Ash Wednesday

Become God’s Friend



 Wednesday 17th February 2021

Family Prayer Service

**Ash Wednesday**





**Prayer Space:**

* There will be a prayer table to provide a focal point where we will gather.

The Prayer table:

* Purple Cloth, School/Family/Children’s Bible, Cross made from card, Candle, Trócaire Box
* Have children place the objects in the Sacred Space

**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.

**INTRODUCTION:**

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.

The cross of ashes that I will place on your forehead on this special day is a sign for everyone to see that you are willing to change the way you live and be the kind of person that Jesus asks us to be, people who believe and live the Good News.

During Lent we are asked to make a special effort to be people of the Good News. We are asked to fast, pray and give to help people who are not as lucky as we are.

In our prayer today we ask God to help us to make this Lent a holy time when we remember that we are loved by God and asked to share that love with others.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Dear God, you love us always and we are made in your image. Sometimes we turn away from your love but we know you are always with us. **Amen**

**SACRED SPACE:**

As we begin our Lenten journey we place this candle in our Sacred Space. The light of this candle helps us to remember that God is always with us.

We place our Bible in our Sacred Space. The stories we read in this book help us to live the Good News of God’s love for us every day.

Now we place this cross in our Sacred Space, which reminds us that God sent his only Son, Jesus, to live and to die on the cross so that we might know how much he loves us.

Finally we place our Trócaire Box in our Sacred Space. This reminds us that Jesus always wants us to help those who are not as lucky as we but we are asked to do this especially during Lent.

**Reading from Scripture**

*A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians*

Do not use harmful words,

but only helpful words,

the kind that build up

and provide what is needed,

so that what you say

will do good to those who hear you.

And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad;

for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you,

a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free.

Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger.

No more shouting or insults,

no more hateful feelings of any sort.

Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another,

and forgive one another,

as God has forgiven you through Christ.

Since you are God's dear children,

you must try to be like him.

Your life must be controlled by love,

just as Christ loved us

and gave his life for us as

a sweet-smelling offering

and sacrifice that pleases God.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**BLESSING ON FOREHEAD**

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 make the sign of the cross on our forehead

**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. (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.)

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**

**Words from Pope Francis for Ash Wednesday**

**Fasting**

Fast from hurtful words and speak kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

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