



# Ash Wednesday

A Guide For families

## What is Lent?

Lent is the 6-week period leading up to Easter.

## What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Lent season. It is a day to remember the serious reality of death and the joyful hope of Christ.

### Why Ashes?

Ashes are used as a symbol of repentance from sin and a reminder that we are weak like the dust of the ground.

*"Ash Wednesday forces us to confront death, but it also offers hope."*

-Tish Harrison Warren

## Why Do We Observe It?

Ashes are ministered to our foreheads in the shape of a cross to remind us of the reality of death. It is a day to pause the normal day to day and think about eternity.

We think we can be in control of our lives and future, that we can somehow escape pain and death. But no one will escape the reality of death despite age, riches, being smart or having a healthy lifestyle.

It is easy to get caught up in idolatry, which is pursuing things in place of God. Being liked by your friends or having the newest video game or toy isn't bad, but does it replace your love for God? Trying to be happy or avoid pain is good, but does it take up all your time and energy? When life is good, God gets pushed from our thoughts. But when life gets hard, we often turn quickly to him. Wearing the ashes all day helps us see how much sin grieves God's heart and a desire to turn our hearts back to Him in repentance, obedience, and love.

## Scripture

- "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." - Colossians 1:17
- "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." - Hebrews 9:27-28
- "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." - John 11:25
- "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." - Philippians 3:20-21
- "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." - Revelations 21:4

## Questions

- Why do we observe Ash Wednesday each year?
- What do the ashes represent?
- Do you pray only when life gets hard, or is prayer more like talking to God as a friend?
- When you think about death, how do you feel? Are you scared?
- What hope do we have in Jesus after death?

