



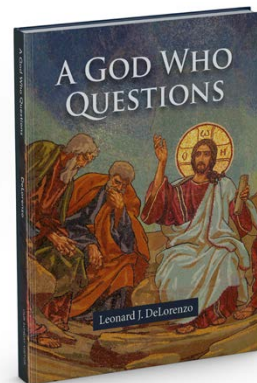
SCRIPTURAL A PILGRIMAGE TO CHRIST THROUGH LENT



A SCRIPTURAL PILGRIMAGE TO CHRIST THROUGH LENT

A Guide for Bible Study and Faith Sharing

Lent is a pilgrimage made by practices of repentance and prayer toward the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This resource guides groups from parishes, schools, or other communities into prayerful reflection of Scripture and substantive faith sharing as part of the Lenten journey. Through meditating on the questions Jesus asks in the Gospel, Leonard DeLorenzo's *A God Who Questions*, which is the book on which this resource is based, gives readers the opportunity to make a "scriptural pilgrimage" to encountering Christ, which is especially pertinent during the Church's broader Lenten pilgrimage.



A God Who Questions is published by Our Sunday Visitor (2019). The author, Leonard DeLorenzo, is a faculty member of the McGrath Institute for Church Life and teaches theology at Notre Dame. For more information, visit mcgrath.nd.edu.

This resource recommends a six-week reading and faith sharing group. Each group meeting is ideally 60–75 minutes, all of which is dedicated to prayer and discussion. The agenda for each meeting follows a basic pattern:

1. Opening prayer, including Intercessions and the Lord's prayer
2. Option for paired conversation, or "mini-group" conversation
3. Group discussion, with suggested questions provided for each session
4. Short period of individual journaling or reflection
5. Closing prayer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Drawing from *A God Who Questions*, this six-week itinerary breaks up the chapters of the book and the corresponding questions of Jesus in the following way:

<u>Week One: The Risk of Presence</u>	4
<i>Introduction: "The questions he asks"</i>	
<i>Chapter 1: "What do you seek?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 2: "Why do you call me good?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 3: "Who do the crowds say that I am?"</i>	
<u>Week Two: The Pain of Healing</u>	7
<i>Chapter 4: "Do you see anything?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 5: "Do you want to be healed?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 6: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath?"</i>	
<u>Week Three: The Hidden Life</u>	10
<i>Chapter 7: "What are you thinking in your hearts?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 8: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 9: "Who is my mother?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 10: "How does your concern affect me?"</i>	
<u>Week Four: The Depths of Mercy</u>	13
<i>Chapter 11: "Where have you laid him?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 12: "Does this shock you?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 13: "Do you know what I have done to you?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 14: "Could you not watch with me one hour?"</i>	
<u>Week Five: The Limits of Hope</u>	16
<i>Chapter 15: "Why have you forsaken me?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 16: "Why are you anxious about clothing?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 17: "What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose himself?"</i>	
<u>Week Six: The New Beginning</u>	19
<i>Chapter 18: "What are you discussing as you walk along?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 19: "Have you anything here to eat?"</i>	
<i>Chapter 20: "Whom do you seek?"</i>	
<i>Epilogue: "The questions we ask"</i>	



WEEK ONE: THE RISK OF PRESENCE

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: INTRODUCTION + CHAPTERS 1-3

Opening Prayer¹

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Lord our God, you formed man from the clay of the earth and breathed into him the spirit of life, but he turned from your face and sinned. In this time of repentance we call out for your mercy. Bring us back to you and to the life your Son won for us by his death on the cross, for he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions²

Leader: Let us give glory to Christ the Lord, who became our teacher and example and our brother. Let us pray to him, saying:

All: Lord, fill your people with your life.

¹ From Evening Prayer I of the First Sunday of Lent, in *Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours* (New York: Catholic Book, 1976), 268.

² From Evening Prayer I of the First Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 267.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you became like us in all things but sin; teach us how to share with others their joy and sorrow,

All: that our love may grow deeper every day.

Leader: Help us to feed you in feeding the hungry,

All: and give you drink in giving drink to the thirsty.

Leader: You raised Lazarus from the sleep of death,

All: grant that those who have died the death of sin may rise again through faith and repentance.

Leader: Inspire many to follow you with greater zeal and perfection,

All: through the example of the blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.

Leader: Let the dead rise in your glory,

All: to enjoy your love forever.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 What are you looking for in your prayer life and your reading of Scripture? Are you willing to be changed?
- 2 What causes noise in your life? In your mind, in your heart, in your home, in your community? How can you separate yourself from the noise?
- 3 How do you listen for Jesus' voice? How might you listen more intently?
- 4 What do you hold on to too tightly? Might it be your reputation, your comfort, your education, your control, your addiction, or your image of yourself (for better or worse)?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer³

All: Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to understand the meaning of your Son's death and resurrection, and teach us to reflect it in our lives. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

³ From Morning Prayer of the First Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 269.



WEEK TWO: THE PAIN OF HEALING

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 4-6

Opening Prayer⁴

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: God our Father, help us to hear your Son. Enlighten us with your word, that we may find the way to your glory. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions⁵

Leader: Let us give thanks to God our Father; through the power of the Spirit he purifies our hearts and strengthens us in love. Let us humbly ask him:

All: Lord, give us your Holy Spirit.

⁴ From Evening Prayer I on the Second Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 291.

⁵ From Morning Prayer on Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 303.

Leader: Help us to receive good things from your bounty with a deep sense of gratitude,

All: and to accept with patience the evil that comes to us.

Leader: Teach us to be loving not only in great and exceptional moments,

All: but above all in the ordinary events of daily life.

Leader: May we abstain from what we do not really need,

All: and help our brothers and sisters in distress.

Leader: May we bear the wounds of your Son,

All: for through his body he gave us life.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 If you were to let go of one thing that is bad for you, especially for your spiritual health, what would it be? How would you make sure you don't go back to it?

- 2 In what ways are you hesitant or unwilling to accept help from others, including God?
- 3 Where do you see suffering? Where could you put yourself to change the suffering you see (or don't see)?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer⁶

All: Father of light, in you is found no shadow of change but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts to the voice of your Word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son who calls us to repentance and a change of heart, for he lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. Amen.

⁶ From Evening Prayer II of the Second Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 295–96.



WEEK THREE: THE HIDDEN LIFE

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 7-10

Opening Prayer⁷

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, during this Lenten season nourish us with your word of life and make us one in love and prayer. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions⁸

Leader: Thanks be to Christ the Lord, who brought us life by his death on the cross. With our whole heart let us ask him:

All: By your death raise us to life.

⁷ From Morning Prayer on Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 327.

⁸ From Morning Prayer on Friday of the Third Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 333.

Leader: Teacher and Savior, you have shown us your fidelity and made us a new creation by your passion,

All: keep us from falling again into sin.

Leader: Help us to deny ourselves today,

All: and not deny those in need.

Leader: May we receive this day of penance as your gift,

All: and give it back to you through works of mercy.

Leader: Master our rebellious hearts,

All: and teach us generosity.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 Where is there bitterness in your life? In what ways are you asked to be “prodigal”—lavish in your giving—but you hesitate to do so?

- 2 Whose good do you have trouble rejoicing over? Is there someone for whom envy, spite, lingering personal hurt, or something else keeps you from desiring their joy?
- 3 How have you listened to the Word of the Lord this week? Do you want to hear him?
- 4 For whom do you pray? For what do you pray? For whom or what do you not yet pray that you might be called to pray?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer⁹

All: God of all compassion, Father of all goodness, to heal the wounds our sins and selfishness bring upon us you bid us turn to fasting, prayer, and sharing with our brothers and sisters. We acknowledge our sinfulness, our guilt is ever before us: when our weakness causes discouragement, let your compassion fill us with hope and lead us through a Lent of repentance to the beauty of Easter joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

⁹ From Evening Prayer I of the Third Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 316.



WEEK FOUR: THE DEPTHS OF MERCY

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 11-14

Opening Prayer¹⁰

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, guide us in your gentle mercy, for left to ourselves we cannot do your will. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions¹¹

Leader: God the Father has given us his only Son, the Word made man, to be our food and our life. Let us thank him and pray:

All: May the word of Christ dwell among us in all its richness.

¹⁰ From Morning Prayer on Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 361.

¹¹ From Morning Prayer on Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 348.

Leader: Help us in this Lenten season to listen more frequently to your word,

All: that we may celebrate the solemnity of Easter with greater love for Christ, our paschal sacrifice.

Leader: May your Holy Spirit be our teacher,

All: that we may encourage those in doubt and error to follow what is true and good.

Leader: Enable us to enter more deeply into the mystery of your Anointed One.

All: that our lives may reveal him more effectively.

Leader: Purify and renew your Church in this time of salvation,

All: that it may give an ever greater witness to you.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us: Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 Where is there pain or darkness in your life or the life of someone you love? How can you show Jesus to that place?

- 2 How do you prepare to receive the Eucharist? How might you prepare yourself more fully?
- 3 What difference does the Eucharist make in your life? How do you become bread for others? How might you?
- 4 What do you need to work on in your spiritual life to be more attentive to the Lord? What specific actions might you take to work on those things?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer¹²

All: Father, creator, you give the world new life by your sacraments. May we, your Church, grow in your life and continue to receive your help on earth. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹² From Morning Prayer on Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 346.



WEEK FIVE: THE LIMITS OF HOPE

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 15–17

Opening Prayer¹³

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, help us to be like Christ your Son, who loved the world and died for our salvation. Inspire us by his love, guide us by his example, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions¹⁴

Leader: The Lord Jesus sanctified his people with his blood.
Let us cry out to him:

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

¹³ From Evening Prayer I of the Fifth Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 363.

¹⁴ From Evening Prayer on Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent, in *ibid.*, 382–83.

Leader: Loving Redeemer, through your passion teach us self-denial, strengthen us against evil and adversity, and increase our hope,

All: and so make us ready to celebrate your resurrection.

Leader: Grant that Christians, as your prophets, may make you known in every place,

All: and bear witness to you with living faith and hope and love.

Leader: Give your strength to all in distress,

All: and help us to raise them up through our loving concern.

Leader: Teach the faithful to see your passion in their suffering,

All: and to show to others your power to save.

Leader: Author of life, remember those who have passed from this world,

All: grant them the glory of your risen life.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 What hope are you afraid to hope? How can you offer that to Jesus, who has already gone all the way beyond the edge of hope?
- 2 How can you practice trusting the Lord more each day? What small act of trust can you make daily?
- 3 Is your word trustworthy? With whom or under what circumstances are you likely to hide what you really mean or not really mean what you say? How can you take more care with words?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer¹⁵

All: Father in heaven, the love of your Son led him to accept the suffering of the cross that his brothers might glory in new life. Change our selfishness into self-giving. Help us embrace the world you have given us, that we may transform the darkness of its pain into the life and joy of Easter. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹⁵ From Evening Prayer I of the Fifth Sunday of Lent, in *ibid.*, 364.



WEEK SIX: THE NEW BEGINNING

A GOD WHO QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 18–20 + EPILOGUE

Opening Prayer¹⁶

Leader: O God, Come to our assistance.

All: O Lord, Make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Almighty, ever-living God, you have given the human race Jesus Christ our Savior as a model of humility. He fulfilled your will by becoming man and giving his life on the cross. Help us to bear witness to you by following his example of suffering and make us worthy to share in his resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions¹⁷

Leader: Let us pray to Christ our Savior, who redeemed us by his death and resurrection:

All: Lord, have mercy on us.

¹⁶ From Evening Prayer I of Palm Sunday, in *ibid.*, 387–88.

¹⁷ From Morning Prayer on Monday of Holy Week, in *ibid.*, 394

Leader: You went up to Jerusalem to suffer and so enter into your glory,

All: bring your Church to the Passover feast of heaven.

Leader: You were lifted high on the cross and pierced by the soldier's lance,

All: heal our wounds.

Leader: You made the cross the tree of life,

All: give its fruit to those reborn in baptism.

Leader: On the cross you forgave the repentant thief,

All: forgive us our sins.

Leader: For what else shall we pray? (People may offer intentions aloud, or call them to mind silently).

Leader: Gathering all our prayers into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

Discussion Questions

The facilitator may choose—either as a regular practice or from session to session—to include paired conversations or mini-group conversations at the beginning of the discussion. It is sometimes easier for people to just talk with one other person or in a smaller group before engaging as a whole group. “Mini-groups” are 3–4 people. Paired conversations and mini-groups may focus on just a couple questions.

- 1 Do you think you are better at listening to other people or listening to the Lord? How can you strengthen the side you are weaker in?

- 2 How much of your life—including your relationships, history, virtues and vices—are you willing to allow Jesus to assume into his life? What are you willing to hand over? What are you hesitant to hand over? What have you never even thought about handing over?
- 3 To call Jesus “My Lord and my God” means placing all your trust and your hope in him. It means being willing to relativize everything else. Do you want that?
- 4 What question do you want to ask the Lord, in truth?

Personal Reflection and/or Journaling

After group conversation, allow some time for personal journaling, so each group member might remember and begin to reflect on the fruits of their reading and discussion.

Closing Prayer¹⁸

All: All-powerful and ever-living God, your only Son went down among the dead and rose again in glory. In your goodness raise up your faithful people, buried with him in baptism, to be one with him in the eternal life of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

For more resources from the McGrath Institute for Church Life, please visit mcgrath.nd.edu/resources.

¹⁸ From Morning Prayer on Holy Saturday, in *ibid.*, 421–22.

The McGrath Institute for Church Life partners with Catholic dioceses, parishes and schools to address pastoral challenges with theological depth and rigor. By connecting the Catholic intellectual life to the life of the Church, we form faithful Catholic leaders for service to the Church and the world.



mcgrath.nd.edu