



BACKGROUND:

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14th) is the day in the church year where we mark the beginning of the season of Lent. During this season, we are all invited to reflect on the things in our lives that may be causing us to be distant from God and distant from others. Beginning around the 11th century, the Ash Wednesday service became a way for Christians to physically mark and remember the beginning of the season.

ASH WEDNESDAY ACTIVITY:

(See insert - "Journey through the Labyrinth")

Supplies: Labyrinth sheet, ashes or black paint, and the scripture reading

Christians have used labyrinths as a means to have a multi-sensory expression of prayer and contemplation. They provide space and time to reflect and pray while traveling the path.

Please gather around a table or other flat surface in your home.

Place the labyrinth in the middle of the table or surface.

Designate one or more readers of the scripture passage Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. Invite each person in your group to use their finger to "journey through the labyrinth." If your group has more than 4, invite two participants to journey the labyrinth together. Start by placing one finger at the beginning of the labyrinth and when the reader begins to read the scripture, trace your finger slowly through.

When each participant reaches the center of the labyrinth, the participant will then dip their thumb into the ashes or paint and make the sign of the cross in the middle of the labyrinth. Together all will say the refrain: From dust you came and from dust you will return.

Pause between each of the four breaks after the refrains as the participant finishes tracing their finger through the rest of the labyrinth. Please keep or display the labyrinth in a visible location throughout the season. We will return to it on Good Friday.

READ:

Matthew 6:1-4 - From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Matthew 6:5-6 - From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Matthew 6:16-18 - From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Matthew 6:19-21 - From dust you came and to dust you will return.

PRAYER:

"Dear God of our whole selves, as we journey through this season of Lent, teach us how to give, so that we can joyfully respond when you call us to serve. Teach us how to pray, so that we can be closer to you in all that we do throughout the day. Teach us how to let go, so nothing stands in the way of our connection with you. Teach us how to prepare, so we can be ready to receive your love. Help us to remember that in all ways we belong to you, AMEN."