Caritas AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

PROJECT COMPASSION
FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

PRIMARY
ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY
Teacher's Guide

lent.caritas.org.au 1800 024 413 #projectcompassion

NOTE TO TEACHERS

PROJECT COMPASSION FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that videos, images and external links contained in this resource may contain images, voices or names of people who have since passed away.

This liturgy has been created to guide you through the readings, prayers, reflections and distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday. It is designed to be used with the PC22 Primary Ash Wednesday PowerPoint Presentation contained within the zip file downloaded from the Caritas Australia website.

You will require one leader and seven readers.

For the Gospel dramatisation, you will need one student to play Jesus and two accompanying students.

You might like to create a sacred space at the front of the gathering or include some special items to be carried forward in the procession. Some suggestions include:

- Purple linen as per the colour of the liturgical season
- Project Compassion posters and large donation boxes
- Symbols from each of the featured countries in Project Compassion 2022 (Mozambique, India, Australia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Solomon Islands)

MAKE A PLEDGE

You may wish to ask students to write down a pledge prior to walking into the liturgy that incorporates the following phrase:

for all future generations

These can then be placed into a bowl in the sacred space after they receive their ashes, or at the start as students enter the liturgical space.

ADDITIONAL PC RESOURCES FOR THE LITURGY

Additional Project Compassion resources that can be used during the liturgy include:

- 2022 Project Compassion Prayer PowerPoint
- 2022 Project Compassion Primary Film
- Introducing Project Compassion – for Primary Schools PowerPoint

These resources can be downloaded from our Project Compassion website: https://lent.caritas.org.au

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SLIDE 1: Ash Wednesday Liturgy - Project Compassion 2022

Music: *Quiet instrumental music as the community enters the sacred space and sits down.*

Reader 1: Welcome to all our school family gathered here today: parents and carers, family members, students and teachers.

SLIDE 2: Introduction

Reader 1: As we gather to celebrate the beginning of the Church's season of Lent, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the _____ people. We acknowledge and offer our respect to their continuing culture and the contribution they make in the life of this region.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Church's season of Lent. The marking of the ashes on our foreheads on this day is a public expression of our faith and humility. It is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Through prayer we come closer to God so that we are better able to realise the promises made for us at our baptism, to live justly as Jesus teaches us. Fasting joins us in solidarity with people experiencing poverty who often have no choice but to go without the basic human needs. Sharing what we have, or 'almsgiving', is a sign of our commitment to justice and our thanks for all that God has given us.

Lent prepares us for the season of Easter, the most important time in the Church's calendar. By praying, fasting and giving alms, we are reminded of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus brought the promise of hope to all people so that we may "Have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10) As we live into that fullness, may we also be challenged to act with love and hope, *now* and for all future generations.

Please stand for our gathering song.

SLIDE 3: Gathering Song

Music: Michael Mangan - *This Is the Time*

Processional (Optional)

Incense bearer leads procession to the altar. Students chosen for entrance procession walk in with the Gospel, a school candle, a Project Compassion poster, and the ashes to be blessed, and places them on the sacred space. All precede the Celebrant/leader of the Ash Wednesday Liturgy.

SLIDE 4: Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

God of hope and compassion,
You remind us of the need to care for our global family.
Teach us how to show your love to others.
Help us to understand the challenges faced by many families and communities in our world today.
Be with us as we try to change, to be young people who put our compassion into action.
May we respond with love and hope, *now* and for all future generations.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
All: Amen

SLIDE 5: Gospel Dramatisation

Dramatisation based upon the Gospel Reading (Matthew 6: 1-4 translation from the Lectionary for Masses with Children).

You may wish to read the Gospel first and then have the students perform the dramatisation. Students play the roles of Jesus and two students.

Leader: A dramatisation of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus: *(speaking to audience)* When you do good things, don't try to show off.

Student 1: *(to audience and in a gloating tone)* I did a good thing today!

Student 2: *(to student 1)* Remember, when we do a good thing, we shouldn't show off!

Student 1: But what is the point of doing something good if nobody knows I have done it?

Jesus: When you do good things, God always knows about it.

Student 2: (speaking to student 1) When you show off, it shows that you did good things so that others can praise you, or think you are cool. But really, when you do a good thing, you are doing it to help others and as a way of praising God.

Jesus: When you give to the poor do not blow a loud horn. That is what show-offs do so that others will praise them.

Student 2: Showing off when giving to the poor is unkind and puts down other people.

Student 1: But Jesus – how should we give to the poor?

Jesus: When you give to the poor, don't tell everyone about it. Then your gift will be a gift to them, and not for yourself. Put yourself in the place of those who are poor. Does making a big show of your good deed respect them? *(Student shake their heads.)*
God knows what is done in secret and he will reward you. *(Students nod.)*

Student 2: So, when we share our wealth with the poor we should show respect, right Jesus?

Jesus: Yes, this is what God asks of you.

Student 1: *(nods)* Oh now I get it!

Both students walk away together. Jesus bows his head and stands still until all have responded to the Gospel.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SLIDE 6: Gospel Reflection

Reader 2: Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Christian season of Lent. Lent is a time when we pray, give up things we enjoy in order to give to others, and do kind things for other people as we prepare to celebrate the great feast of Easter.

For forty days, we are asked to follow Jesus on his journey to Calvary. Despite his suffering, Jesus shows mercy and forgiveness to those who had sentenced him to his death. This powerful moment shows us the importance of both asking for forgiveness of God and showing forgiveness to others within our own lives. During Lent, we ask God to have compassion on our poor choices.

Fasting, prayer and giving to others are very important during Lent and Jesus tells us within today's Gospel reading that we should not do them to show off or gloat about it to others. Instead, when we take the time to pray, fast and give to others, we should do it because we know we are doing the right thing for others and by God.

The ashes that will be placed on your forehead today are a reminder to us of the Lenten promises we will make in our own lives, and to encourage us to give ourselves to others, just as Jesus did for us. What will you do or give up this Lent?

This important time in the Church's calendar asks us to reflect on the needs of our brothers and sisters, and to be thankful to God for all the things we are lucky to have in our lives. We are reminded of those who do not have access to basic needs such as water, shelter, medicine and education, and we should think about the ways that we can act in service to them.

As we prepare to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus during Easter, let us do so with hope, *now* and for all future generations.

SLIDE 7: Distribution of Ashes

Leader:

Let us pray.
Bless us Lord as we receive these ashes as a reminder of our humility. We ask for the forgiveness of our sins as we recall times when we have turned away from you and have not shown mercy to others.
We ask you to help us to be fair, peaceful and just as we go about your work in the world. Fill our hearts with the Holy Spirit as we stand with our global family who bear the burden of injustices and inequalities around the world.

All: Amen

Distribution of Ashes

Note: Ashes are placed in the in the form of a cross on the forehead with these words: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
Response: Amen

Suggested music:

Quiet instrumental music
Michael Mangan - *Out of Ashes and/or We Turn to You*
John Burland – *These Ashes*
Drew Lane - *Ashes*

SLIDE 8: Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Lord, we begin our Lenten journey being marked with the sign of the cross as a symbol of your love and sacrifice for us. We come together in prayer, asking for your blessing and guidance.

Reader 3: We pray for our Church leaders Pope Francis and _____ (insert Archbishop/Bishop's name), that they may follow your lead and bring peace and strength to our Church.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 4: We pray for our brothers and sisters who experience poverty and injustice, that we may act in solidarity to end injustices around the world – today and every day, for all future generations.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 5: We pray for our school community, that we may be inspired by the life and message of Jesus to act in love, reaching out to those who need our help.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 6: We pray for the work of Caritas Australia, that through our support of Project Compassion, Caritas can work together with communities around the world, providing them with the skills needed to create a future they deserve.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Leader: God of mercy and love, hear our prayers. May you walk with us this Lent and guide us as we come together as disciples of Jesus, ready to make a difference in the lives of others.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

SLIDE 9: Our Father

Leader: Let us now pray together in the words that Jesus taught us. Our Father…

SLIDE 10: Project Compassion 2022: For All Future Generations

Reader 7: This year, Caritas Australia's Project Compassion theme is 'For All Future Generations'.

It comes from one of the great moments in Scripture: after the flood has receded in the book of Genesis, God puts a rainbow in the sky as a sign that the earth will never again suffer in such a way. God makes a promise with the human family and the whole of creation "for all future generations". This theme challenges us to venture into a new experience of compassion: one full of hope in God's promise.

Throughout Project Compassion 2022, inspiring stories from Mozambique, India, Australia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Solomon Islands will be shared, highlighting the importance of working hand-in-hand with communities around the world.

This Lent, we are encouraged to make simple lifestyle changes and act with care for each other and our environment. Our challenge is to respond with love and hope, *now* and for all future generations.

Optional: Show the Project Compassion Primary School film- available on the Caritas Australia website and on the Project Compassion USB.

Or you might choose to show the 'Introducing Project Compassion – for Primary Schools' PowerPoint.

All resources available at https://lent.caritas.org.au

SLIDE 11: Closing Prayer

Leader:

God of peace,

As we begin our Lenten journey, guide us as we fast, pray and give to others. May we support the work of Caritas Australia as they strive to enrich the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

SLIDE 12: Sending Forth

Leader: Let us go forth signed with ash and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

(Teacher Note: Before recession song, you might like to ask a representative from each class to come forward and collect a large Project Compassion box to take back to their class prayer space.)

SLIDE 13: Recessional Song

Suggested Music:

Andrew Chinn – *These Hands*
Steve Angrisano – *Go Make a Difference*