

FEBRUARY 14, 2018
ASH WEDNESDAY



There is joy and gladness in forgiveness.

ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ash Wednesday observance.

Wednesday	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	The practice of faith
	2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10	Ambassadors for Christ
	Psalms 51:1-17	A prayer for cleansing
	Isaiah 58:1-12	False and true worship

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. **Psalms 51:8 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for this Holy Day:

Dear God, give me a heart that seeks your forgiveness, and fill me with joy and gladness. Amen. (Psalm 51:8, 10)

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, just as you renew a right spirit within us, we thank you for renewing our bodies with this food. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord your God have mercy on you, wash you thoroughly from your sin, and give you joy and gladness. (Psalm 51:1-2, 8)



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HYMN FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Create in me a Clean Heart



CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a time you got really dirty. How did it feel to get clean again?
- Ash Wednesday is a day for reflection and repentance—for thinking back on our lives, bringing our sins to God, and asking for the Lord’s forgiveness. What makes it so hard to ask for forgiveness? Is it easier to ask another person or God for forgiveness? Why?
- God is always ready to forgive us. How does that impact your relationship with God?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Psalm 51:1-17.

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, a time to focus on our need for a Savior and Christ’s gift of salvation from the cross. We live in an age that does not like to focus on our own wrongdoing. We get defensive and offensive rather than repentant. Psalm 51 uses many words for sin: “transgressions” (rebellion), “iniquity” (to be bent out of shape), and “sin” (miss the mark). The psalm also uses many words for forgiveness: “have mercy,” “blot out,” “wash,” “cleanse,” the result of all this attention to sin and forgiveness is not to be discouraged or self-condemning but to be restored with “joy and gladness” (v. 8). What words or images would you use for your sinful life? What words or images would you use for your restoration and forgiveness? What words or images would you use for the joy and gladness you receive from the cleansing work of God in your life?

Pray: **Dear God, give me a heart that seeks your forgiveness, and fill me with joy and gladness. Amen.** (Psalm 51:8, 10)

SERVICE



We live with broken relationships with others. Mend a broken heart and relationship by making amends in your heart with someone. If you are able, express that word of forgiveness with that other person.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Ash Wednesday is a day for Christians to remember that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. Observe Ash Wednesday, February 14, in your home (or with friends) by marking one another with ashes. Burn some paper and crush it into fine ashes and mix the ashes with a small amount of olive oil. Make the sign of the cross on one another’s foreheads as you say these words (taken from Genesis 3:19):

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn back to God and believe in the good news of Jesus.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org