



LIVE
Lent
TOGETHER

Startup Guide

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

What is Live Lent Together?

**What if Lent were more than fish fries and giving up chocolate?
What if you could elevate your relationships and boost your prayer?
This year, lead a small group for BIG impact with your friends and neighbors.
This year, *live lent together*.**

Live Lent Together is a parish-based movement of small groups that gather around the Word of God during Lent.

- For leaders, it is a simple first step into mission through proclaiming the Gospel and helping others grow as disciples.
- For participants, it is a simple first step toward a deeper encounter with the Lord through prayer with Scripture.

Archbishop Lucas asks us to come together in small groups this Lent and break open God's Word. It is a concrete way to live the habits of prayer, compassion, friendship, and invitation featured at the 2021 Pastoral Conference. The Gather Study found on <https://archomaha.org/lent/> is the recommended next step to prepare leaders for Live Lent Together. It reveals to them the simplicity and power of gathering in small groups and praying with Scripture, so they can invite others into that experience during Lent.

Live Lent Together can help parishes build momentum in becoming missional communities. Each new small group means more leaders stepping out on mission and more people having life-changing encounters with our Lord.

There's a reason Jesus spent most of his public life teaching a small group of twelve men. ***A small group of men and women can still change the world.***

Key Benefits

Invite leaders to participate in Live Lent Together, and your parish will:

1. Equip Leaders for Mission

Live Lent Together is a practical way to participate in the call to be a missional community. The training is practical and straightforward so even first-time leaders feel confident to step into the mission. Since the focus is on shared *Lectio Divina*, Jesus does the heavy lifting through prayer.

2. Reach the Disconnected

People today feel disconnected and lonely. A small group is a way to connect people with God and others. Small groups also have unlimited flexibility to fit the demands of every person's life. Because groups can meet in homes, secular spaces, and even online, they are well-suited to engage non-Catholics.

3. Transform Hearts through the Gospel

Live Lent Together fosters transformation of the heart, not just a transfer of information. Participants experience authentic relationships through conversation and shared prayer, which disposes hearts to conversion. In prayer with Scripture, the inspired words originally spoken by God many centuries ago become living words for people today.

Designate a Point Person

While any individual leader can decide to start a small group, Live Lent Together will have a greater impact when a parish takes ownership of inviting and supporting small group leaders. Parishes should designate a point person who will oversee and champion this movement. This could be a member of the leadership team or parish staff, or a highly engaged lay leader. Point people can register here to receive ongoing help from the Parish Support Team:

https://archdioceseofomaha.formstack.com/forms/lit21_point

The role of the point person includes the following tasks:

1. Lead the communication efforts about Live Lent Together.

The point person should collaborate with other parish leaders who are involved in communicating key messages. The resources at the end of this guide can be used to invite potential small group leaders to a training event (e.g., flyer/bulletin insert, Mass announcement, Live Lent Together website).

2. Keep track of the leaders and groups for the parish.

Collect the following information to maintain ongoing communication with small group leaders:

- Contact info for all small group leaders and co-leaders
- Day and time that each group meets (this allows the point person to help participants find a group that fits them or to switch groups if needed)

3. Support the small group leaders.

The point person should make a plan for regular communication with the small group leaders. This can happen through emails, phone calls, Zoom, or even in-person meetings. The point person should check in with small group leaders to:

- Pray with them and provide encouragement along the way
- Remove practical obstacles (e.g., a leader has trouble finding a place to meet)
- Address pastoral concerns (e.g., a group member needs professional help)
- Help leaders discern next steps for their groups, since groups can continue meeting beyond Lent for ongoing community and growth

A parish should consider three audiences for promotion:

1. The parish

Any parishioner is welcome to attend a small group leader training and lead their own group for Lent. Once trained, leaders will make personal invitations to participants for their small groups.

Parishes should NOT hold a general sign-up for small group participants. This diminishes the opportunity for leaders to grow in making personal invitations, and it can lead to poor group dynamics.

2. Key parish groups

The point person should make sure that key parish groups (e.g., pastoral council, parish and school staff, ministry leaders) have heard the vision for Live Lent Together and received a personal invitation to participate. The point person needs to collaborate with other parish leaders to make this happen.

3. Individual leaders

Expect that most small group leaders will only say 'yes' if they receive a personal invitation. It is essential to sit down with other parish leaders and brainstorm a list of potential small group leaders who will be personally invited by phone or in person.

Any parish leaders who attended the Pastoral Conference or using the Gather study should be invited to a small group leader training.

Who should you invite?

Listen to the Lord

Ask the Lord who he wants you to invite. He may draw your attention to people you never would have considered. Too often, our imagination is limited to the usual suspects or to leaders who are already overcommitted. Try asking Jesus: *Who are you inviting to take a first step into mission?*

Lead with why

People respond when you give them a compelling reason. Think about the impact that you hope small groups could have in your parish. Also reflect on the why for each person you think of – ask the Lord why he brought them to your mind. Then, share that desire with them.

- What impact do you think small groups could have in your parish?
 - *Example: “I think small groups are a simple and powerful way to help more people in our parish know God’s love in a deeper way.”*
- Why would this person make a good leader?
 - *Example: “I think you should lead a small group, because you are a beautiful example of faith in Jesus Christ, and I think he wants you to grow as a missionary disciple.”*

Let them decide

Don’t say “no” for someone else. Give them the opportunity to decide, even if it seems like a long shot. If the Lord brought them to mind in prayer, then have courage in making your invitation. The worst that can happen is that they decline. But, they might say “yes” and discover a beautiful way of living out their discipleship and helping others to know the Lord.

How to invite others

Leader Training and Support

How can small group leaders get trained?

Many training opportunities will be available across the Archdiocese from late-January to early-February. Urban and rural parishes will serve as host sites where leaders from any parish in the Archdiocese can be trained. There will also be one training for Hispanic leaders and two Zoom trainings. Leaders can see the current host sites and register for a training on the Live Lent Together website:

<https://archomaha.org/lent/>

What resources should small group leaders use?

While leaders are welcome to use any any Catholic resource that is faithful to the Church, we recommend the Encounter Series *lectio* studies for several reasons:

- It provides a simple first step into mission for first-time leaders
- It spurs authentic friendships through fun weekly icebreaker questions
- It makes prayer with Scripture accessible and engaging
- It leads to deep and transformative conversations

The Encounter Series was created by the Parish Support Team, and can be downloaded for free on the Live Lent Together website.

What happens after Live Lent Together?

Many small groups will want to continue meeting beyond Lent. They can use a variety of resources to continue growing in habits of prayer, compassion, friendship, and invitation. Please see the list of additional small group resources on the Live Lent Together website: <https://archomaha.org/lent/>

Sample Timeline

2021

- Oct. 26** LLT Orientation Via Zoom
- Nov. 2** The Parish Leadership Team discerns how they will participate in LLT, decides on a point person, and makes a plan to visit with key parish groups throughout November/December.
- Nov. 2-Dec. 24** The Parish Leadership Team and point person visit with key parish groups to share a vision for LLT and invite groups to attend a small group leader training. They also brainstorm a list of other potential small group leaders whom they will personally invite.

2022

- Jan. 2** Begin several weeks of bulletin and Mass announcements that invite parishioners to a small group leader training. Set up an information table in the narthex (appropriately staffed) with flyers, promo video, and laptop(s) for registration.
- Jan. 24-Feb. 10** Small group leader training occurs at multiple host sites across the Archdiocese.
- Feb. 5** Small group leaders begin making personal invitations to join their small groups. The point person begins proactive communication with all small group leaders as they prepare to start their groups (see page 4).
- Mar. 2** Ash Wednesday – The Parish Leadership Team and point person begin planning a celebration for all small group participants after Easter.
- Mar. 2-Apr. 17** Small groups meet throughout Lent. The point person continues proactive communication with all small group leaders as they meet with their groups (see page 4).
- Apr. 17** Easter Sunday
- Apr. 24** Host a celebration for all small groups to build community, share graces, recognize first-time leaders, and offer suggestions for next steps.



LIVE *Lent* TOGETHER

Jesus started with a small group of 12 men, and he gave them a **GREAT** mission: "Go make disciples of the nations!"

That small group...*changed* the **WORLD**.

But today, we face a challenging culture, hectic lifestyles that leave people disconnected and lonely, and empty pews because less and less people hear the voice of God.

And so, **YOU** are called to step into that mission given to the first disciples. This might seem intimidating. You will need courage, **boldness** of heart, but the remedy... is simple. Basic even.

Archbishop Lucas asks you to gather in small groups this Lent. These small groups, like that first small group, will build true friendship around the **Word of God**. The words of scripture can be words *for you*, helping you see Him active in your life.

Register for a Live Lent Together training for small group leaders by going to ArchOmaha.org/Lent. We will give you the tools and the confidence to take this small but bold step.

Answer the call, and you will see great fruits **because small groups can still change the world!**

Take your first step into mission!





LIVE *Lent* TOGETHER

Jesus started with a small group of 12 men, and they *changed* the **WORLD**. Today, you are called to step into the same mission given to the apostles.

Archbishop Lucas asks you to join him and the faithful of the Archdiocese to gather in small groups this Lent. These small groups, like that first small group, will build community, true friendship around the **Word of God**.

Register for a Live Lent Together training for small group leaders by going to ArchOmaha.org/Lent. We will give you the tools and the **confidence** to take this small but *bold* step. **Because small groups can still change the world!**



Take your first step into mission!



Archdiocese *of* Omaha

Need Help?

Contact the Parish Support Team:

Andy Dejka - ajdejka@archomaha.org

Calvin Mueller - cjmueller@archomaha.org