Rather than listening with the intention of just responding or, worse still, simply reacting.

Wednesday
March 3

Today, think about the times and places you, as a couple, communicate best, either now or in the past. Commit to bringing more of these moments back into your marriage.

Thursday
March 4

Think about a time in your marriage when you spoke about a difficult/sensitive subject well. What was different? What did you do well as a couple? How did that make you feel?

Friday
March 5

We communicate in marriage with more than just words. Try to communicate "I love you" using more than words today.

Saturday
March 6

Identify an area of your marriage that perhaps needs talking about but isn't being spoken about. Make a plan to discuss this with your spouse at an appropriate time (eg. finances, parenting, extended family, etc.)

Sunday
March 7

Resolve to share at least one rewarding meal with your spouse today; breakfast, lunch or dinner.

<p>Monday March 8</p> <p><i>Take time today to reflect on those things in your life which rob you and your spouse of time together. What changes could be made?</i></p>	<p>Tuesday March 9</p> <p><i>Resolve this evening to resist the allure of social media.</i></p> <p><i>Also, resolve to turn off phone notifications after a certain time each evening for the remainder of Lent.</i></p>	<p>Wednesday March 10</p> <p><i>We're nearly half way through Lent. Set time aside to share with your spouse today, and talk about how your Lent is progressing; do you need to recommit? In what areas of your life?</i></p>	<p>Thursday March 11</p> <p><i>Today, put a competing priority in your life on hold so as to commit to time with your spouse. Recognise that your marriage is the vocation God has called you to as your top vocational priority.</i></p>	<p>Friday March 12</p> <p><i>Recall fun or happy times in your marriage. Commit to making more time for these moments in your marriage going forward. Make one concrete plan for this today.</i></p>	<p>Saturday March 13</p> <p><i>Intentionally choose to spend time with your spouse today by "tagging along." Make sure it's rewarding for them to have you there, even if you're not doing something that is your usual "cup of tea."</i></p>	<p>Sunday March 14</p> <p><i>You've made it over half way! Intentionally celebrate this with your spouse by doing something small that you know you both enjoy (eg. share a meal that you particularly like, or a drink, going for a walk together, etc.)</i></p>
<p>Monday March 15</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse three qualities you appreciate about them which they uniquely contribute to your marriage; and why you appreciate those qualities.</i></p>	<p>Tuesday March 16</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse three highlights of your married life journey and why these are important to you.</i></p>	<p>Solemnity of St Patrick March 17</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse something you appreciate in them that perhaps they don't appreciate about themselves.</i></p>	<p>Thursday March 18</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse the story of how you came to decide you wanted to be married to them.</i></p>	<p>Solemnity of St Joseph March 19</p> <p><i>St Joseph is the great protector of the family and the Church. Today, in prayer, entrust your marriage and family (the domestic church) to the protection of St Joseph. Ask for his guidance.</i></p>	<p>Saturday March 20</p> <p><i>Today, think of a metaphor/simile you feel best describes a strength in your marriage and share this with your spouse (eg. "Our marriage is like a... because...")</i></p>	<p>Sunday March 21</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse today your vision for your marriage.</i></p> <p><i>Ten years from now, if everything went according to plan, what would you be celebrating.</i></p>
<p>Monday March 22</p> <p><i>Surprise your spouse with a small gift today (eg. an unexpected sms during the day, a flower from the garden, a chocolate, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Tuesday March 23</p> <p><i>Make time today to hug or hold your spouse as regularly as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Or express your love through some other appropriate means of physical affection.</i></p>	<p>Wednesday March 24</p> <p><i>Offer to give your spouse a massage today whether it be a head massage, foot massage, shoulder rub, etc.</i></p>	<p>Solemnity of the Annunciation, March 25</p> <p><i>On the Feast of the Annunciation we celebrate Mary's great "Yes!" What is God asking you to say "yes" to in your marriage? Is their something you've been putting off or avoiding?</i></p>	<p>Friday March 26</p> <p><i>Today, discuss with your spouse a plan for spending quality time together this weekend and make it a priority over other things.</i></p>	<p>Saturday March 27</p> <p><i>Today, share with your spouse anything that you've noticed that has been different for you in your relationship over recent weeks which you appreciate.</i></p>	<p>Palm Sunday March 28</p> <p><i>Do something spontaneous and unplanned with your spouse today that serves no other purpose than to bring you both joy.</i></p>
<p>Monday March 29</p> <p><i>Share with your spouse today some of the good qualities you've discovered in them since becoming married.</i></p>	<p>Tuesday March 30</p> <p><i>Don't let the busyness of life rob you of "smelling the roses." Take every opportunity you can today to notice what there is to appreciate about your spouse and to tell them.</i></p>	<p>Wednesday March 31</p> <p><i>Christ was afraid to face the Cross but he trusted in His Father's love for Him. Today, acknowledge one of your spouse's fears or anxieties. Let them know that you love them, believe in them, and that you're there for them.</i></p>	<p>Thursday April 1</p> <p><i>This evening, the Church celebrates Jesus' Last Supper. He set an example of service by washing the feet of his disciples. This evening, when it is quiet, wash your spouse's feet.</i></p>	<p>Good Friday April 2</p> <p><i>Today, we commemorate Christ's great sacrifice for us on the Cross so that we might have life. What sacrifices is God asking of you so that your marriage may encounter new life too?</i></p>	<p>Saturday April 3</p> <p><i>Write a love letter to your spouse today that you can give them on Easter Sunday.</i></p>	<p>Easter Sunday April 4</p> <p><i>Today we celebrate our new life in Christ. Find time today to acknowledge the Lord at work in your marriage by sharing, with your spouse, how you've encountered God's grace alive in your married life.</i></p>