



## RESET OF THE HEART

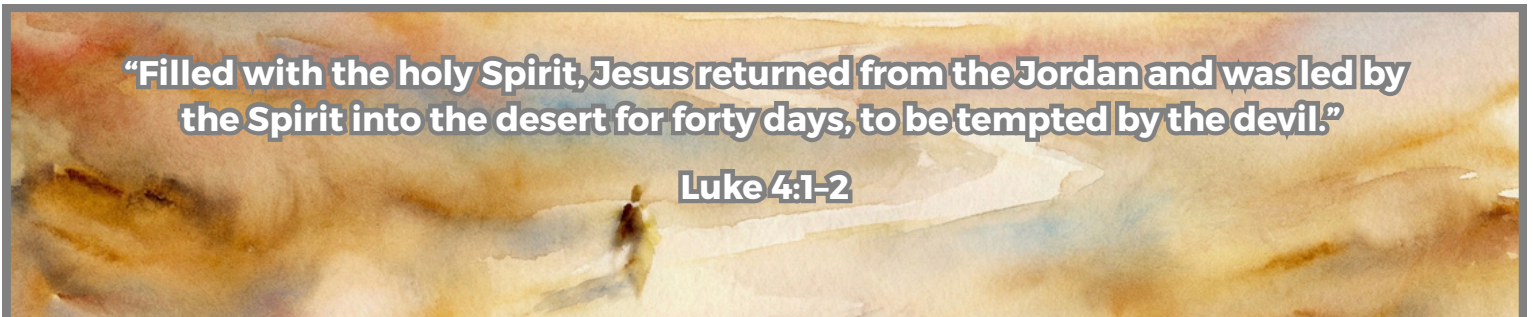
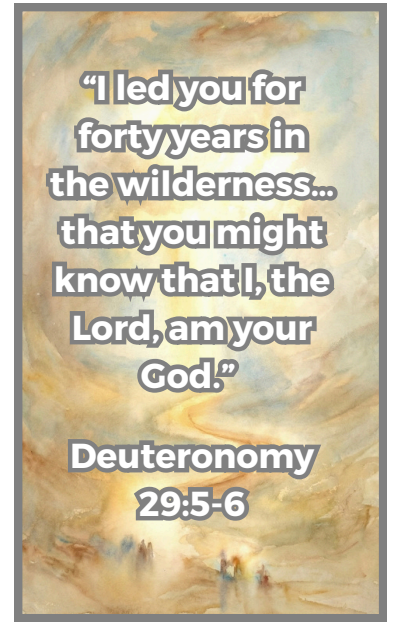
We are flooded with information, news, and content at our fingertips. While acquiring information and learning new skills can be useful and fulfilling, too much of even good things can still pull us away from God and our families. Technology forms our behaviors, our thoughts, and our perspectives. Whether we know it or not, we are shaped by the content we consume, and that influence impacts our faith and family life.

Fear sells, and social media algorithms push the content that will be most engaging. When we are surrounded by those voices, we often find ourselves anxious, angry, or envious, and rather than turning to God for guidance, we turn to our favorite podcast or other sources for help. We may receive good advice, but do we find peace? This disquiet of our hearts leads to disquiet in our homes. But Christ came to give us peace, and He will not leave our hearts troubled or afraid (John 14:27).

Every year during Lent, the Church unites herself to the mystery of Jesus in the desert (CCC 540). We are invited to journey with Christ into the desert to let go of things that pull us away from God and from fulfilling our duties to our vocations and families. This is our own reset of the heart, so that we may be prepared to spread the Gospel and share in Christ's victory over sin and death.

## INTO THE DESERT

Jesus is led into the desert. This isn't accidental, but an intentional act by Jesus to stand in place of all mankind, who have failed in resisting the temptations of the devil. Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will (CCC 539). As we journey with Christ this Lent, we should practice intentionality and reflect on the areas in our lives that need God's help the most.



**Prioritize Family and values.  
Delay Social Media.**

**Delay Smartphones.  
Phone Free School Day.**



## INTO THE DESERT CONT.

As we strive to imitate Christ, we bear the fruit of living the Christian life. As Jesus mentions in Matthew 7:16, “by their fruits you shall know them.” In Galatians 5, Paul lists the desires of the flesh and how they are contrary to the working of the Spirit. This is a good place to start our journey by asking ourselves, “What are the desires of the flesh that need to be uprooted? What fruits of the Spirit need to be cultivated in my life?”



This is the fruit we want to cultivate: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23). But this is not just for ourselves; it is our opportunity to work together as families and allow God to reform our hearts.

## SMART FAMILIES LENTEN CHALLENGE

To help families disconnect from tech and reconnect with God and one another this Lent, we designed the Smart Families **Lenten Challenge & Accountability Tracker** (see at the end of this newsletter). We encourage families to come together and discuss what steps they can take to reduce distractions from screens and social media to cultivate a stronger faith and family life.

Families should discuss which devices, notifications, apps, games, or other tech habits negatively affect their faith and bonds and determine how they can fast from those distractions during the Lenten season. Whatever is decided, families should work together not only to maintain the fast, but also to fill the tech void with activities that strengthen their relationships to God, one another, and their friends.

Suggestions to guide your family discussion include limiting screen time and video games and replacing them with family game nights or faith-centered movie nights. Families might delete social media and non-essential apps to prioritize family prayer, the reading of scripture, and conversations or phone calls. Other ideas include faith-based crafts, nature walks to reflect on God’s creation, participation in parish Lenten activities, or volunteering to serve those in need.

From all of us at Smart Families, we pray that you have a blessed and holy Lent.

## LET US PRAY

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and **lead us not into temptation**, but deliver us from evil. **Amen.**

2026 SMART FAMILIES LENTEN CHALLENGE		HOW TO PARTICIPATE
1	<b>Gather as a family</b> to talk about which devices, notification, apps, games, or other tech habits are present in your life AND negatively affecting your faith or family.	
2	<b>Discuss:</b> Where is technology coming between us and God? Between us and each other? Name the habits—social media, gaming, streaming, late-night scrolling—that most need attention.	
3	<b>Make three specific commitments</b> for Lent that will reduce (or remove) digital distractions and create room for prayer, conversation, and presence. Write them down and commit to them together.	
4	<b>Track progress daily</b> using the provided Accountability Tracker. Mark each day you live out your goals. When you fall short, begin again with mercy.	
5	<b>Replace, don't just remove!</b> Fill the space created by fasting with consistent life-giving practices: shared meals, evening prayer or Scripture, board games, walks, service to others, AND attending Mass.	

Smart Families is partnered with your church and/or school to educate, encourage and empower your community about the importance of delaying smartphones. To learn more, visit [www.smart-families.org](http://www.smart-families.org)



# 2026 SMART FAMILIES LENTEN CHALLENGE

**SUGGESTED  
COMMITMENTS**

## **For Parents**

- *Silence non-essential notifications and delete or pause social media apps (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, etc.).*
- *Establish a firm no-phone boundary two hours before bedtime.*
- *Use Focus/Downtime modes to protect family time.*
- *Model intentional presence—lead by example.*

## **For Children & Teens**

- *Surrender smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches to parents during Lent.*
- *Limit screens to schoolwork only; set timers for any approved use.*
- *Commit to at least one daily non-screen activity that fosters creativity or connection.*

## **Ideas to Fill the Space**

- *Prioritize family dinners and meaningful conversation.*
- *Restore Sundays as holy—pray a family Rosary or read Scripture together.*
- *Serve those in need; encounter Christ in the poor through acts of mercy.*
- *Attend parish Lenten events—Stations of the Cross, retreats, or fish fries.*



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PARTICIPATE**

**1**

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**2**

**Discuss:** Where is technology coming between us and God? Between us and each other? Name the habits—social media, gaming, streaming, late-night scrolling—that most need attention.

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**4**

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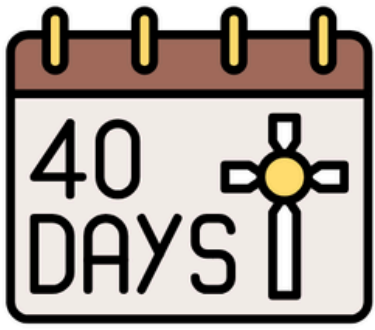
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# SMART FAMILIES

## LENTEN CHALLENGE TRACKER

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3

DAY 4

DAY 5

DAY 6

DAY 7

DAY 8

DAY 9

DAY 10

DAY 11

DAY 12

DAY 13

DAY 14

DAY 15

DAY 16

DAY 17

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DAY 32

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DAY 35

DAY 36

DAY 37

DAY 38

DAY 39

DAY 40



*\*Mark each day you live out your goals. When you fall short, begin again with mercy.*