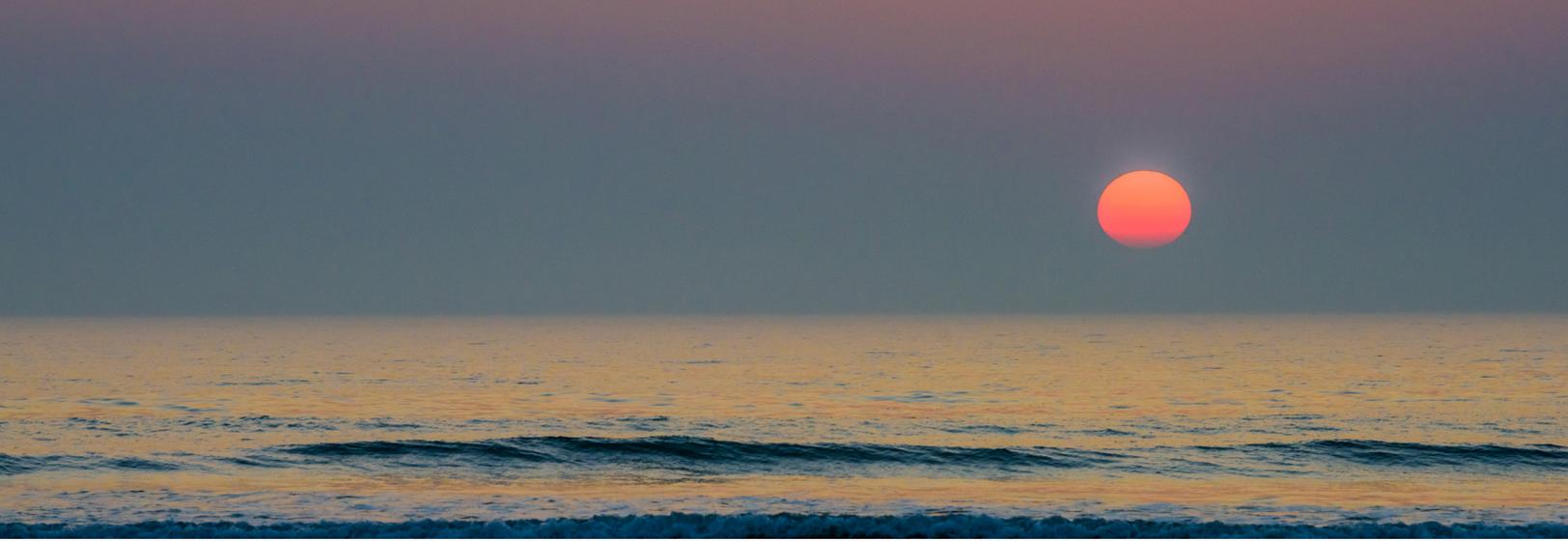


LENT GUIDE 2023

INFANTUM

World Vision



Welcome to Lent, a season of anticipation and preparation. We invite you to spend the weeks leading up to Jesus' ultimate triumph on Easter by tuning in to the heart of Jesus and considering His way, His values, and His principles in the world. When we sit at Jesus' feet as students, hope for what is to come—and for what is possible—blossoms. May this Lenten season bloom hope afresh in your heart.

This guide was created for you. We pray it's a blessing to you as you journey through the Lenten season.



Danielle Strickland
Author & World Vision partner

WATCH VIDEO

Or scan this code with your phone's camera to watch the video. >



How to use this guide

This resource is designed for you to draw closer to the heart of God during this Lenten season. It begins on Ash Wednesday and runs through Easter Sunday.

In this guide, you'll find:

- > Inspiring video interviews about hope
- > Devotional videos to guide you in a posture of prayer
- > Reflect and Respond questions to ponder with God and share with others
- > Access to an accompanying [YouVersion daily reading plan](#) so you can invite others to take in the content and grow with you
- > Daily reflections and practices for Holy Week



INTRODUCTION

Devotional

Hope. It's a word many of us use so much that we may not know what it means anymore. We hope for a certain kind of weather or we hope we do well on a test or project. This kind of hope is really no more than wishful thinking. The hope of Jesus is much deeper and more complex than that. As we take this Lenten journey together, we will analyze, reflect on, and wrestle with hope.

What does hope mean for people of faith? What does it mean for those who wrestle with doubt and despair? And what does it mean for all of us when hope seems elusive?

As we dive into this time of self-reflection, meditation, prayer, and Scripture examination, may we find our hope—our confident assurance—renewed in Jesus as we discover it in unexpected places and ways.

Read

[Romans 15:4–13 \(NLT\)](#)

Reflect

- › What verses or phrases stand out to you in the passage?
- › Verse 13 speaks of overflowing with “confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” What does the rest of the passage tell you about what living in “confident hope” looks like?

Respond

- › Based on your thoughts and actions, how would you define hope and what you put your hope in?
- › How are you called to be filled with the confident hope of the Holy Spirit in this season? Take time to pray for God's direction and guidance as you seek a Jesus-centered hope.



WEEK ONE (Wednesday through Saturday)



Surrender story

Asuntha Charles

World Vision Afghanistan, National Director

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Note: This interview took place before Afghanistan banned women from serving in nongovernmental organizations. Much of World Vision's work in the country has been placed on hold, but we are on alert and ready to resume all of our life-saving programs as soon as this ban is lifted.

Devotional

The call to endure in the faith is found throughout the New Testament. Endurance is necessary because the world is not as it should be. Heartache and hurt of all kinds are inevitable. It can be easier to surrender to the challenges of suffering instead of surrendering the challenges to Jesus.

What's the difference?

Surrendering to the challenges places us in a posture of accepting that the world is full of problems that affect us individually, communally, and globally, and there's not much we can do about it. This posture leads to despair, the opposite of hope.

On the other hand, surrendering the challenges of suffering to Jesus produces "endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Romans 5:5, ESV). This posture is honest that this world is unfair and unkind, full of disappointment and discouragement. And yet, there is hope in Jesus as we go through the pain.

Read

[Romans 5:1–5 \(ESV\)](#)

Reflect

- > Faith, hope, and love are often mentioned together in Scripture. What stands out to you about their relationship in this passage?

Respond

- > This passage lays out a progression for developing hope (endurance produces character, etc.). Where have you seen or experienced this in your life or in the lives of other people of faith?
- > Where do you need to be honest about the suffering and challenges you're experiencing so you can cultivate authentic hope?
- > How can this honesty bring you to a posture of surrender?



WEEK TWO (Sunday through Saturday)



Surrender teaching

WATCH VIDEO

Or scan this code with your phone's camera to watch the video. >



Devotional

In this week's video, Danielle shares her definition of humility, which is "agreeing with God about who He says we are." This helps us find a mature hope because we acknowledge that we need Jesus—the personification of hope.

Read

[Psalm 139:14 \(NIV\)](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:9 \(NIV\)](#)

Reflect

- > What picture do these two verses paint of the human condition?

Respond

- > Where do you struggle to "agree with God about who He says you are"?
- > How do these verses challenge you to surrender to a more honest view of yourself?



WEEK THREE (Sunday through Saturday)



Generosity story
Daniel Muvengi
*World Vision's East Africa Regional
Faith & Development Director*

WATCH VIDEO

*Or scan this code with
your phone's camera
to watch the video. >*



Devotional

One of the greatest ways to share hope is to guide others to participate in God's redemptive story. Elisha does this in the account of the widow with the jar of oil. In this encounter, a widow of one of the prophets confronts Elisha. She is desperate because a creditor is about to take her sons and sell them into slavery to pay off debts she and her late husband incurred.

The widow and her sons find hope as they watch God miraculously use their small oil jar to fill many other jars that they can then sell. God provides the resources to pay off their debts with enough extra that they have funds to live. Elisha points the widow in the right direction, and she and her sons actively participate in the restoration of their hope.

This is God's gift of generosity in perhaps its purest form—when those of us with needs (that's everyone) are given a new vision of hope to see how God can use whatever we have (skills, relationships, resources, etc.) far beyond our wildest imaginations. We can be conduits of God's power.

Read

[2 Kings 4:1–7 \(CEB\)](#)

Reflect

- > How does Elisha center the widow and her sons in the passage?
- > How do you think the widow and her sons felt as jar after jar was filled?

Respond

- > What does Elisha's example teach you about generosity and hope?



WEEK FOUR (Sunday through Saturday)



Generosity teaching

WATCH VIDEO

Or scan this code with your phone's camera to watch the video. >



Devotional

In biblical times—and in some cultures today—the inheritance passed down from one generation to the next is of great significance. In one of our earlier daily readings in YouVersion, we looked at the demand of the prodigal son for his inheritance and the expectation of his demand. In some ways, the demand of the prodigal son was also a not-so-subtle hint that he thought he was better off with his

father dead since an inheritance was usually only received when the patriarch of the family passed on.

First Peter 1 opens with a perspective that shows just how upside down the kingdom of God is. The author of our faith, Jesus, has defeated death and now gives us a living hope through His resurrection—a hope that is active and dynamic because He has conquered the grave. This living Savior has given us an inheritance through His death. It's an inheritance that is both safely in heaven for us (verse 4) and experienced here and now.

Read

[1 Peter 1:3–9 \(NET\)](#)

Reflect

- > What words or phrases stand out to you from the passage? Why are these concepts significant to you at this moment in your faith journey?

Respond

- > How does this perspective on inheritance challenge you to be more open-handed and generous?



WEEK FIVE (Sunday through Saturday)



Mission story

Sarafina Akisichab
2022 World Vision's Emerging
Leaders Award Recipient

WATCH VIDEO

Or scan this code with
your phone's camera
to watch the video. >



Listen as Sarafina answers interview questions from Danielle. The two were not able to meet live.

Devotional

One of the beautiful things about the example of Jesus is how He loves others in perfect humility and obedience to the Father. He even humbled Himself to the point of death for the benefit of others—so that all people could be saved.

As followers of Jesus, we are to have the same mindset of Christ. But having love

and humility toward others—especially those who are hard to love—can be challenging. How can you share in the same love of Jesus, so that people can see the goodness of God?

Sarafina shares that in her advocacy work, giving up is not an option. She reciprocates the love God has for her by using her voice to help vulnerable children. God has replaced her spirit of timidity with one of confidence as she boldly strives to make the world a better place for children.

This week we'll consider Jesus' example of humble but confident love as we move ever closer to His ultimate triumph at Easter.

Read

[Philippians 2:1–13 \(NIV\)](#)

Reflect

- > What stands out to you about Jesus' actions and attitudes as described in this passage?
- > We are told in this passage to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." Based on this reading, how would you describe that mindset?

Respond

- > How does Jesus' example challenge your approach to your mission and calling?



HOLY WEEK

During Holy Week, the time between Jesus' triumphal entry and Easter, we'll intentionally put our hope into embodied practices. You'll be guided to engage in some simple spiritual practices that we pray will prompt you to share the authentic hope you've found in Jesus. May this spark meaningful moments of connection between you and the risen Jesus—and with those around you.

MONDAY

Read

[2 Chronicles 16:9a \(CJB\)](#)

Reflect

Sometimes knowing where God is calling us to place our hope requires us to open our eyes to things that we have not yet seen or recognized.

Respond

Take a walk or drive through your neighborhood (whether physically or in your mind). Where do you sense God at work? Where do you see signs of despair or need? As you notice these things, lift them up in prayer.

TUESDAY

Read

[Luke 6:38 \(NIV\)](#)

Reflect

Have you ever heard of Yes Day? This is a day when parents, who are often in the habit of saying “no,” intentionally say “yes” to their kids as much as they can. It's not that parents don't have good reasons to say “no” to their kids, but sometimes that “no” comes out of habit or even a lack of imagination!

(TUES. CONT.)

Respond

Today, take the opportunity to participate in a spiritual Yes Day, even if it might be an interruption. Pray that God reveals to you an opportunity to say “yes” to sharing hope with someone in a way that you wouldn't normally. And pray that you'll see the interruption(s) in your schedule as an invitation.

WEDNESDAY

Read

[Galatians 5:22–23 \(MSG\)](#)

Reflect

For many of us, our pace of life teaches us the opposite of patience. Our goal today is to slow down so we can be more aware of opportunities to bring hope.

Respond

Think about your day. Is there a slower route you can take to work? Can you get in the longer line at the store? Is there a person you avoid talking to because the conversation often lasts longer than you think it should? Take at least one opportunity today to practice patience and see what invitations to share hope arise.

THURSDAY

Read

[Matthew 20:16 \(MSG\)](#)

Reflect

Jesus set an example of servanthood during His ministry in many ways, but one of the most dramatic examples was when He washed the disciples' feet. The job of washing feet was for the lowest servants. Jesus took on this humble role because His identity came from who His Father said He was. Likewise, our identity should come from us agreeing with what God says about us. This frees us to share hope through acts of service.

Respond

Focusing on what you could complete today specifically, what job at your home, place of work, school, or in your community is necessary but undesirable? What task or chore have you or others been avoiding? Follow Jesus' model of service and complete that task today, letting it shape your identity as God's child.

FRIDAY

[Good Friday prayer video](#)

You're invited to watch this video and pray a Good Friday prayer. We'll practice the postures of surrendering our will to God's, opening our hands to receive from the Holy Spirit and be generous to others, and dying to self.

WATCH VIDEO

SATURDAY

Read

[1 Corinthians 13 \(MSG\)](#)

Reflect

It's common for us to find ourselves listening to respond instead of listening to hear and understand. Sometimes giving people hope requires that we listen and not respond. It helps center others as they work to find hope and solutions to the challenges they're facing, and it protects us from a savior complex—thinking we have to solve all their problems.

Respond

Ask God to reveal to you someone who needs your listening ear. Make time to be present with them today. Try to minimize what you say. Ask them follow-up questions with phrases like, "Is there anything else?" or "Will you say more about ____?" Try to practice active listening: Repeat back to them what they're saying or ask clarifying questions without criticizing or providing solutions.

SUNDAY

[Easter prayer video](#)

HE IS RISEN! You're invited to watch this video and pray an Easter prayer. We'll practice the postures of surrendering what we want to be done; seeking open-handedness that sits, grieves, hopes, and stays generous; and opening our hearts and lives to the work of the resurrected Jesus in the world.

WATCH VIDEO

Thank you for joining this Lenten journey. May Jesus continue to do His work in you.

Special thanks to Asuntha Charles, Daniel Muvengi, Sarafina Akisichab, and Danielle Strickland for sharing their wisdom, and to Rebecca Guerrero for the YouVersion daily readings. We're so grateful for the ways you prepared our hearts this Lenten season.