DERRY DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL CENTRE

Ash Wednesday Prayer and Art Activity

Ash Wednesday officially begins the season of Lent. This year Ash Wednesday is celebrated on February 17th

LENT

- … is a period of 40 days, a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ's Death and Resurrection at Easter
- … is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as we prepare to celebrate Easter
- … connects us to Jesus 40 days in the desert when he was tempted by the devil
- … begins on Ash Wednesday
- … calls us to remember and live our commitment at Baptism
- …asks us to turn away from sin and turn towards Jesus again

The ashes that are used on Ash Wednesday are usually obtained by burning palms that are left over from the previous year. When the priest makes the sign of the Cross with the ashes on our forehead, he says, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" or "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." It is a call to think again about our Baptismal Promises and during Lent to turn away from anything that stops us living God's perfect plan for our lives. We turn towards Jesus, make small sacrifices to share in his suffering and prepare to celebrate the most important time in the Church year-Easter.

This year, because of the pandemic, we cannot receive Ashes.

The Drawing God project (LENT 2021 — Drawing God (drawing-god.com) has developed a lovely template for children/young people to mark Ash Wednesday and start their Lenten journey. Below is an activity which could be done before completing the template.

Made in the Image and likeness of God

Why not sit quietly for a moment and ask God to help you now as you begin your Lenten Journey.

Read the words below, talk to Jesus about what you hope to do for Lent and then draw an image of yourself with the Cross of Ashes on your forehead, using the template provided.

God loves you more than you can imagine, you are precious to God, made in God's image and likeness.

Isn't that just amazing? God has a special plan for your life.

He has given you many gifts and talents to do something for him that nobody else can do.

He gives you the help and strength to do that every day of your life.

He sent his son Jesus so we would know of this great love.

Jesus taught us how to live our lives well, looking out for others, being God's love in the world.

The Holy Spirit was given to live within us, so we would always know what God wants us to do and say.

As Jesus told us the Holy Spirit, within us, is our helper and our guide.

God made us all good, but sometimes we forget that goodness, and we turn away from God.

Lent helps us to turn again towards God, through Jesus his Son, and to remember we are made in God's image and likeness.

Take some time now to tell Jesus now what you hope to do for Lent.

Draw an image of yourself with the Cross of Ashes on your forehead, using the template provided.

Finish by saying: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.