

Ash Wednesday

For the church family at home

Ash Wednesday is a special day in the Christian Church in which we remember the ways in which we have not got things quite right with God and say sorry for those things in a time of prayerful repentance. It is wonderful that you want to take part in this time of reflection and you are very welcome to use the following words and actions to help you to mark this day.

Before you begin you will need to gather the following items:

- *Some paper and a pen*
- *Something to burn the paper in outside such as a metal baking tin or a barbecue*
- *Matches or a lighter*
- *Some vegetable oil (preferably olive)*
- *A vessel of water in case you need to extinguish the flames quickly*

Where the text appears in red it is telling you what to do next

Where the text appears in black one person reads aloud on behalf of everyone

Where the text appears in bold black everyone joins in together

Everyone gathers together and spends a moment in silence before saying the following

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Amen

A brief period of silence is kept before the prayer for the day, The Collect, is prayed

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

We keep a period of silent reflection on our sins, those things we have not got right in our lives, and write them down on the paper.

If not already outside, everyone moves outdoors, each person places their paper in their metal vessel and a responsible adult carefully sets fire to them.

Everyone says together

**Make our hearts clean, O God;
and renew a right spirit within us.**

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

**We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.**

You may then like to mark each other with the sign of the cross using the ashes. Mix a little oil with the ashes to make a paste and make the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads saying

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

After a moment of silence, everyone says together:

**May the Lord enrich us with his grace,
and nourish us with his blessing;
the Lord defend us in trouble and keep us from all evil;
the Lord accept our prayers,
and absolve us from our offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
Amen.**