**Forty**

**If you need more evidence that 40 sounds like a lot please see the standard American workweek: 40 hours.**

**Forty is the maximum number of players a Major League Baseball team can sign to its roster at once.**

**When the bubonic plague gripped Europe during the Middle Ages, ships would be isolated in harbor for 40 days before passengers could go ashore. The Italian word for 40 is quaranta -- hence quarantine.**

**In literature, 40 is the number of thieves Ali Baba clashes with in Arabian Nights.**

**There are 40 spaces on a standard Monopoly board. Proving that life is a gamble, the game gives players equal odds (one in 40) of going directly to jail or winning the Free Parking lottery.**

**Forty is the only number in English whose letters appear in alphabetical order.**

**Forget "nine months"; a typical pregnancy actually lasts 40 weeks.**

**In religion, 40 seems to be shorthand for "a long time." Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness being tempted by the devil; the great flood lasted 40 days and 40 nights, the Jewish people wandered the desert for 40 years.**

**Minus 40 degrees, or "40 below," is the only temperature that is the same in both Fahrenheit and Celsius.**

**It took chemists 40 attempts to develop the magical spray we know as ... wait for it ... WD40 (full name: Water Displacement, 40th formula).**

**Also, 40 is the number of winks Dr. William Kitchiner suggests taking for a perfect nap.**

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***(Brandon Specktor, in the November, 2015 issue of Reader's Digest, on page 144)***

***(Sources: todayifoundit.com, npr.org, dicegames.org, mlbdailydish.com, babycenter.com, wd40.com, brittanica.com, gutenberg.net, and dol.gov)***

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**This annual season of fasting, prayer and penitence has been observed by the western church since the first century after Christ, although it has not always been forty days long. *(Charles Fillmore, in Keep A True Lent, p. 138)***

**Lent is a church institution, and there is no authority for it anywhere in the New Testament. The idea, however, has a sound spiritual basis; Moses, Elijah, and Jesus Himself set a precedent for it. Each observed a forty-day period of prayer and fasting as a preparation for spiritual work. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai at the conclusion of his fast. Elijah talked with God on Mount Horeb at the conclusion of his period of prayer and fasting. Jesus began His great spiritual ministry at the close of His fast in the wilderness. *(Georgiana Tree West)***

**The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday from the custom that prevailed in the early Church of sprinkling ashes on the heads of penitents on the first day of Lent, in token of repentance for sin. Ash Wednesday comes forty-six days before Easter. There are six Sundays in Lent, and they are not considered part of Lent, because in the Western church Sunday is always a feast day. The forty week-days following Ash Wednesday constitute Lent. *(Charles Fillmore, in Keep A True Lent, p. 138)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The number “forty” in the Bible is symbolic of the time necessary to complete a certain task. *(Frank Giudici, in An Overview of the Old Testament)***

**The ancient Hebrew writers made a practice of using numbers to symbolize ideas. Forty, in their minds, was a “foursquare” number, suggesting the idea of a foundation for something to follow; an idea of completeness. So the number forty is frequently used in the Scriptures to indicate a completed preparation for something to follow. When we consider Lent as a well-rounded or “completed” season of retreat from the things of the world for the cleansing of the mind and the recollection of the things of Spirit, it becomes a true season of preparation for the Eastertide; a preparation for the resurrection of the mind from the darkness of its sins, doubts, and false beliefs into the light of understanding. *(Georgiana Tree West)***

**The period of time mentioned as “forty days” may refer to an actual calendar period, or (as seems more likely) it may be an approximate statement, equivalent to our term “about a month.” However, it is interesting and instructive to note how this word “forty” (days or years) appears again and again in Scripture. In most instances the word “forty” indicates “a period time necessary to complete the work that is being undertaken.” *(Dr. Herbert J. Hunt, in A Study of the New Testament, p. 17)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The word “quarantine” comes from the Venetian Italian quadranta giorni, meaning “forty days.” This is the length of time that ships were required to stay in a harbor before coming ashore during the Black Death. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 239)***

**After a talking sheepdog gets all the sheep in the pen, he reports back to the farmer: "All 40 accounted for." "But I only have 36 sheep," says the farmer. "I know," says the sheepdog. "But I rounded them up." *(Norie Bloom, in Reader's Digest)***

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