

Adult Faith Formation - Learning

LENT

A Time Of Preparation and Spiritual
Growth

The Significance of Ashes and Ash Wednesday

- ▣ The liturgical use of ashes originated in the Old Testament times. Ashes symbolized mourning, mortality and penance. In the Book of Esther, Mordecai put on sackcloth and ashes when he heard of the decree of King Ahasuerus to kill all of the Jewish people in the Persian Empire (Esther 4:1). Job repented in sackcloth and ashes (Job 42:6). Prophesying the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem, Daniel wrote, "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3).

The Significance of Ashes and Ash Wednesday

- ▣ Jesus made reference to ashes, "If the miracles worked in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have reformed in sackcloth and ashes long ago" (Matthew 11:21).

The Significance of Ashes and Ash Wednesday

- ▣ In the Middle Ages, the priest would bless the dying person with holy water, saying, "Remember that thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return." The Church adapted the use of ashes to mark the beginning of the penitential season of Lent, when we remember our mortality and mourn for our sins.

The Significance of Ashes and Ash Wednesday

- ▣ In our present liturgy for Ash Wednesday, we use ashes made from the burned palm branches distributed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year. The priest blesses the ashes and imposes them on the foreheads of the faithful, making the sign of the cross and saying, "Remember, man you are dust and to dust you shall return," or "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

The Significance of Ashes and Ash Wednesday

- ▣ As we begin this holy season of Lent in preparation for Easter, we must remember the significance of the ashes we have received: We mourn and do penance for our sins. We again convert our hearts to the Lord, who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation. We renew the promises made at our baptism, when we died to an old life and rose to a new life with Christ. Finally, mindful that the kingdom of this world passes away, we strive to live the kingdom of God now and look forward to its fulfillment in heaven.

What Is Lent?

- ▣ Lent is our time of preparation.
- ▣ During these 40 days, we ponder what it means to “give up, take up and lift up.” Using the spiritual practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we deepen our relationship with Christ and discern where God is working in our lives.
- ▣ As we begin our Lenten journey, we reflect on those spiritual pillars that will help bring us into a deeper relationship with God.

Why Forty Days?

- ▣ The season of Lent is the Church's preparation for Easter, a liturgical season of forty days.
- ▣ The number forty plays a key role in several passages of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- ▣ The Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us that Jesus spent forty days in the desert after his baptism in the Jordan River .

Why Forty Days?

- ▣ “Jesus Was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days to be tempted by the devil”
((Luke 4:1-2)
- ▣ Jesus experience in the desert reminds us of the Israelites who were freed from Egyptian slavery only to wander in the desert for forty years on their way to the Promised Land. During that time they were tempted and they sinned.

Why Forty Days?

- ▣ But when the devil tempted Jesus, he did not give in to temptation . Because of his faithfulness to God, Jesus overcame the temptations he faced.
- ▣ In a sense, Lent is a desert experience for each of us. It is a time when we step away from the world and reflect in prayer.

Why Forty Days?

- ▣ It's important to take time to reflect on how You're living your faith. These are the moments God's voice comes to us the clearest.
- ▣ Preparing for Easter during Lent by refocusing our lives on God makes us ready to take part in the Easter celebration.

How can our Lenten reflection guide us in delving deeper into Catholicism?

- ▣ Prayer
- ▣ We pray for others in the global church. We reflect on what type of person God calls us to be, and we ask for his guidance in living up to our potential. There are many ways to pray, and many individuals and communities that need our prayers.

How can our Lenten reflection guide us in delving deeper into Catholicism?

- ▣ **Fasting**
- ▣ We **fast**, or give things up, as a reminder to remove things in our lives that get in the way of our relationship with God. When we feel hungry or choose not to eat the things we like, we are reminded that everything we have is a gift from God. Our fasting also reminds us of those who do not have enough food, who experience hunger without a choice. God calls each of us to care for those who are in need.

How can our Lenten reflection guide us in delving deeper into Catholicism?

▣ Giving

- ▣ We give alms with a spirit of generosity to our brothers and sisters in need, honoring Jesus' call to serve our neighbors. This Lent, through our sacrifices, we can empower and transform the lives of our brothers and sisters in need.

Bibliography

- ▣ How to Practice Lent/ CRS Rice Bowl Crsricebowl.org/about/ How to practice Lent.
- ▣ Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSR Provincial. Journey of Faith for Teen: Enlightenment. E2(826313). Denver. Liguori, 2016

Videos

- ▣ Ash Wednesday – in Two Minutes

<http://bustedhalo.com/video/ash-Wednesday-in-two-minutes>

Ash Wednesday Movie - 3:15

Sam Peters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAxtCfJ9SLk>

Videos

- ▣ Celebrate a Catholic Lent

- ▣ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkgHQGdPwMo>

- ▣ Journey Through Lent

- ▣ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkgHQGdPwMo>