

Lenten Devotional Project Overview: Conversations in the Lectionary

Purpose

The season of Lent slows us down in ways ordinary weeks rarely allow. This devotional project gives our congregation a simple way to sit with Scripture before we gather on Sundays. Each episode offers a short conversation around one of the lectionary readings and helps people pay closer attention to how the text speaks into real life. The goal is to create a steady pattern that invites people into Scripture with curiosity and a sense of shared discovery.

Format

Each week features three episodes released on a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule.

- Monday focuses on the Old Testament text.
- Wednesday focuses on the New Testament text.
- Friday focuses on the Gospel text.

Episodes will run as a dialogue between Woods and Sarah, with a guest joining them each week to broaden the conversation and bring a fresh lens. Guests include clergy from the surrounding area.

Content Deliverables

- Video podcast recording
- Edited audio version
- Transcript
- Study questions for further reflection

All content will be housed on the church website and podcast feed, and shared through our weekly email and social platforms.

Release Schedule

Below is the full outline of Scriptures, leaders, guests, and psalter selections for the season.

	Scripture	Psalter/Prayer	Lead	Guest
2-18-26	Romans 5:12-19		Woods	
2-20-26	Matthew 4:1-11		Sarah	
2-23-26	Genesis 12:1-4a	Psalms 121	Woods	Gillian
2-25-26	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17		Sarah	Gillian
2-27-26	John 3:1-17		Woods	Gillian
3-2-26	Exodus 17:1-7	Psalms 95	Sarah	Micah
3-4-26	Romans 5:1-11		Woods	Micah
3-6-26	John 4:5-42		Sarah	Micah
3-9-26	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Psalms 23	Woods	Kristen
3-11-26	Ephesians 5:8-14		Sarah	Kristen
3-13-26	John 9:1-41		Woods	Kristen
3-16-26	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalms 130	Sarah	Michael
3-18-26	Romans 8:6-11		Woods	Michael
3-20-26	John 11:1-45		Sarah	Michael
3-23-26	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29	Woods	Jennifer
3-25-26	Philippians 2:5-11		Sarah	Jennifer
3-27-26	Matthew 21:1-11		Woods	Jennifer
3-30-26	Isaiah 42:1-9, Hebrews 9:11-15, John 12:1-11		Sarah	Mike
3-31-26	Isaiah 49:1-7, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, John 12:20-36		Woods	Mike
4-1-26	Isaiah 50:4-9a, Hebrews 12:1-3, John 13:21-32		Sarah	Mike
4-2-26	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35		Woods	Mike
4-3-26	Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Hebrews 10:16-25, John 18:1-19:42	Psalms 22	Sarah	Mike

Communication Plan

Primary Goals

- Equip the congregation with a clear Lenten devotional rhythm.
- Encourage weekly engagement through a mix of video, audio, and guided study tools.
- Offer multiple perspectives on each text.

Target Channels

- Church website
- Weekly Spanish Fort Spotlight & Pastor's Note emails
- Social media (Instagram, Facebook)
- App push notifications

Timeline

Two weeks before Lent (Feb 2–9):

- Announce the devotional series in worship.
- Add landing page to website.
- Release trailer video featuring Woods, Sarah, and a few guests.
- Post-series schedule graphic on social media.

Week before Lent:

- Pastor's Note feature article introducing the format.
- Social posts highlighting the guests.
- Invite small groups and Sunday school classes to adopt the series for Lent.

Weekly Rhythm During Lent:

Monday morning:

- Release OT episode and study sheet.
- Email reminder with link to transcript and reflection questions.

Wednesday morning:

- Release NT episode.
- Social media clip or quote from the conversation.

Friday morning:

- Release Gospel episode.
- “Weekend reflection” email or social post with a key question to carry into Sunday.

Holy Week:

- Special communication noting the multi-text days (3.30, 3.31, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3).
- Encourage deeper engagement as preparation for Easter.

Post-Easter:

- Send a feedback survey.
- Thank participants and guests.
- Evaluate whether this format should continue for another season.

Podcast Episode Format

Episode Length:

20-30 minutes (tight enough to keep attention, long enough for depth)

EPISODE OUTLINE

1. Opening (2 minutes)

Set the tone without dragging.

- Brief welcome from either Woods or Sarah
- Quick introduction of the guest
- State the passage for the day and a single guiding question
You're not trying to summarize everything, only giving listeners a handhold.

Example:

"Today we're sitting with Exodus 17, a moment full of frustration and need. The question we're circling is simple: what do people reach for when they feel stuck?"

2. Scripture Orientation (3 minutes)

Not a full reading. More like grounding the room.

- A short overview of the text
- One detail that matters in its original setting
- A moment or line that stands out

Think of this section as clearing a small space for the conversation to live inside.

3. First Pass Reactions (5 minutes)

Let each person respond to the text before the deeper work begins.

- What caught your attention
- What surprised you
- Where you felt resistance
- A detail you never noticed until now

This section works best when it feels unscripted. Listeners want to feel the honesty of real engagement rather than a polished commentary.

4. Deep Exploration (8–12 minutes)

This is the core of the episode. Give it room to breathe, but keep it structured so the energy never dips. You can divide it into loose segments that act like touchpoints.

A. The Context

One helpful insight about culture, translation, setting, audience, or narrative structure. One thing. Not a lecture.

B. The Tension

Every good text has a hinge or a pressure point. This is where the story starts to say something that isn't obvious.

C. The Bridge to Real Life

Move from interpretation toward lived experience. A story is helpful here. Humor works. So does vulnerability. Listeners want to hear how this passage meets actual faith and ordinary days.

Each of these mini-sections can run 2–3 minutes, creating a rich but steady pace.

5. Reflection and Practice (4–6 minutes)

Prompts that work well:

- What part of this text stays with you
- Where this story exposes something in you
- One question you hope people will sit with
- One concrete step that fits the arc of the passage

This is where the episode takes on pastoral weight, but in a gentle and grounded manner.

6. Closing (1 minute)

End cleanly.

- Thank the guest
- Point listeners to transcripts and study questions
- Preview the upcoming episode with a single sentence

Strategies to Keep 20–30 Minute Episodes Engaging

Hold to one guiding question.

It keeps the conversation from drifting and gives listeners a sense of direction.

Rotate who leads which segment.

Variety keeps the rhythm alive.

Use the guest intentionally.

Don't treat them as window dressing. Let their viewpoint shape the middle section.

Shift tone gradually across the episode.

Open with curiosity, move toward depth, settle into reflection.

That arc keeps people listening.

Keep theological depth tied to concrete examples.

Avoid abstraction. Tie insights to real experiences, community life, small pastoral moments, stories, or images.

Close before the energy fades.

Listeners appreciate a thoughtful landing rather than an extended wrap-up.