

“Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.”

-Book of Common Prayer

### **Ash Wednesday**

With Lent arriving in about one month, Building Faith would like to share some ideas and inspiration for the start of the Lenten journey. Christian denominations mark the beginning of Lent in different ways, but Ash Wednesday has become increasingly widespread. The tradition is straightforward: imposing ashes on the forehead, using ashes made from last year's Palm Sunday palms. The messages of Ash Wednesday are deep: penitence, mortality, sin, and forgiveness.

Check out the Building Faith articles below. In addition to Ash Wednesday, we have included three posts about “Shrove Tuesday,” the day before Ash Wednesday.



### **[Pancake Supper Survival Guide](#)**

Hosting a pancake supper this year? This article has tips and tricks to make your event the best ever. In addition to cooking advice, you'll find a Shrove Tuesday placemat and tri-fold to put on tables.



### [Pancake Relay Race](#)

This is intergenerational fun, and all you need is two or more teams and some pancakes (real or fake). A pancake relay race is a great way to add life to your pancake supper, or other church event.



### [Mardi Gras: A Playful Day for the Church](#)

This article offers some history and traditions of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). Read thoughts from Christian educators about the importance of fun at church... especially just before Lent.



### [Singing in the Dark: Ash Wednesday with Children](#)

A brilliant article about the importance of children experiencing Ash Wednesday in church.

One way to integrate children into the service is through singing. The author lists several suggestions for appropriate songs.



### **[Fire and Ashes: Ash Wednesday at Home](#)**

Ever thought of bringing Ash Wednesday home with some special traditions? Jerusalem Greer offers this “Home Practice” which includes an Ash Wednesday bonfire. Participants burn sins on slips of paper, followed by some marshmallow roasting.



### **[Ash Wednesday Invitation to a Holy Lent](#)**

In the Episcopal tradition, the Ash Wednesday service includes an inspiring “invitation to Lent,” from the Book of Common Prayer. Check out this post to hear Building Faith editors Charlotte Hand Greeson and Matthew Kozlowski read the moving invitation. (Nostalgia alert: this was one of our first posts on Building Faith.)



### [Creative Ideas for Children's Ash Wednesday Services](#)

Some churches host Ash Wednesday services especially for families and children. This church in Virginia incorporates the burning of the palms, child-friendly explanations, a labyrinth walk, and more. If your church does a family Ash Wednesday (or if you are considering it), this article is for you.



### [Burning Palms with the Confirmation Class](#)

A heartfelt and charming account from a youth minister who gathered the confirmation students to burn palms on Ash Wednesday... to make ashes for the Ash Wednesday service. Teenagers gravitate to traditions such as burning palms - as it is sensory, communal, and sacred.

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