

## Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, blessed ashes are put on your forehead in the shape of a cross. These ashes are made by burning palm leaves which have been saved from last year's Palm Sunday.

Ash Wednesday is also when we begin to do penance for Lent. Penance is an act of religious devotion performed to show sorrow for having committed a sin. We do this to improve our relationship with God and others. The Church suggests three special practices of penance for Lent:

**Pray-** go to Mass more often, pray more often.

During Lent the Stations of the Cross (prayers about the journey Jesus made to his crucifixion on Good Friday) are said at our church every Friday. My family goes to this every Friday during Lent.

Can you think of other ideas?

**Fast-** going without food or eating less. It can also mean giving up a certain food or treat.

My husband is giving up Diet Coke during Lent. My son is eating fewer sweets during Lent.

Can you think of other ideas?

**Almsgiving-** means doing good things for others. That can be giving gifts of money or help to others.

The money my husband does not spend for Diet Cokes he will collect. At the end of Lent he will give the money to the poor.

Can you think of other ideas?

**Activity:** Sources: <http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com.br/2009/02/lesson-plan-ash-wednesday-lent.html>

After reviewing the Lenten penance activities, invite the students to think of ways they can pray, fast, and perform acts of charity during Lent. Invite the children to share their ideas with the families.

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Lenten Promises

Prayer

Fasting

Charity

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