



Lent 2019 - 40acts Generosity Challenge
A missional moment for your church

Wednesday 6th March to Saturday 21st April 2019

Church Guide

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When Stewardship launched their Lent generosity challenge, back in 2011, the idea was simple. A daily reflection throughout Lent, accompanied with a generosity challenge to complete that day. 40 days, 40 reflections, 40 simple acts of generosity.

Isn't it amazing what God can do with the simplest ideas?

Fast forward to this year and the impact and missional potential for churches that 40acts provides is clear:

Thousands of people now receive the daily emails or follow the challenge on social media;

Churches, small groups, youth groups and Christian Unions have already committed to 'do Lent generously'.

And, in recent years, hundreds of schools have joined the challenge and dedicated weeks in their term to learning about the Christian value of giving, through tailor-made assemblies, lesson plans and activities.

Hope and Stewardship have partnered together over many years and I'm thrilled to recommend 40acts as a missional moment for your church to consider in 2019.

Using the other free resources available at 40acts.org.uk, plan 40acts with your church, make the most of this incredible mission opportunity.



Roy Crowne, Hope

P.S – we love to hear what groups are doing so please keep in touch with us on social media (@40acts), or by email to 40acts@stewardship.org.uk





What is 40acts?

A Quick guide

- ★ 40acts is a generosity challenge for Lent – think of it as a daily devotional with a practical edge.
- ★ Lent 2019 starts on Wednesday 6th March.
- ★ It is 100% unashamedly Christian, with reflections provided by a wonderful mix of church and ministry leaders, writers and teachers.
- ★ The daily challenges cover an accessible range of generosity-related themes. Some days are about giving time, others about giving practical help, while some deal with generosity of our finances, our influence and much more.
- ★ Sharing and celebrating online is actively encouraged, with thousands following the #40acts feed on social media each year.
- ★ We provide additional resources for churches to complement the daily reflections. This includes notes for speakers and small group studies. All available for FREE on our website (www.40acts.org.uk)

Launching 40acts in your church

Getting everyone ready and excited!

- ➔ Plan well in advance – use the slides and other promotional templates to build some anticipation. Use our customisable leaflets and posters available for purchase/download [here](#).
- ➔ Invite the church to start praying for outreach opportunities through the 40acts challenges.
- ➔ Take a look at our suggested 7-week activity guide, plan some events, recruit some volunteers and prep your small groups.
- ➔ Contact local schools and ask if they're taking part – send them the link to the website and suggest they watch this [video](#) of a school that took part in a previous year.

Ideas and Tips

- ➔ Announce it several weeks before Lent to your congregation;
- ➔ Play our promotional films (which will be released before the beginning of 40acts);
- ➔ Use social media to create a buzz (create an online group specifically for 40acts);
- ➔ Ask your congregation to take part in the challenge as individuals and sign up for the daily emails;
- ➔ Circulate the bible study notes resources amongst group leaders and hold a pre-planning meeting so that they can get to grips with the content before Lent begins;
- ➔ Hold a launch event – this could be a special announcement in a service on the Sunday before Lent, or could be a 'stunt' on Shrove Tuesday or Ash Wednesday (we've seen churches give out free pancakes and muffins at their local railway stations before – very effective!).

'40acts has helped our church family to be more outwardly focussed and shown how simple acts of kindness can make a real difference to people's lives.'

*Simon Cromer, Head of Mission,
Cromer Church*

As well as the daily challenges and the teaching and preaching, 40acts provides the chance to be intentional about reaching out into the wider community and seizing opportunities to be generous. Here are our suggestions to make the most of Lent 2019...



LAUNCH!

Plan a pancake giveaway for Shrove Tuesday (or the Sunday before) to launch your 40acts challenge



SUNDAY 24th MARCH

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP – grab the litter picks and binliners and organise a cleanup. Pick local streets, or maybe a local park, and get it spick and span, before well deserved refreshments to celebrate your success!



SUNDAY 31st MARCH

Arrange to visit your local care home with cards and flowers for residents who don't have regular visitors



SUNDAY 7th APRIL

Arrange a lunch for the youth or the elderly at your church! Make it as creative as you can



SUNDAY 14th APRIL

Create a prayer wall at your church. Encourage passers by to write on it. Add some seating and drinks to engage passers by in conversations.

'Young people, particularly in the 20 - 40 age group are time poor, and 40acts is a brilliant way to embrace Lent in a totally different way. There has been general excitement about doing something different and nobody predicted how much fun it was going to be. I highly recommend 40acts to all church leaders.'

*John Hawkins,
Archdeacon of Hampstead*



THE BIG FINALE

ARRANGE AN EASTER EGG GIVEAWAY AFTER YOUR EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS.

Is there a local hospital you could visit for the afternoon?



Extra resources

Marketing tools available

- ★ Customisable leaflets and posters can be found on our website.
- ★ Promotional Film (will be released prior to the start of Lent)
- ★ Use our press release template to let your local media know about particularly newsworthy 40acts events that you're organising – the launch of your challenge on Shrove Tuesday could be a good place to start!

TIPS

- ★ Charge an entry fee/pancake price that will cover your set up costs and allow you to fundraise. Advertise to your congregation and flyer your local community. Put on some music for people as they mingle/eat their pancakes. Provide a 'pancake tossing' station for prizes

Social Media advice

- ★ Join our 40acts for Church Leaders Facebook Group to share the experience with other leaders. Be sure to also tell your congregation to join our 40acts group on Facebook to be inspired by other 40activists from across the world.
- ★ Ask questions and engage through social media with your congregation on a daily basis about how they are getting on.
- ★ Follow the official 40acts social media accounts and repost the challenges and conversations each day.
- ★ Ask for ideas and begin conversations about how to tackle the daily challenge.
- ★ Use the group to gather ideas for your community project, set up events and keep your congregation in the loop with progress and needs they can meet.



Maximising your 40acts experience

1 Check out and plan to use all the free resources available at 40acts.org.uk

This year's theme is 'Seize Your Opportunity' – focussing in on what the early church at the beginning of Acts can teach us about generosity.

What are the other resources?

Notes for Speakers

Outlining the biblical foundation for each of the weekly themes, this resource will help your church to engage fully with the vision of 40acts this year. Sunday services are an opportunity for the church to come together and be ignited in one vision, so why not bring your congregation together.

Small Group Studies

Small groups vary from church to church. In some churches, small group might mean a youth group, in others it may refer to groups that meet together mid-week in homes. Whatever the scenario we encourage your small groups to engage

with the challenge outside of a Sunday morning service. This resource can be read and digested by youth leaders or small group leaders and turned into a format which suits their group best.

Kids Wall Planner

This resource is aimed at the families with children in your church. 40 days is a long time and family life can get pretty hectic! This wall planner is provided to help add structure to the challenge, enabling families to teach generosity as a value in children by making it as fun and as accessible as possible.

2 Hope

Hope encourages every Christian to be intentional about making Jesus known, with something to say, something to give and in invitation offer. Check out HOPE's resources for something to give, such as the HOPE at Easter magazine or a copy of the gift book 'Who Do You Say I Am?'

3 Pray

Plan and act on the ideas for corporate acts of generosity in this guide.

4 Join us on social media

Celebrate with us, learn with us, learn from others and share your experiences on FACEBOOK, TWITTER and INSTAGRAM using #40acts

Keep in touch!

We'd love to hear what you are up to, and support you on your mission.

Be sure to connect with us by email at 40acts@stewardship.org.uk or on any of our social media channels:

Facebook/[40acts](https://www.facebook.com/40acts)

Twitter/[@40acts](https://twitter.com/@40acts)

Instagram/[@40acts](https://www.instagram.com/@40acts)

Raising awareness with local press

If you would like to inform or advertise in your local news about what you have been up to as a church in the community feel free to use the draft press release template on the 40acts website ('Extras' page) and fill in the blanks.



About Stewardship

We help people give. Since 1906 Stewardship has provided advice, guidance, inspiration and practical tools to make it easy for people to give easily and tax effectively.

Stewardship giving accounts are currently used by over 25,000 people in the UK with more than £58 million distributed to charitable causes from Stewardship accounts every year. Over 19,000 registered churches, secular and Christian charities and full-time Christian workers are currently supported with Stewardship.

Stewardship is a charity that helps people to give. If you would like to find out more about how we can help you to give then visit

www.stewardship.org.uk/give or find us at

www.facebook.com/stewardship or

www.twitter.com/stewardshipnews or

www.instagram.com/stewardshipuk