

Ash Wednesday

17th February, 2021

(a) Family Prayer Service

(b) Resources and Ideas for Lent

Family Prayer Service

Leader: We begin by lighting our candle. Our candle reminds us that God is with us. We pray in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Today we begin the season of Lent. This is a special time when we are getting ready to celebrate Easter. During Lent many people 'give up' things or 'turn away' from things that they do too much of. For example, too much eating, too much TV or time playing computer games. Lent is a time for turning away from things that distract us from God. It is a time for drawing closer to God.

Reading from Scripture:

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew (6:1 – 6, 16 – 18)

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your

alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Gospel of the Lord

Black ribbon or card:

- Normally we would be able to use ashes to make the sign of the cross on our foreheads and this reminds us that we want to draw closer to God during Lent. This year, because of the pandemic, we can't do that. However, we will now put on our black ribbon/card/T shirt and it can also remind us of trying to get closer to God during this Lent. **(See 'Resources and Ideas for Lent' below)**

Lenten Promises:

- We now place our Lenten promises in our sacred space and this can help us to remember what we are trying to do this Lent. **(See 'Resources and Ideas for Lent' below)**

Loving God,
These are our promises for Lent.
We know that you hear us and care for us.
Help us during this Lenten time to grow in love
For you and for others. We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Prayers:

1. Loving God, you invite us to be close to you. May we try to find quiet time to pray to you just like Jesus did. May we listen to you in our hearts during this special time of Lent. God of Love, turn our hearts to you.

Response: God of Love, turn our hearts to you

2. Loving God, you want us to care for our friends. Help us to be kind to those around us during this special time of Lent. God of Love, turn our hearts to you.

Response: God of Love, turn our hearts to you

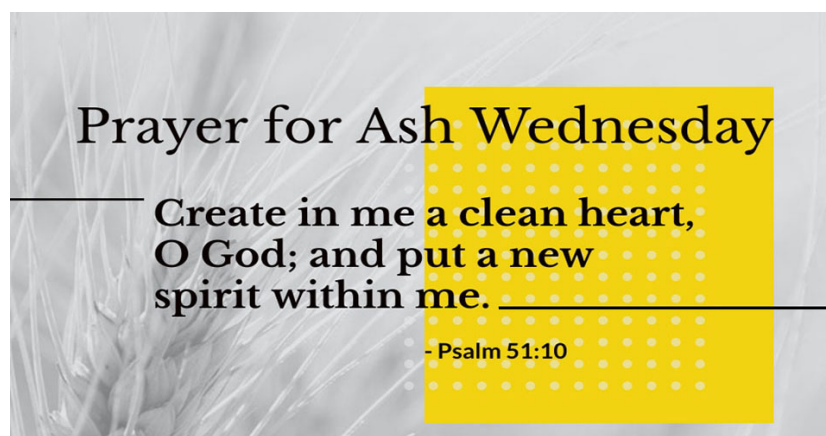
3. Loving God, you want us to be unselfish and not to be greedy. Help us to be generous in our giving and sharing during this special time of Lent especially to those who are in need. God of Love, turn our hearts to you.

Response: God of Love, turn our hearts to you

4. Loving God, you want us to be healthy and well. Help us to remember all the people in our world who are sick at the moment because of Covid. We pray that soon we will be able to play with our friends and get back to school.

Response: God of Love, turn our hearts to you

Concluding Prayer:



Blow out Candle

Resources and Ideas for Lent

- In the same way that decorating for Christmas and Easter helps us to remember what we're celebrating, adding items to our home that remind us of our Lenten journey helps us focus on what Lent is about.
- Consider setting up a **prayer space in your home** – perhaps in the kitchen or another prominent place. Consider engaging the children in setting this up as this is a good way to get across what Lent is all about. This will prompt you to think and pray about Lent each day. In the prayer space you could include:
 - **A purple cloth or scarf.** Purple is the liturgical colour used by the church during Lent and it reminds us that this is a time of prayer, fasting and doing good deeds for others
 - **A candle – real or battery.** This reminds us that Jesus is present with us as we pray during Lent.
 - **A bowl or vase containing sand.** This reminds us that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert during his life
 - **A Bible or Prayer Book.** This reminds us that during Lent we are trying to get to know Jesus better and we will read about him in the Scriptures. If you don't have a Bible then use the children's religion book instead. They will make the link that this is a special book.
 - **A crucifix or cross.** This will help us to focus on the death of Jesus which we will remember during Holy Week at the end of Lent.
 - **As Lent progresses you can add palms closer to Palm Sunday.** Remember be creative – use whatever you think will help keep your family focused on Lent this year.



Ash Wednesday:

Ashes:

- Traditionally we have the sign of the cross marked on our foreheads with ashes. This year that is not possible. However, it may be helpful to have some tangible sign of a black cross for Ash Wednesday.
- You could use black ribbon or card or card and form it into a small cross and wear it on Ash Wednesday. Alternatively, you could just draw a black cross and get the children to colour it in and place it in your prayer space for the day.
- You could ask everyone in the family to wear something black and use this as a way of explaining that this is a serious time where we remember important events in the life of Jesus.
- Have everyone in the family write down one thing that they promise to try to do during Lent... give up sweets, take up saying a prayer each day, etc.
- You might also consider making a purple symbol or cross that can be worn during the rest of Lent.



My name is _____

THE MEANING OF LENT



On Ash Wednesday we receive ashes to remind us that in Lent we walk with Jesus to Jerusalem, where He will suffer and die for us, and where He will rise from the dead.

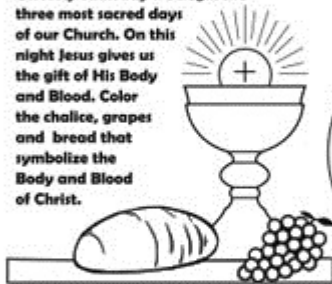
Color the children and fill in the crosses on their foreheads to show how we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.



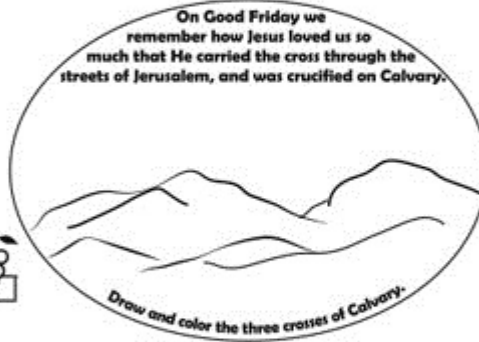
On Palm Sunday we enter Jerusalem with Jesus, seated on a donkey, who comes not as a proud king, but as the Prince of Peace.

Draw and color Jesus on a donkey as He rides into Jerusalem.

On Holy Thursday we begin the three most sacred days of our Church. On this night Jesus gives us the gift of His Body and Blood. Color the chalice, grapes and bread that symbolize the Body and Blood of Christ.

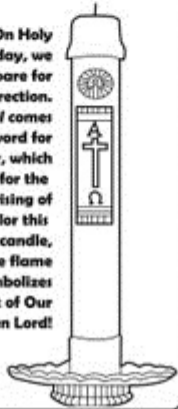


On Good Friday we remember how Jesus loved us so much that He carried the cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and was crucified on Calvary.

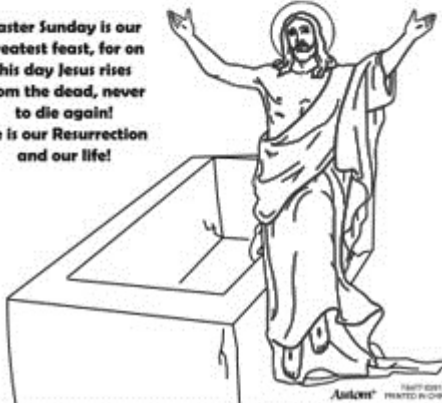


Draw and color the three crosses of Calvary.

On Holy Saturday, we prepare for the Resurrection. *Paschal* comes from the word for Passover, which stands for the dying and rising of Jesus. Color this Paschal candle, and add the flame which symbolizes the light of Our Risen Lord!



Easter Sunday is our greatest feast, for on this day Jesus rises from the dead, never to die again! He is our Resurrection and our life!



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