

Dust and Ashes?

ENTER THE MYSTERY...
of Christ's Suffering,
Death and Resurrection

Ideas for celebrating the beginning of Lent with young people

Liturgy 1 Darkness and Light

Each person is given a candle as they assemble

As people arrive, play appropriate music, accompanied by suitable images

Opening Drama: From BT to JC (for 4 voices - offstage)

Characters: Voice 1, Sam, Dave, Jesus.

All voices are 'off stage'. The phone rings and then:

Voice Welcome to BT Answer 1571. The person you are calling is not available. Please leave a message after the tone. Beep!

Dave Hello Sam. I'm glad you're not in because I don't really want to speak to you. I just wanted to say that I thought you were well out of order the other night. Beep!

Sam Beep! David, it's Sam. What's the matter with you?! Talk about being over sensitive. You're a bit touchy mate! Beep!

Dave Beep! It's got absolutely nothing to do with being touchy! Beep!

Sam Beep! Ooh! Not touchy are we? Not touchy?! You need to sort a few things out, mate! I can see you take after your mother. Beep!

Dave Beep! What's my mother got to do with it? At least my mother isn't fat and ugly. Beep!

Sam Beep! Fat and ugly? You can talk! You've got a bum the size of a small country. Beep!

Dave Beep! Getting personal now are we. I've always thought you were a boring sad person. I only went around with you cos I felt sorry for you! Beep!

Jesus Hang on a minute. What's happening?

Dave Who are you?

Sam Will you get off the line, please. I am trying to fall out with my best mate!

Dave Yeh you can't even have a decent fight these days.

Jesus Hear me out. Just for a sec. Don't worry, this call will cost you nothing. Can't you see what's happening. You're so full of pride that neither of you will give in. Why fall out with people? Friendship is too important. And you are my friends too. Because that's what I have called you. When they stretched out my hands and nailed me to a cross, my heart burned with love for the world and I showed you then how much I loved you, how much I will always love you. Love is far more powerful than hate and anger, far stronger than sin or death. And when I rose from the dead I breathed my Holy Spirit upon you to give you life.

Sometimes you seem so far away from me it feels like you've wandered - never to return. And all I can do is watch you. But I am always here to welcome you back, my gaze never leaves you, and my love never weakens.

Voice There is now one person who can connect all others. He is so caring, so loving that he gave his very life. He stretched out his arms and embraced all people, offering forgiveness and reconciliation.

Dave Recon silly what?

Voice Reconciliation. It means being brought together. Sin divides us you see. Jesus reconciles us to God and one another through the cross.

Dave Oh, I see. (Pause) Sam.

Sam Yeh Dave

Dave I'm sorry mate

Sam Yeh. So am I. Beep!

Voice Jesus. Bringing

Sam Sam

Voice And

Dave Dave

Voice Together

Hymn: The Servant King

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And also with you.

Let us pray (pause for silent prayer)

Father in heaven,
the light of your truth gives sight to the darkness of sin.

May this season of Lent bring us the blessing of your forgiveness and the gift of your light.

We ask this through Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading Joel 2: 13 - 14

Psalm: As the Deer Pants for the water

Gospel: John 8: 2-11

Homily Pointers:

Pick up the themes of the Opening Prayer, darkness and sin, forgiveness and light. The young people have unlit candles, and when they receive a sign of penitence in ashes, they light

their candles as a sign of the light they receive when they receive forgiveness.

Talk about makeovers, and makeover programmes, when people try to make themselves look more beautiful! Today, we do the opposite! We put ashes on our faces. Sin makes us ugly. God's love and forgiveness makes us beautiful. We are of value to God.

Meditation and Preparation for Ashing:

Try using the You Must Love me, by Madonna, from the Evita soundtrack, accompanied by appropriate images

The Blessing of Ashes

We ask God to bless these ashes, to mark our repentance.

Lord, bless these ashes by which we show that we are dust:
they remind us that sin makes us ugly.
Forgive our sins, and make us beautiful in your sight -
for we want to live for ever with Jesus the risen Lord,
Who reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

As each person receives the ashes these words are said:

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel

During the Ashing, play some reflective music, accompanied, perhaps, by Powerpoint Images, such as Stations of the Cross

After each person is ashed, they light their votive candle, which they place on the altar

Meditation after Ashing: "Good Morning God?"

(Three People required)

Voice 1

Morning God.
Sorry I didn't say 'good' morning
But the morning's not really that good.
My parents were arguing again today
And my father banged his way out of the house
Leaving my mother in tears
And the dog hiding under the stairs.
And in all the fuss I forgot my school assignment.
It took me all weekend to do that assignment
And now I'll get in the neck from my teacher!
And to top it all off
I've got PE last session.
God, I hate PE!
Not like my friend – he's football mad!
I can't stand it, God!
So, all in all, not a good morning.
Mind you, things are much better after talking to you.
Are you having a good morning, God?
Is your morning good?

Voice 2

*Morning.
Sorry, you're not feeling too good this morning*

*Some days are better than others, I know.
Don't let everything get you down.
There are lots of people to help you through it
And make things better.
It won't be like this forever.
Life is tough sometimes
And you've had a rough deal this morning.
I know what family life can be like sometimes.
It's not all it's cracked up to be!
Anyway, it's good to hear from you.
I always like to hear from you.
Things are better after talking to you.
Anyway, I hope your morning gets better.
Just remember, I'm always around...I'm never far away!*

Voice 3

Good Morning God!
How are you?
I can't believe it!
I woke up this morning to great news!
I've been accepted for that football coaching course!
I applied for it ages ago
And this morning I got the letter through the post!
I'm dead excited!
I can't wait!
I couldn't wait to tell my mates on the bus this morning.
I don't know how I'll be able to concentrate in school today!
My mind's full of football!
Anyway, thanks for everything, God.
Life's great!

Voice 2

*Good morning!
And what a good morning!
Life's exciting isn't it?!
And that's the way I meant it to be!
I love to watch you play football
It's great to see people using the gifts I gave them!
By the way, since you're so excited and full of happiness
Have a word with your friend.
He's not having such a good morning.
I'm always in need of someone to show others that I care for them.
There are loads of people around who need comfort and healing,
There are lots of people who aren't enjoying life.
So, why not pass your good morning onto others.
That's how I do lots of my work!
Anyway, I'm really excited for you... And by the way, have fun on the course!*

Prayer (Priest)

God our Father,
You are so close to us that sometimes we take you for granted.
You are always there to listen to us.
You are always there caring for us and loving us.
You are always there sharing in our life.
Help us to bring your love and care to others,
And to share in people's sadness as well as their

gladness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray as Jesus himself has taught us:

Our Father...

Final Prayer and Blessing

Lord, we have shared the sadness of life
by remembering sin and suffering;
We have shared the joy of life
in being assured of your forgiveness.
Make us always truly thankful,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny
yourselves, take up your cross and follow him , and
the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son
and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you
always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

Liturgy 2 **A Stone's Throw Away!**

Play some appropriate reflective music before the liturgy begins and as people gather, accompanied, perhaps by images.

Opening Drama: Good Morning Britain

Characters: Richard, Judy, Woman, Floor Manager (FM)

Richard Good Morning!
Judy And welcome to *Good Morning Britain!*
Richard My name is Richard
Judy And I'm Judy. And today we have a special Ash
Wednesday version of the show.
Coming up on today's show...
Richard Mrs Close is in the kitchen giving tips on how to
make the perfect soufflé
Judy There's an update on the weather every ten min-
utes from Mr. Devereaux
Richard We have fashion tips from Miss Watkins
Judy And I'll be getting a sixty-second makeover
Richard It'll take longer than sixty seconds! Also, coming
up – a woman with a remarkable tale to tell
Judy Rescued from the jaws of death by one man.
Richard Remarkable.
Judy And here she is. Good Morning and welcome to
'*Good Morning Britain.*'
Woman Good Morning
Judy Good Morning
Richard Good Morning! You were in a bit of a pickle weren't

you?
Woman You could say that!
Richard To be fair you *had* been a bit naughty hadn't you? I
understand you'd been caught with a man - who
wasn't your husband! Would you like to tell us
about that?
Judy Richard!
Richard What?! I'm just interested.
Judy There are children listening.
Richard (*sighs*) Well, basically you broke the law, and you
were about to be stoned to death. Seems pretty
fair to me. What happened then?
Woman There were all these people with stones - ready to
kill me. But there was a man in the crowd, called
Jesus, who did an amazing thing.
Judy (*getting excited*) Did he rush to your defense? Did
he stand between you and the stoners? Did he get
stoned instead of you?
Woman Not really. He simply changed the way people
looked at each other. He said 'Let anyone who has
never sinned be the first to throw a stone'. People
thought about it, dropped their stones and went
away. So that was my second chance. And I've
jumped at the opportunity.
Judy So how has your life changed?
Woman Well changed simply because I was forgiven.
Richard Well, thanks for coming in today to tell us your re-
markable tale. Maybe you can fill me in on the
other details later.
Judy Richard!
Richard What?! I'm just interested.
Judy So there we are: Now it's over to Mrs Close in the
kitchen, who's just knocked up a sponge and is
about to tell us all we need to know about soufflés!
FM Hang on a minute. Leave the soufflés.
Richard (*Sigh*) Sorry about this. It's the Floor Manager.
What's the matter? Do you want to cut to the
weather instead?
FM No I think we should talk about this a bit more.
Richard Quite right. Could we go back to the time you were
caught with the man who wasn't your husband?
Judy Richard!
Richard What?! I'm just interested.
FM Today's Ash Wednesday -the beginning of Lent.
It's a time for thinking about when we have sinned
against God and each other.
Richard A bit like our guest this morning. I do wish she'd tell
us what she did!
Judy Richard!
Richard What?! I'm just interested!
FM Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days -
where he thought long and hard about his life. And
so we can also do the same kind of thing. Try to
put our lives on track with God. Be more open to
God. Try to be more faithful followers of Jesus.
And in case we think that's too much to do, God
has promised to help us. Our guest's tale this
morning throws up some important questions.
Richard What? Like what she really got up to?!

Richard What? I'm just interested.
FM No, questions like:
Do we carry stones that we need to put down?
Do we have someone or something we need to forgive?
Do we need to ask to be forgiven?
Judy Big questions
FM Yeh, big questions, Judy. But something to think about, don't you think?
Judy Definitely. Ok then, let's forget the weather update. Mrs Close, drop the soufflés, love. (*Noise as soufflés are dropped*) I didn't mean literally!

Here you could have a visual Meditation
Keane – She Has No Time

Hymn: The Servant King

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And also with you.

Let us pray (*pause for silent prayer*)

Father in heaven,
the light of your truth gives sight to the darkness of sin.
May this season of Lent bring us the blessing of your forgiveness and the gift of your light.
We ask this through Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Joel 2: 13 - 14

Psalm: Yahweh, I know you are near

Gospel: John 8:2- 11

Homily

Pointers:

Talk about the phrase, 'People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.' Refer to the stones in their hands which represent our sins, our hitting out and the harm we being to others, etc. After we have been ashed we are invited to place our stones on the altar, as a symbol of our leaving our sins with God, to be transformed by his love and forgiveness. Stones weigh us down, just like sin weighs us down. We shouldn't judge others or cast stones because we have all sinned.

Meditation and Preparation for Ashing:

Try a song such Athlete - Wires, interpreted with appropriate images.

The Blessing of Ashes

Let us ask God to bless these ashes, which we will use as the mark of our repentance.

Lord, bless these ashes

By which we show that we are dust
Pardon our sins
And keep us faithful to the discipline of Lent,
For you do not want sinners to die
But to live with the risen Christ,
Who reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

As each person receives the ashes these words are said:
Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel

After each person is ashed, they place their stone on the altar.

During the Ashing

Try playing music, such as U2: Sometimes you can't make it on your own, with appropriate images such as Stations of the Cross

Meditation: A Stone in my shoe!

I was walking down the street the other day
And I had a stone in my shoe!
It felt like a great big boulder that kept cutting into my foot!
I tried to put up with it for a while
But in the end I had to stop to get rid of it.

And when I took off my shoe...out it fell.

It was tiny!

Miniscule!

Minute!

I can't believe that such a small stone caused so much discomfort!

Lord, I carry stones around with me all the time
Not 'real' stones!

But they're real enough to weigh me down
and cause me discomfort.

Sometimes I'm tempted not to drop the stone
but to throw it at others

To get it as far away from me as possible
and let it be someone else's problem.

These stones come in different shapes and sizes
They are stones of sin, stones of insecurity, stones of arrogance, stones of fear.

Lord, help me to drop the stones that threaten to cause harm to you,
the stones that harm others,
the stones that harm me.

You see, it's only when my hands are empty
that I can receive.

Help me to drop the stones

so that I may come to you, Lord, with empty hands

and a heart that wants to be filled with your love and forgiveness.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray that we may forgive as we have been forgiven, in the words that Jesus gave us...

Our Father,

Final Prayer and Blessing

Lord, we have shared the sadness of life by remembering sin and suffering; We have shared the joy of life in being assured of your forgiveness. Make us always truly thankful, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you
And also with you

May the Lord, who through his death and resurrection, removes the sin that weighs us, strengthen you with his love and the assurance of your forgiveness, and the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit Be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky*

Liturgy 3: Playing Up to God!

Music and Images as people gather

Opening Drama – Big Brother

*Characters: Voice Over, Voice of Big Brother
Mr M, Mr D, Mrs C, Miss W, Pupil (or other)
Big Brother Music*

Voice Day One in the Big Brother House. And Mr M is feeling the pressure.

Mr M sat talking with M C and a pupil

Mr M I don't understand it. Miss N is so timid in school (or church) Put a few cameras on her and she thinks she's

Pupil It's Mr D I don't understand. He used to be so shy. And now he thinks he's Tom Cruise.

Mrs C Well, what about Miss W?! If she has one more can of Red Bull she'll start flying. Those high-energy drinks don't agree with her!

Voice Over The Tension is building in the Big Brother House and Miss W comes to the Diary Room.

Miss W takes a seat. She acts all glamorous and extravagant, almost flirtatious!

BB Hello Miss Watkins

Miss W Hello Big Brother

BB There's something different about you today

Miss W What do you mean?

BB Well, you've glammed up a bit.

Miss W Me? I'm always like this! I may be quiet in school, but come the weekend I'm a high flyer!

BB Is that why you clashed with Mr D?

Miss W Well he is such a prima donna! He's just trying to win votes. He's not being natural. Usually by this time of night he's tucked up in bed with a Horlicks.

BB What housemates are you getting on with?

Miss W None of em! They're all just playing for votes. Playing up to the camera. Know what I mean?! (*winks*)

BB Are you flirting with me?

Miss W Hey, when I'm flirting, you'll know all about it!

BB So, how do you think it's going in the house?

Miss W It's not. I thought Mrs C could cook. Did you see the rubbish she churned out last night. It's just like that saying: 'Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach!'

Voice Day Two in the Big Brother House and the housemates are given their first challenge.

Mr M, Mr D, Mrs C and Miss W and Pupil sat around table

Mr M Well, if you think I'm crawling round on all fours pretending to be a cat you've got another thing coming.

Miss W Come on, be an animal!

Mr D Miss W! What's the matter with you? You used to be so shy and unassuming. You're just trying to win votes!

Pupil Calm down now. There's no need for this kind of behaviour! Just chill out, the lot of you. Forget about the cameras! Just be natural.

Miss W Be natural? How can Mr D be natural with a sun-tan like that.

Mr D Oi, I've just come back from Majorca

Miss W Majorca!

Mr M Well, we've got to do this challenge or we won't be able to eat tonight.

Miss W Well, if Mrs C is cooking that will be a blessing.

Mrs C Excuse me, but after this show I'm hoping to get a television contract for my own cooking programme. I'm gonna be the next Delia Smith.

Voice Day Three in the Big Brother House, and the housemates are still playing up to the camera.

Miss W and Mr D. Miss W, looking into the camera to apply lipstick

Mr D What are you doing?

Miss W. Just putting a bit of lippy on.

Mr D This isn't working is it?

Miss W What?

Mr D The Cameras. This house. Everyone's behaving so ridiculously. It's like we've all forgotten how to be ourselves.

Miss W What do you mean?

Mr D Well, remember that Gospel Reading from Matthew that you used for an assembly (or sermon) a few weeks ago.

Miss W The one about being sincere? 'Beware of practic-

ing your piety before others in order to be seen by them.'

Mr D Yes. Maybe we should just do that. Be ourselves.
Miss W Be ourselves?
Mr D Not too much to ask. Is it?

Voice Day Four in the Big Brother House and there's nothing to report. Everyone is being themselves. Bit boring really. It seemed more exciting when they played up to the camera. They're just sitting around, drinking coffee. Like any normal day. Not really sure what's going on. Maybe this Ash Wednesday Service will give some kind of insight.

Hymn: The Servant King

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And also with you.

Let us pray (*pause for silent prayer*)

Father in heaven,
the light of your truth gives sight to the darkness of sin.
May this season of Lent bring us the blessing of your forgiveness and the gift of your light.
We ask this through Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

Psalm: As the Deer Pants

Holy Gospel Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Homily

Pointers:

Talk about Reality TV Programmes, where people play up to the camera to impress the public and win votes. We don't need to play up to God. He wants us to be ourselves, to be open to him. Not to try to hide our sins, or be someone we're not. He knows us through and through.

If you are using the petals idea for the act after ashing, then you could take a flower and remove petals one by one, mimicking what lovers do, 'He loves me, he loves me not.' When they are invited to scatter petals each petals is 'He loves me.' Through Christ's death and resurrection we know that Christ loves us.

And/or talk about how flowers open up to the sun. And we, as followers of Christ, are to open up to God, and grow towards him.

Also, that through God's forgiveness the ugliness of our sin is transformed into something beautiful.

Meditation and Preparation for Ashing:

Try music such as Damien Rice—The Blower's Daughter, with appropriate images.

The Blessing of Ashes

Let us ask God to bless these ashes, which we will use as the mark of our repentance.

Lord, bless these ashes
By which we show that we are dust
Pardon our sins
And keep us faithful to the discipline of Lent,
For you do not want sinners to die
But to live with the risen Christ,
Who reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

*As each person receives the ashes these words are said:
Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel
Or:*

Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.

Either:

After the have been ashed the young people are invited to take a handful of petals and throw them on the altar, or at the base of the cross, as a sign of being open to God, or wanting their sin to be transformed by God's forgiveness into something beautiful.

Or:

Give each person a card with the words of Psalm 139, and a prayer for Lent, such as:

Father,

You have created me and know me through and through.

Take away the sin that separates me from you and help me to see the value I have in your sight.

Through Lent,

help me to understand the meaning of your Christ's death and resurrection, and teach me to reflect it my life.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or, if you are able to, give them a small cross, perhaps a lapel cross.

During the Ashing, suggested Music:

*Here I am Lord by Mike Stanley (Rejoice n Sing, Volume 2),
Yahweh, I know you are near*

How deep the Father's Love for us

And/or play reflective music with Images

Meditation:

Lord, there are times when I pretend to me who I'm not, when I put on a show or try to impress others.

Lord you have searched me out:

You know me through and through.

Lord, there are times when I'm afraid to be myself, because I think I don't fit in or because people won't accept me for who I

am.

Lord you have searched me out:
You know me through and through.

Lord, there are times when I make mistakes, and things I do or say spoil your image in me, and stop me from being the person you want me to be.

Lord you have searched me out:
You know me through and through.

Lord, there are times when I'm intolerant, when I can't accept people, or I expect them to be just like me.

Lord you have searched me out:
You know me through and through.

Lord, there are times when I hate myself and I am disappointed in the person I am, and I can't live with myself.

Lord you have searched me out:
You know me through and through.

Lord, there are times when I stand by and see others criticised or talked about, when I am prone to gossip or undermining others

Lord you have searched me out:
You know me through and through.

Priest

Lord,
You have searched us out,
you know us through and through.
You have created us in the image of your Son,
and sent him as one like ourselves,
though free from sin,
that you may see and love in us,
what you see and love in Christ.
Remove from us the sin that spoils your creation
and help us to follow you in the light of Christ.
Through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray that we may forgive as we have been forgiven, in the words that Jesus gave us:

Our Father...

Blessing

The Lord be with you
And also with you

May the Lord who knows you through and through strengthen you with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: There is A Redeemer

Notes

These liturgies were written for school for a morning liturgy, and so they can be adapted appropriately for use in church, by changing references and names in the dramas, prayers, etc.

Make the most of the space available to you. If you have the facilities, play CD Music through your speaker system, and project appropriate images onto a screen. Also, you can easily record the dramas on a video camera, which is especially appropriate for the dramas that use TV Programmes.

Hymns

The hymns given are suggestions only, although some have been appropriately placed because of images and themes that have been followed through. For example, the Psalm, As the deer pants, in Liturgy three picks up the themes of riches and treasures as explored in the first reading and Gospel.

Readings

The Readings are suggestions. After the first reading, use the words, This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.** For the Gospel, when read by a priest or deacon, use the response, Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to Saint N. **Glory to you, O Lord.** And, 'This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ.**'

Popular Music:

Here are some appropriate songs that could be used to draw out the theme, especially when accompanied by appropriate music.

Robbie Williams—Feel, from the album of the same name
Robbie Williams—Advertising Space, from the Album, Intensive Care
Athlete—Wires, from the album, Tourist
U2—Sometimes you can't make it on your own, from the album How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb
Keane—She has no time, from the album Hopes and Fears
Madonna—You must love me, from the Soundtrack Evita
Damien Rice, The Blowers Daughter, from the album 'O'
Katie Meluah—I cried for you, from the album, Piece by Piece

There is loads of reflective, Christian music that's appropriate such as Taize, CJM, etc.

Youth Department

The Youth Department has an Information Sheet on using Powerpoint in worship, available online at www.enterthemystery.com or from the Youth Chaplain.

Thanks

I am grateful to the staff and pupils at St John Baptist Church in Wales High School who have been more than willing to try out these liturgies for successive Ash Wednesdays.

Fr Dean Atkins