**Sample Prayer Service**

**Ash Wednesday**

***Note:*** *You might like to prepare the prayer space with some of these suggestions:*

* *Purple cloth*
* *Message stick*
* *Project Compassion boxes and posters.*

**Introduction/Welcome:**

**Leader/Principal:**

Welcome to our prayer service.

As we gather today on Ash Wednesday to celebrate the beginning of the Church’s season of Lent, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Catholic Church’s season of Lent, a special time of preparation, when we stop and think about how we can play our part in God’s hope for a world that is fair, just and peaceful.

Lent prepares us for the season of Easter, the most important time in the Church’s calendar. It is a time of prayer, fasting and giving to others, when we think about all of our blessings and give thanks for all that God has given us.

The ashes that will be sprinkled on your head today are a symbol, reminding us that during Lent we are trying to grow to be more like Jesus.

Please stand and sing our gathering hymn.

**Gathering Hymn Suggestions:**

These Hands – Andrew Chinn

Create a New Heart – Michael Mangan

Turn Back to God – Michael Mangan

**Opening Prayer**

**Celebrant:** Let us begin our prayer service together in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of Justice,

We come to you today as members of one human family.

Teach us how to be your loving presence to others.

Help us understand the challenges others face.

Be with us as we try to change, and be people who act for others and seek a world where everyone has a just future.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

**All: Amen**

**Gospel Reading**

*(Matthew 6: 1-4 translation from the Lectionary for Masses with Children)*

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**All: And with your Spirit.**

**Celebrant:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All: Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples:

When you do good deeds, don’t try to show off.

If you do, you won’t get a reward from God in heaven.

When you give to the poor, don’t blow a loud horn. That’s what showoffs do in the meeting places and on the street corners, because they are always looking for praise.

I promise you that they already have their reward.

When you give to the poor, don’t let anyone know about it. Then your gift will be a secret. God knows what is done in secret and God will reward you.

The Gospel of the Lord

**All:** **Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ**

**Distribution of Ashes**

**Celebrant:**

Let us Pray:

Bless us as we receive these ashes as a reminder that we want to walk with Jesus this Lent.

We ask for forgiveness for the times we may have turned away from God or hurt those around us.

We ask you to help us to be fair and peaceful and to inspire us to put other’s needs before our own, helping all people around the world.

**Distribution of Ashes**

*It could be a good idea to have quiet music playing during this time.*

*There could be a period of quiet after this where you could use Project Compassion material such as a PowerPoint.*

**Some Lenten songs to consider**

This is the Time – Michael Mangan

Out Of Ashes – Michael Mangan

We Turn to You – Michael Mangan

**Prayer of the Faithful**

**Celebrant:** Lord, we are marked with the sign of your cross, a symbol of love and total giving of self. As we begin our Lenten journey, we join together in prayer, asking your blessing for our world and all people.

**Student:** For Pope Francis and Bishop Greg and all clergy and religious, that they may have the strength to lead their people in justice and peace.

Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Student:** For all people throughout the world who experience poverty and injustice: that we can all work together to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity.
Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Student:** For the work of Caritas Australia: That through our support of Project Compassion, Caritas can work together with communities around the world, helping them learn the skills they need to create the future they deserve.

Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Student:** For our school community: Help us to make this season of Lent a time when we make choices that bring us closer to God.
Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Celebrant:** God of mercy and love, hear our prayers.  May we come to know our one human family, learning to help each other and work together to make our world a better place.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

**Celebrant:** Let us now pray together in the words that Jesus gave us:

**All: Our Father…**

**Closing Prayer**

**Celebrant:**

God of all people,

We are asked to fast, pray and give to others during the season of Lent.

May we strive to better the lives of all people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**

**Recessional** **Hymn Suggestions:**

Could be quiet music.

Hearts On Fire – Michael Mangan

We are God’s Hands – Andrew Chinn