

ASH WEDNESDAY

Our family
at home
the week before Lent begins
can look at
what
Ash Wednesday offers.

Maybe
we will consider
doing these activities
over several evenings.

Maybe we will select
just a few activities
to do on
Ash Wednesday.

We can decide.



LET'S BEGIN

Gathered:
Us and God



LET'S PRAY

Together:
Us and God



LET'S CHECK IN

How did
your day go?



BIBLE STORY

Clues for our decisions



LET'S CHOOSE

Activities
that work for us



CLOSING PRAYER

Until next time: Bye!

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who settest the solitary in families:
We commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell.

Book of Common Prayer, page 828.



To Go

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Scripture References: The New Revised Standard Version Bible published by the
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Ash Wednesday



LET'S BEGIN: We explore what it means for a Wednesday to be named Ash Wednesday.



LET'S PRAY: Help us, God, to take a break from our busyness and listen for you in our lives. Amen.



LET'S CHECK IN: We can each tell what we think of when we hear the words: "star dust."



BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: PAGE 265. Read the prayer, or tell it like this: If we go to church on Ash Wednesday, the priest will remind us, as ashes are placed on our forehead, that we have been created out of dust -- star dust -- and will return to dust. (The priest will use ashes from burning last year's Palm Sunday palm branches).

WONDERING TOGETHER: How does it make us feel to think of ourselves as recycled stars?



LET'S CHOOSE: We can decide which activities work for us.



STAR DUST: Take a piece of dark construction paper and coat it with a glue stick. Blow some dust onto the paper to have a Star Dust Picture. Our Star Dust Picture can sit on our table when we eat.



LENT BEGINS TODAY: We could look up the word Lent in a dictionary or describe it this way: the days are getting longer; Lent offers time to look at our priorities -- as Jesus did when he went into the wilderness.



GIVING UP/TAKING ON: Lent invites us to consider some changes. We could begin to think about the things that are wasting our time and our money. What could we do with the time and money we would save?



CARING FOR OTHERS ALSO MADE OF STAR DUST: How could we help other star dust people who have less than we have? Maybe our church has a project we could help with -- or maybe we can check the Internet for a place we could help and begin to collect coins. Is there someone we know who could use our help: maybe starting a vegetable garden?



CARING FOR THE STAR DUST ON OUR PLANET: We can consider things we could do for our planet. Could we find out how to compost (if we are not already doing it)? Are there some ways we could use less energy, less water?



LENT GRACE FOR MEALS: We could create a new prayer to say before our meals. What would we ask God's help to do? What are we noticing that makes us want to say thank you to God?



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE: Since God already knows what we will pray for, why do we tell God about it anyway?



CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, God, for the many ways you show us to use our star dust. Amen.

UNIT ONE

Some things that may help

Bible
Book of Common Prayer

construction paper:
black or a dark color
glue stick
dust

a dictionary



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Ash Wednesday



LET'S BEGIN: We can consider some ways our family could get ready to keep a Holy Lent.



LET'S PRAY: Help us, God, to explore the place you have for us in your huge universe.



LET'S CHECK IN: We can each tell an amazing thing we have noticed.



BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 6:1-6. Read it, or tell it like this: When you give away things, don't act stuck up and make a big deal out of it. Instead, quietly slip your gift to the person or group. Then it's your secret -- with God.

WONDERING TOGETHER: Why might "sneaky" be a good word to use in this situation?



LET'S CHOOSE: We can decide which activities work for us.



OUR GRATITUDE BOX: We can find a container that has a lid and use gift wrap or construction paper to decorate it. We can cut a slit in the lid. When the box is ready, we can set it in a prominent place. Then when something happens that makes our hearts glad, we can find a time when no one is looking and drop in a few coins. On Easter, we can open the box and give the coins to the group we have chosen to help.



A HOLY LENT: We can decide what a Holy Lent will look like at our house: what are the things we are doing that we want to keep on doing and what stuff might we want to change? We can think about where we will send our coins. Maybe we will look at more Bible stories and spend less time with TV or video games.



FRIDGE POSTER: We can create a poster to go on our refrigerator or some other place we choose. We can draw circles to represent people who will receive our prayers. We can put their names in the circles, or draw their faces. Each circle could be "dusted" with star dust. (Dust we find in our house.)



LENT AS PREPARATION: The early church brought new people into their community at Easter, people who had spent Lent finding out about the Church. If someone came to us and asked: "What is your church all about?" what are some things we could tell them?



A PRAYER CONTAINER: We can find a pretty dish to put on our supper table. With small pieces of paper and a pencil close by, we can write names (or draw pictures) of people we want to remember in prayer. At supper we can select a few pieces of paper and pray for those people.



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE: If we don't think God magically zaps things, what do we think happens when we pray?



CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, God, that you invite us to help you make our universe a better place. Amen.

UNIT Two

Some things that may help

Bible

small box with lid
(to hold coins)

gift wrap or
construction paper
crayons or markers

glue stick

"star dust"



Ash Wednesday



LET'S BEGIN: We can look at what we are doing with our star dust.



LET'S PRAY: Help us, God to discover what you are hoping we will do. Amen.



LET'S CHECK IN: We can each tell one thing about ourselves that we are pretty sure pleases God. (Sticking with a hard school subject, for example.)



BIBLE STORY: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20. Read it, or tell it like this: We are ambassadors -- representing God's ways in a world that wonders who God really is. We all can work on getting our act together.

WONDERING TOGETHER: If someone who had never heard of Christians saw us, what might they think it means to be a Christian?



LET'S CHOOSE: We can decide which activities work for us.



AMBASSADOR'S PORTFOLIO: Ambassadors carry a fancy letter to show people that they are official ambassadors. It might say things like: "This is to certify that ___(name)___ is an Ambassador of Christ." The letter might have a fancy seal. We can create a portfolio for each of us by writing on a piece of plain paper, then rubbing the paper with a cotton ball dipped in vegetable oil. When the paper dries, it will look like parchment paper.



AN OFFICIAL SEAL: To create an Official Seal, we can (adults helping small children) hold a lighted, dark-colored candle and let it drip to form a puddle on our portfolio. Blow out the candle and, before the wax dries, scratch in our initials -- and maybe a cross or a star. (We might choose to experiment on a piece of scrap paper until we get what we want.)



PRAYER ASSIGNMENTS: Ambassadors get official assignments. Our official assignment may be to pray for people we love and people who need our prayers. We could find an official-looking container and place it on our supper table. Some slips of paper and pencils or crayons will allow us to add names (or drawings of people) we feel "assigned" to include in our prayers. When we are all together for a meal, we can select a few pieces of paper and offer our prayers for that person.



STAR DUST AMBASSADORS: We can talk about the star dust we sprinkle on our world. Who are some people that are happier because we are in their lives? What things are we doing with our star dust? (Sticking with hard stuff at school, being friends with a kid who doesn't have many friends, etc.)



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE: Since millions of people are praying at the same time we are, how do we think God hears our prayers?



CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, God, that you have assigned each of us as an ambassador of Christ. Amen.

UNIT THREE

Some things that may help

Bible

plain white paper
pencils or crayons
glue stick
"star dust"

dark-colored candle

"official-looking" container

scraps of paper

pencils and crayons



To Go

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Ash Wednesday



LET'S BEGIN: Lent is about to begin. We can talk about what we are planning to give up -- or take on -- for Lent.



LET'S PRAY: Help us, God, to enter into a Holy Lent noticing what we will do together with you. Amen.



LET'S CHECK IN: We can each offer something that we thought was going to be **HARD** to do but turned out to be easier than we thought it would be.



BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 6:16-18. Read it, or tell it like this: If you decide to give up something, don't wear a sad face nor make a big deal out of it. Share your decision with God and put on a big smile since God is going to help you do what you have chosen to do.

WONDERING TOGETHER: Why might a happy face help us do what we have promised?



LET'S CHOOSE: We can decide which activities work for us.



DECISIONS: What decisions have we made about Giving Up/ Taking On? Have we discovered some "others" we will choose to help? What ideas do we have to help care for our planet? Will we have a Gratitude Box? What about prayer assignments? How can we help each other with our decisions?



LEARNING SOMETHING ABOUT OUR SERVICE: We can look at the service from our prayer book that we use in church. Is there a part we say together that we could learn, so we will be more comfortable saying it when we are in church?



STAR DUST ASSIGNMENTS: We could draw a picture of some of the things we do with our star dust. Sprinkle some dust on the picture and secure it with a glue stick. Put the picture where we can see it.



CREATING A LENT FAMILY PRAYER: Using words we use all the time (rather than limiting ourselves to "church" words) we can compose a prayer. It might even begin with "Hi, God."



BUTTERFLY CHRYSALIS: We can make butterflies to come out on Easter. Using construction paper, we can cut them out and roll each into a chrysalis (toilet paper tube) to wait with us through Lent. (We might even put "star dust" on each chrysalis.) On Easter, we can release the butterflies from each chrysalis and invite them to land on our table. Create your own patterns, copy the ones on this page or go online seeking Butterfly Patterns to Color and find many more.



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE: How might God be using our prayers to change us as we pray?



CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, God, for the ways we will choose to have a Holy Lent in our family. Amen.

UNIT FOUR

Some things that may help

Bible

construction paper

crayons or markers

scissors

empty toilet paper tubes

glue stick

"star dust"



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