

Ash Wednesday for Household with Elementary and Preschool children

Supplies needed: A piece of paper to write Alleluia on (this can also be a coloring page with the word on it, or even a piece of wood with the word printed/stickered on,) bubbles and ashes. Words in bold can be done responsively by the whole household or read on behalf of the household if there are another of non-readers.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are sorry: Create and make in us new and sorry hearts, that we, admitting what we have done wrong and really wanting to do better, may be forgiven because of your great mercy and grace, and given a chance to try again; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Burying the Alleluia

It is a tradition in the church, as a way of setting aside Lent as a time that is different than other times in church life, that we choose to stop doing some things that bring us joy, like not eating chocolate or not watching television, so we can focus on our relationship with God, and to help make the celebration of Easter extra special. Sometimes this is also achieved by taking on a new thing - like praying as a family once a day or making different choices about what items we buy. As a symbol of these sacrifices, as a church, we give up proclaiming Alleluia. As a way to show this shift, we can bury the word, digging it back up at Easter. (Also appropriate is planting it where early bulbs for Spring are likely to grow like crocuses or daffodils, or digging it up and setting a flower pot on the spot on Easter morning, with Alleluia proudly displayed on the pot or plant.

Take this time to color together an Alleluia. You can also write on it what the family or individuals plan to do intentionally for the season of Lent.

Dig a small hole in a pot or in your yard and bury your Alleluia. While you bury it, pray these words:

Psalm 103:8-14

***The Lord shows mercy and is kind.
He does not become angry quickly, and he has great love.
He will not always scold us.
He will not be angry forever.
He has not punished us as our sins should be punished.
He has not repaid us for the evil we have done.
As high as the sky is above the earth,
so great is his love for those who respect him.
He has taken our sins away from us***

*as far as the east is from west.
The Lord has mercy on those who fear him,
as a father has mercy on his children.
He knows how we were made.
He remembers that we are dust.*

The Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (6:1-6, 16-20)

“Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do them in front of people to be seen by them. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

“When you give to the poor, don’t be like the hypocrites. They blow trumpets before they give so that people will see them. They do that in the synagogues and on the streets. They want other people to honor them. I tell you the truth. Those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give to the poor, give very secretly. Don’t let anyone know what you are doing. Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites. They love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners and pray loudly. They want people to see them pray. I tell you the truth. They already have their full reward. When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father who cannot be seen. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

“When you give up eating, don’t put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look strange to show people that they are giving up eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating. But your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

“Don’t store treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. So store your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. Your heart will be where your treasure is.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Blowing Away our Sins

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have not listened when you have shown us ways we could serve our neighbors. We have not made the same choices Jesus would want us to make. We have made you sad.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you that we have thought we were more important than other people,
We confess to you, Lord.
times when we hurt other people to get our own way,
We confess to you, Lord.
Our anger when we are frustrated and our jealousy about other people,
We confess to you, Lord.
Our love of things,
We confess to you, Lord.
not praying as often as we should
We confess to you, Lord.
Accept our apology, for our bad choices
Accept our apology, Lord.
For times we thought mean things about other people and judged people by the way they look
Accept our apology, Lord.
For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of worry about the future,
Accept our apology, Lord.
Forgive us and don't be angry at us anymore.
for your mercy is great.
Give us the grace of your salvation
That we may show your glory in the world.
By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Let us live with you and all your saints forever.

Open your bubbles and blow bubbles together, discussing choices you have made that you are sorry for or sins that you have committed. Take about ways you can, with God's help do better, face consequences of your choices, or what you can do to make a bad choice better. When you are finished pray:

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who doesn't want to punish people but instead hopes we learn to turn to God and try again. We ask that you forgive us all the things we have done wrong, even things we didn't know were wrong or things we can't remember, so that we can learn and grow into a better relationship with you and be better followers of Christ, today and always. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Imposing Ashes

The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence, (a time of being sorry) and fasting (a time of focusing on God). This season of Lent provided a time in which new Christians were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of really big sins, had been separated from the church were brought back and forgiven. The whole church would focus on being sorry and making holy choices together.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by thinking

about our choice and by recognizing things we have done wrong; by prayer, self-denial and intentionally focusing on God; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

Over the ashes:

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: help these ashes be a reminder to us that we are your creation and we will always be your creation. Everything we do should show that we are yours in how we live, in how we die, in how we think and treat other people. ***Amen.***

Mark a sign of the cross on each other's heads, stating:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

And now, as our savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Grant, most merciful Lord to us your faithful people, forgiveness and peace, that we may live to serve you everyday. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.