

Ash Wednesday Home Prayer Service

Create a prayerful environment in your home. This might include a Bible, a candle, perhaps some quiet music, etc. Before you begin, divide out the reading parts of this prayer.

Begin by gathering the members of your household and inviting them to settle in and remind them that God is present in their midst.

LEADER: **In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

All: Amen.

LEADER: **Praised be the God of grace, mercy, and peace.
Blessed by God for ever.**

All: Blessed by God for ever.

LEADER: **Today, Ash Wednesday,
many Christians receive a cross of ashes
on their foreheads.
This powerful sign has been used by God's people
for hundreds of years.
The cross of ashes tells friends and neighbors
that we know we are not perfect.**

**We sometimes break the law of God.
We hurt other people.
We act selfishly.
Today we tell God and each other
that we are sorry.
With the help of Jesus,
we will try during Lent to become better.
The cross of ashes means all of these things.**

from Children's Daily Prayer

Let us reflect on God's word.

READER 2: Even now says the Lord,

READER 1: return to me with your whole hearts,

READER 2: with fasting and weeping and mourning.

READER 1: Rend your hearts not your garments,
and return to the Lord your God.

READER 3: Even now, says the Lord, return to me.

READER 1: Even now, says the Lord, come with fasting
and weeping and mourning.

READER 2: Come to me with your whole heart.

READER 1: Lord, where have we seen you?

READER 2: Lord, show us the path that leads to you.

READER 3: Be on guard against performing religious acts
for people to see.

When you give alms,
do not announce it in the assembly.
When you give alms,
do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

When you pray,
do not draw attention to yourself.
When you pray,
go to your room, close your door,
then pray to the God who sees all and knows all.

When you fast,
do not look glum like the hypocrites.
When you fast,
groom your hair, wash your face.
God sees what is hidden,
will see the hunger that is also in your heart.

READER 1: Lord, where have we seen you?

READER 2: Lord, show us the path that leads to you.

READER 3: There was once on the side of the way,
a man, half dead.

READER 2: Who is my neighbor?

READER 1: Who is my neighbor?

READER 3: A priest travelling down the same road saw the man,
and then passed by on the other side.

READER 1: Who is my neighbor?

READER 3: And then a Samaritan came upon him.

READER 2: In Christ, there is no east or west.

READER 1: In Christ, neither male nor female, Jew nor gentile.

READER 3: In Christ, the least of all has pride of place.

Even now says the Lord, return to me.

READER 1: Lord, where have we seen you?

READER 2: Lord, show us the path that leads to you.

READER 1: Who is my neighbor?

READER 3: Even now, says the Lord,
return to me,
come with your whole heart.

LEADER: The words, "Remember, you are dust
and to dust you shall return"
remind us that we were created from the earth.

The words, "Turn away from sin
and be faithful to the gospel"
remind us that we are called to live in the light of the truth.

Although this Ash Wednesday we do not have ashes with us,
we are reminded who we are,
and to whom we belong.

Let us take a moment to sign each other's foreheads
with the sign of the Cross
to remind us that we are Children of God
and it is God to whom we belong.

All trace the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads. Quiet music could be played during this ritual.

LEADER: We now turn to God in our prayer.

For the Church – all the people of God,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For Pope Francis,
Bishop Kettler,
our pastor Fr. (name),
all priest, deacons, religious and lay ministers,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For those without homes,
for those who are sick,
for those without jobs
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For our family,
for our friends,
for our neighbors,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: For what or whom shall we pray?

Invite those gather to offer their own intentions. Conclude each one with, "we pray to the Lord."

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Merciful God,
you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
you claimed us for Christ,
in the waters of baptism.
Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days
and bless our journey through the desert of Lent
to the font of rebirth.
May our fasting be hunger for justice;

**our alms, a making of peace;
our prayer, the chant of humble
and grateful hearts.**

**All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,
for in his cross you proclaim your love
for ever and ever.**

from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers

All: Amen.

LEADER: Let us pray with the words that Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father...

**LEADER: Father, our source of life,
you know our weakness.
May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand
and to walk more readily in your ways.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

**LEADER: May the Father bless us,
for he has adopted us as his children.**

All: Amen.

**LEADER: May the Son come to help us,
for he has received us as brothers and sisters.**

All: Amen.

**LEADER: May the Spirit be with us,
for he has made us his dwelling place.**

All: Amen.

from Book of Blessings

LEADER: **In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

All: Amen.

It would be suitable to end the prayer time with a song or by exchanging the sign of peace.

Sources

Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://store.usccb.org/catholic-household-blessings-prayers-p/7-657.htm>

Book of Blessings, Liturgical Press

<https://litpress.org/Products/1875/Book-of-Blessings-Ritual-Edition>

Children's Daily Prayer, Liturgy Training Publications

<https://ltp.org/products/details/CDP21/childrens-daily-prayer-2020-2021>