



seeking:
honest questions
for deeper faith

**a discussion
guide for youth**
by Rev. Anna Strickland

introduction

The *Seeking* theme for Lent is particularly relevant to teenagers' lives as they are navigating the change from childhood to adulthood. They are seeking friendship, meaning, romance, direction, belonging, purpose, autonomy, connection, and calm within the storm of rapid physical and social changes. This guide is written with youth ages 12-18 in mind, though many of the ideas and questions could be relevant for young adults as well.

how to encourage participation

Youth can be hesitant to open up about heavier topics. Remember, they are going through an intense period of change and growth, and their social world is extremely important to them. There are many ways to make space for reflection on these topics that don't require spoken responses:

in person

- Hang large pieces of chart paper or butcher paper around the room along with printed questions, one per sheet. Play some instrumental music as youth walk around the room, answering the questions. Talk about the responses after everyone has had a chance to answer.
- For a seated activity, print questions at the top of separate sheets of paper. Give each youth a paper to start, and pass the papers around the circle, allowing youth time to answer each question.
- Have youth pair up and find a place to talk somewhere quiet in the building. Give each pair a list of questions or a broad topic to discuss and a time to return. When everyone re-gathers, ask the youth what they learned from their conversations that they would like to share. Alternatively, youth can spend time journaling instead of talking in pairs.
- Use a live polling app such as [Slido](#) to solicit anonymous responses or questions from youth. Results are updated live on the presenter's screen, which could be projected to show all the responses. This is also a great tool for anonymous responses during online discussions.

online

- Encourage youth to utilize the chat feature on Zoom, YouTube, Facebook Live, or whatever other platform you are using.
- For anonymous answers on Zoom, share your screen, presenting either a blank slide or a slide with the question and lots of empty space for annotation. In the presenter settings, turn off "Show names of annotators" so youth can type their answers as annotations on the screen anonymously. See [this help article](#) on Zoom for additional information.
- Create breakout groups on Zoom to share in pairs on a given topic or question. When everyone re-gathers, ask the youth what they learned from their conversations that they would like to share. Alternatively, youth can spend time journaling instead of talking in pairs.
- Consider utilizing asynchronous discussion avenues (such as social media platforms, GroupMe, Slack, or Discord) where questions can be posted throughout the week for youth to answer.

discussion questions

The following questions can be used as a supplement to the [Seeking devotional booklet](#) and [Seeking daily devotional cards](#) for youth in middle and high school, approximately ages 12 to 18, as more specific topics of conversation relevant to teenagers' lives. We encourage you to utilize the commentary, art, poetry, and daily devotional cards alongside these questions.

ASH WEDNESDAY

seeking: *Is this the fast that I choose?* | Isaiah 58:1-12

* **Note:** If you are using the Seeking: Lent devotional booklet, you might choose to fill out pages iii. and iv. together, either in addition to or in place of the questions below.

- In what ways do you live your faith? How does your faith impact your actions?
 - What habits, activities, or practices draw you closer to God? Where do you feel most connected to God? How often do you make time for those things?
 - What is one new thing you can do this season to seek God? How will you remember to do it?
-

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

seeking: *Who will you listen to?* Matthew 4:1-11 | Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

- Who do you follow on social media? Friends and family? Influencers? If you took the top ten people you see on your feed, do they represent the voices you want to pay most attention to? Whose point of view is missing from your feed?
 - What music do you listen to most? What are the messages that come through in the lyrics?
 - What YouTube channels do you watch the most and why? What kind of impact has that had on your life?
 - If you wanted to learn more about a current event, where would you go for information? How reliable are those sources?
 - What big decisions and hard topics have you needed advice about? Where did you turn? Who (or what) do you feel is trustworthy?
-

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

seeking: *How do we begin again?* John 3:1-17 | Genesis 12:1-4a

- What big new beginnings have you had in your life so far? (Moving, starting a new school, starting an extracurricular activity, starting a new relationship, changing names, changing styles or friend groups, etc.) How do you feel about beginnings? Are you excited? Nervous?
- Is there anything you wish you could break free from and start over fresh?
- If you could pick up and move to another place where no one knew you and you could reinvent yourself completely, who would you be? What would you change? What would you keep?
- What new things are you learning right now? How are you growing? What would you like to learn? In what ways are you seeking new growth?

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

seeking: *Will you give me a drink?* John 4:5-42 | Exodus 17:1-7

- When have you leaned on others for support? Who do you know that you can lean on for support when you need it?
 - When have you experienced God's grace through someone you didn't know?
 - When have you befriended someone you didn't really know or who was really different from you?
 - Is it easy or hard for you to open up to new people? How does it feel when other people know your deepest secrets, like Jesus knew the Samaritan woman's?
-

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

seeking: *Who sinned?* John 9:1-41

- What assumptions have people made about you? Are there any labels or reputations you feel like you'd like to shed and leave behind?
 - What assumptions have you made about someone else that ended up being totally wrong?
 - How does it feel to get an answer or explanation you weren't expecting or that didn't really satisfy you?
 - If you could ask a big question of God, knowing that you would get a true and direct answer, what would it be?
-

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

seeking: *Can these bones live?* John 11:1-45 | Ezekiel 37:1-14

- When have you felt hopeless? In what parts of your life or the world is hope hard to find?
 - What parts of your life right now feel like dry bones: broken, buried, and beyond the point of no return? How do you respond to God's question, "Can these bones live?"
 - When in your story have you found new life after things seemed hopeless?
 - Who or what gives you hope?
-

PALM / PASSION SUNDAY

seeking: *Where are you headed?* | Matthew 21:1-11

*** Note:** As most youth groups will not meet on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, you might choose some additional discussion questions from these holy days to discuss on Palm Sunday, noting that we know where Jesus is headed: to the Last Supper and the cross.

- Where do you see yourself this time next year? How about in two years? Five years?
- What goals do you have? How are you working toward them?
- Have you ever participated in a protest or march? What were you fighting for? Are there any causes you would like to protest or march for now?
- Do you believe the future is already mapped out for you, whether by God, yourself, or someone else? Or do you believe that your path is always unfolding? Which is more comforting for you to believe?

MAUNDY THURSDAY

seeking: *Will you wash my feet?* | John 13:1-17, 31b-35

- Do you find it hard or easy to be vulnerable? What helps you open up to others?
 - What is your “love language”? How do you like to receive love from others? How do you like to show love to others?
 - When in your life have you felt unconditionally loved? What does that feel like?
-

GOOD FRIDAY

seeking: *Why have you forsaken me?* | Matthew 27: 27-50

- When have you felt alone and abandoned in your life? What did you do? Where did you turn?
 - Have you ever hurt a friend like some of Jesus’ friends did—by betraying them, pretending you don’t know them, or abandoning them? How did that feel? How did you make it right?
 - Who in our society gets left out, abandoned, or pushed aside? What would solidarity with them look like?
-

EASTER SUNDAY

seeking: *Who are you looking for?* | John 20:1-18

*** Note:** *If you are using the Seeking: Lent devotional booklet, you might choose to fill out page 62 together, either in addition to or in place of the questions below.*

- Are there miracles in your life that you only recognized after the fact? What moments in your story were life-changing even though you didn’t realize it at first?
 - Who is Jesus for you?
 - What questions have been hardest to answer this season? What do you still seek answers to?
 - Where are you experiencing resurrection and new life these days? Where are you searching for signs of new life?
 - How will you keep seeking God in the weeks and months to come?
-



about the creator

Rev. Anna Strickland, Operations Support &
Content Creator of A Sanctified Art

Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a former teacher and college minister, a proud Texas Longhorn and graduate of Iliff School of Theology, a Baptist to the core ministering in ecumenical spaces, and a lover of chaos anchored by the belief that the Spirit is most active in the spaces between us.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.

