

Ash Wednesday

A gentle beginning on the journey back to God

Ages about 7-11 | Video 2:23 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Ash Wednesday begins Lent with a sign of ashes and an invitation to return to God through prayer, penance, and giving.

Learning goals Explain the ashes as a sign of human need for God; identify Lent's three practices; and choose one safe response to God's love.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online [Open this video on Servus Dei](#)

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask how someone begins again after losing their way. Watch for the sign and three practices that help us return to God.

Watch and notice

Notice the cross of ashes, God's invitation to return with our whole heart, and the three paths of prayer, fasting, and giving.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What sign begins the reflection?

A cross of ashes on the forehead. It reminds us that our lives come from God and that we need him.

2. Is Lent a way to make God start loving us?

No. The reflection says his love comes first. Lent helps us respond to it and begin again.

3. What three practices does the Church offer?

Prayer, fasting or suitable penance, and giving to those in need. Children's practices should follow adult and Church guidance.

4. What small return to God could you choose?

A brief prayer, a charitable action, or a break from an optional distraction to make room for love. Do not restrict food for this activity.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Ash Wednesday

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw the cross of ashes as a sign of returning to God. Then draw one safe act of prayer or sharing for Lent. Accept an oral explanation.

Read & Write Recall the story, explain its central teaching, then apply it through a specific choice.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: draw or dictate answers; revisit the named story moment together.

Ages 9-11: explain the connection between the story detail and the planned response.

Three paths back to God | Optional 4 minutes

Draw three paths leading toward a heart labeled God's love. Name them Prayer, Penance, and Giving. On each place one safe action. Choose one to begin today. Practice the story's hand-on-heart prayer if comfortable, or simply pray without the gesture.

Look for understanding Look for the named story details in the answers and a practical response connected to lent, conversion, and god's welcome.

Closing prayer Jesus, bring us back to you. Help us pray, share, and make room for your love. Amen.

At home Choose your first step with an adult and pray for someone in need.

Handout answer notes Prayer, fasting or suitable penance, and almsgiving. God's love comes first. Accept a safe, age-appropriate action of prayer, generosity, or reduced distraction.

Teach with care

Provide paper and pencils. Preview the video and invite children to ask questions or pass. The reflection mentions mortality and fasting. Offer calm explanations and choose age-appropriate prayer and charity instead of food restriction. Ashes are a sacramental sign, not a threat or a requirement to describe personal sins publicly. Ages 7-11 are not bound to adult fasting rules. Do not assign food restriction; use prayer, charity, and adult-guided practices.

Words to explain Lent: a season of preparing for Easter. Conversion: turning our hearts toward God. Almsgiving: sharing with people in need.

Sources for the leader

Story source: [Servus Dei video and English transcript](#)

Background: [USCCB: the season of Lent](#)

Background: [USCCB: information on fasting](#)

Beginning again with love

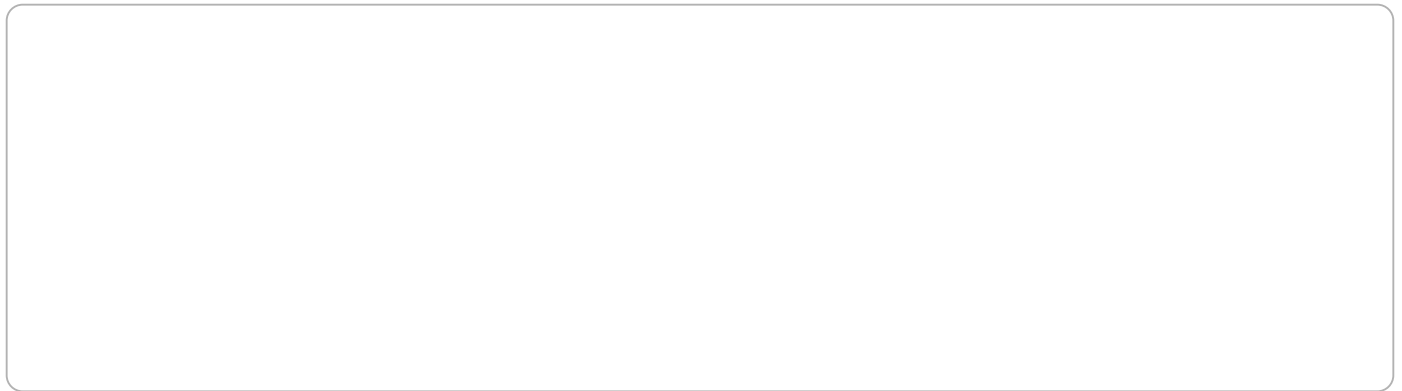
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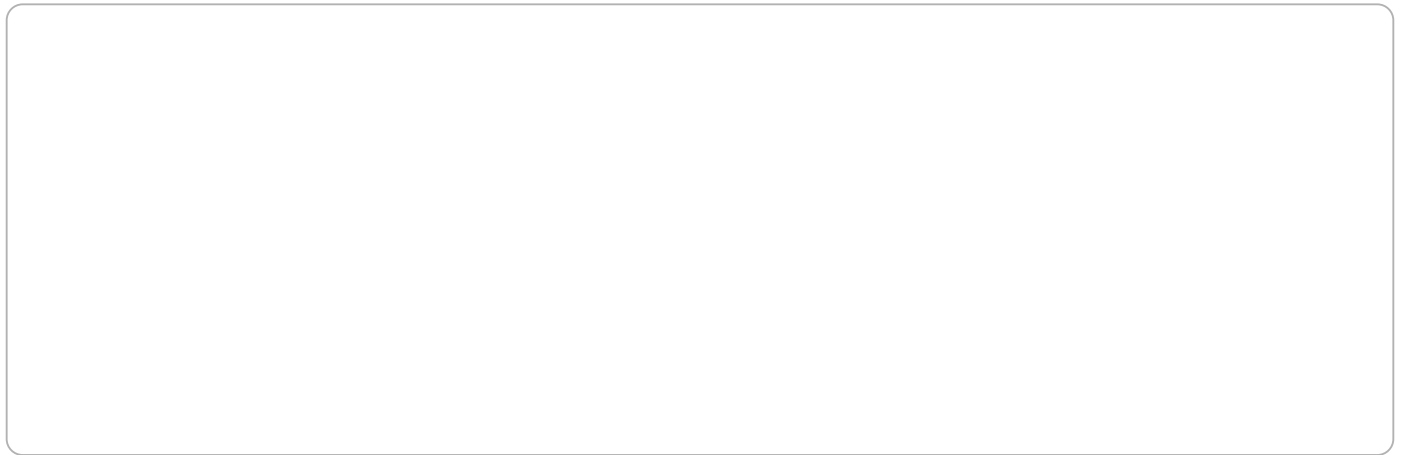
Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

1 Draw the cross of ashes as a sign of returning to God.



2 Draw one safe act of prayer or sharing for Lent.



Tell What do ashes remind us of? How does your action respond to God's love?

Pray Jesus, bring us back to you. Help us pray, share, and make room for your love. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

A whole heart for Lent

Ash Wednesday

A gentle beginning on the journey back to God. Remember, explain, and respond.

Name _____

1 Remember

Name the three Lenten practices.

The three paths are ...

2 Explain

Why do we begin again with God?

God already ...

3 Respond

Choose a safe first step for Lent.

Today I can ...

Pray Jesus, bring us back to you. Help us pray, share, and make room for your love. Amen.

Go deeper Why might beginning again be hopeful rather than shameful?