

Ash Wednesday and the Distribution of Ashes

Needed:

A purple cloth, bible, candle, taper, matches, blessed ashes

For the rucksack: (1) Bible (2) Children's resolutions (3) Socks and a fleece (4) A cross (5) Bottle of water (6) Trocaire box.

For the Giving Tree a large bare branch set in a pot of sand along with the correct number of labels for the class hanging on the tree.

Sacred Space:

Place a purple cloth in the centre. On it place a candle, a bible, a bowl of blessed ashes, and the Giving Tree with suggestions for giving during Lent. During the service six students will place items in the rucksack that will help them on the Lenten journey.

Opening Prayer

God our Father, you guide and direct us on our journey through life.

Be with us as we begin our Lenten journey of faith and love.

Help us to grow closer to you during this special holy season.

Help us to do your will each day during Lent.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Reading: Isaiah 58: 6-8

A reading from the book of Isaiah

“The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the burden of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives. Then my favour will shine on you like the morning sun.”

The word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Gospel: Mark 1: 14-15

A reading from the gospel according to Mark

Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. “The right time has come, he said, and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from sin and believe the Good News.”

The gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

DISTRIBUTION OF BLESSED ASHES

Prayer:

May the ashes remind us of God's invitation to us to repent from sin and to follow him.

The ashes are placed on the forehead of each person in the sign of a cross - saying

“Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Person 1:

Lord, we pray that church leaders will show us the way to repentance and reconciliation by their example.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Person 2:

Lord, we pray that our little acts of self-denial will help us to unite with the suffering of others.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Person 3:

Lord, we pray that we will grow in concern and care for those in need in our communities.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

THE LENTEN JOURNEY

Student 1

As we begin our Lenten journey we place a **bible** in the rucksack. The bible is our map showing us the way to live and love like Jesus. We pray that the gospel values will inspire and guide us.

Student 2

We place in the rucksack our **Lenten resolutions**, promises we have made, promises we wish to keep as a sign of our love and warm friendship for Jesus. We pray that we will keep our Lenten commitments.

Student 3

As we embark on our Lenten journey we pack a **change of clothes** (*socks and a fleece*). Lent is a time of transformation when we cast off any sinful ways, and put on the attitude of goodness and love. We pray that we will change our ways so as to become more like Jesus.

Student 4

As we begin our Lenten journey we pack a **cross**. It is our compass which points in all four directions. The vertical reminds us of our relationship with God. The horizontal reminds us of our relationship with people. We pray that we will grow closer to God and others.

Student 5

Lent is a desert time - a time of fasting, a time of struggle. We need God's strength supporting us to keep our promises. We place a **bottle of water** in the rucksack to remind us of God's blessing during these special days. We pray for the strength to fast this Lent.

Student 6

We place a **Trocaire box** in the rucksack, a sign of our commitment to share a little of our money with those who are in need – of homes, food, clothing and education. We pray that we will be generous in spirit.

Student 7

We hope to change our ways so as to become more like Jesus.

OPTIONAL

THE GIVING TREE

Encourage caring for others during Lent with a Giving Tree. Link up with Trocaire, Children helping Children or Bothair. The experience of thinking of others and giving to others and praying for others is what matters most.

Hang labels on the Giving Tree with what is required written on them e.g. medicine 2 euro, food 50 cent, shoes 50 cent, eye care 2 euro, dental care 2 euro, school-books 50 cent, a blanket 1 euro, a coat 50 cent, a jumper 30 cent, socks 10 cent, a fleece 50 cent, a lunch 10 cent, a dinner for my family 40 cent, a baby grow 20 cent, a cot 1 euro, a baby's bottle 10 cent, nappies 10 cent...etc

Each child is invited to take a label from the giving tree and to respond to it over the 6 weeks of Lent.

Closing Prayer:

God, source of life, you know our desires and our weakness.
Renew our hearts and our lives that we may live as your people.
Help us to reach out to others and to share your love with all people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn