



Hey Parents!

I hope you're planning to come to tonight's Ash Wednesday service at Faith. But if you've never been to an Ash Wednesday service (or not to one at an evangelical church like Faith), I imagine you've got a few questions!

Let me quickly walk you through what will happen at the service so you know what to expect for your family.

We'll start a lot like a regular service, with a call to worship and prayer together. I'll take a few minutes to explain what the service will look like and what people can expect.

I will emphasize that the goal of Lent is for the church to practice three things together: Prayer, Fasting, and Love. We concentrate on prayer, fast from something that our hearts have attached to, and practice acts of love that benefit our neighbors and our neighborhoods.

Then we'll sing together and read Scripture together. If you want to prepare your family for the Scripture readings, look at Isaiah 58:1-12, Matthew 6:1-16, 16, and 21, and Psalm 51. Pastor Tom will lead us in prayer of repentance and I'll preach a quick, ten-minute sermon from Lamentations 1:12. Then we'll practice the imposition of ashes and communion before closing by singing together.

So. What does imposition of ashes look like? Both the ashes and the communion table will be "come when you're ready" experiences, so no one will be forced to do either. People will come up to the ash stations, kneel in front of the benches we'll have there, and one of the officiants will put ashes on their forehead in the shape of

a cross, while repeating the words, “remember you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

Taking the ashes on your forehead is simply a symbol of recognition: a recognition of our human condition, our frailty and need for a savior. It’s a reminder that someday our lives will end – which can be hard for kids to think about – and so we need to focus on Jesus, on what’s most important in life.

We’ll help kids make this concrete by giving them palm branches early in the service, then inviting them to exchange the palm branch for ashes when they come to the bench. By the way, we made the ashes out of last year’s branches from Palm Sunday, which is a tradition the Church has practiced for centuries.

Communion will also be at your discretion, like we do at Good Friday services. There will be a table in the middle with juice and bread; you can come up with your family whenever you are ready, or skip it if your kids aren’t ready for it yet.

After ashes and communion, we’ll have conversation prompts and worksheets for you to do with your kids to help pass the time during these quiet moments. But remember: it’s okay if kids move around and make noise! They’re kids, and we’re okay with that. They don’t have to be adults *quite* yet.

I hope that you’ll consider making Ash Wednesday a new tradition in your family, and use this service and this season as a way to focus on Jesus in the weeks before Easter. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at [joey@faithliveitout.org](mailto:joey@faithliveitout.org). I’m excited to worship with you and your family tomorrow!

Pastor Joey  
Pastor of Teaching and Discipleship

