

LEN^TEN LONGINGS

SAMPLE INVITATION TALK TO BE GIVEN ON SIGN-UP SUNDAY

Please note: This talk will be most effective if it is publicized in advance. Bulletin announcements and announcements at the end of Mass are especially helpful.

The celebrant may introduce you by saying something like the following:
“Something very exciting is happening in our parish. We are taking part in a program called *Lenten Longings* from RENEW International. I thank _____, who will tell us about *Lenten Longings* and why you will want to make being part of a small faith sharing community a part of your Lent this year.”

SPEAKERS:

- Look enthusiastic as you step up to the lectern.
- Speak with a tone of sincerity.
- Start with a story — perhaps about a Lenten tradition in your family. Your first line has to grab the congregation’s attention.
- Have with you a sample of the faith-sharing book and sign-up card when you come forward to speak.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. The more personal the talk, the better: make it your own. Don’t be afraid to use humor. Below is a sample. Share why you are part of *Lenten Longings* and/or your experience in a small Christian community in the past.
2. If you are not familiar with the microphone, practice with it ahead of time. Speak slowly and clearly. Ask someone to listen from the back of the church to make sure you are audible. Look up at the people frequently.
3. Include directions about your sign-up process. For example, where are the sign-up cards — in the pews, in back of the church? How are the cards to be returned?

4. When you introduce yourself, tell the assembly more than your name. Make a personal connection. There are two examples and a sample talk below.

Good Afternoon/morning/evening, my name is _____.

I have been a parishioner at _____ for most of my life. Many of you may recognize me as a minister of the Eucharist (or hospitality minister, or choir member, or whatever visible role you may play in the parish).

Or...

I usually attend the 10:30 a.m. Mass and sit right over there with my husband and my three boys.

Today, I am here to say a few words about a wonderful opportunity that is coming to our parish. *Lenten Longings* is a faith-sharing process for small groups to help us deepen our observance of Lent.

Have you ever found yourself feeling that another Lent slipped by while you were keeping up with the demands of your everyday life?

Have you looked back with a regret at your good intentions to take more time for prayer and find some concrete ways to observe the season?

Have you ever felt unfulfilled by time-honored practices such as “giving up” chocolate or soft drinks or TV time?

Have you ever listened to a homily about Lent as an opportunity for spiritual renewal and wondered why it didn’t seem to apply to you?

Has the arrival of Easter Sunday ever made you feel as if you missed something?

If you said “yes” to any of these questions, you are not unusual.

In fact, you may have heard friends or fellow parishioners or family members saying similar things.

Well, that's where *Lenten Longings* comes in.

This is a chance to *do something* about what we hear so much about every year.

Our parish, along with many parishes around the country, is going to use *Lenten Longings* to revive in our hearts the true spirit of the season before Easter — the spirit of anticipating the resurrection of Jesus and the new life it made possible for all of us.

Groups of eight to ten people — small Christian communities — will meet for about 90 minutes, once during each week of Lent.

Each time the group meets, there will be prayer and Scripture, faith-sharing, and an invitation to put your faith into action in your lives.

Each person in the group will have a book with the contents of the session so that you can prepare for the sessions.

Now why would you want to be a part of this process?

- Maybe you want to meet new people; that's a good reason
- Maybe you want to learn more about your faith and your God; that's good too
- Maybe you want to try to revise how you look at the world.
- Maybe you want to make the season of Lent a real part of your life rather than an idea that has no impact on you outside of Sunday Mass.
- Maybe you want to mark this Year of Faith in a special way that deepens both your spirituality and your connection to the parish community.

Whatever your reason, we want you to be part of this.

Don't miss this chance to experience Lent in a new and meaningful way.

In your pews there are sign-up cards. Most people find it easiest to sign up for the date and time that is most convenient for them.

Remember this is only for six weeks.

We will organize the groups according to when you can meet. Just fill out the cards, and put them in the basket when the hospitality ministers come around to collect them. We'll get back to you. How easy is that?

Just to summarize:

I am inviting you to accept this invitation to be either:

- A participant of a small community gathering or
- A leader or co-leader of a small community gathering

We promise to offer training and to teach you how to lead the group or maybe offer your home to host a small community gathering

On behalf of the parish staff and the other members of our parish team, I invite you to join us on this exciting journey to renew our faith, our parish community and our church.

Thank you for your attention and I can guarantee that you will not be disappointed if you sign up for *Lenten Longings*.

