

## Ash Wednesday Liturgy Lent 2012

*This liturgy can be used as a whole school liturgy or for individual classes to serve as a start to the season of Lent.*



### Opening Hymn

*Choose from the following, or any other appropriate song;*

O let all who thirst  
Come to the water all you who thirst  
Water of life

### Words of Welcome and Introduction

*The liturgy can open with these or similar words;*

Today we mark Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Christian season of Lent. This day is a special day when we think about the love that Jesus shows to us. Lent prepares us in our heart, our mind and our spirit, to celebrate the great feast of Easter.

Lent can be a time to think about how we live our lives. Some of us might give up things that we enjoy, like chocolate or playing computer games. Some of might try to be extra helpful at home or to do something for someone else. All of us are invited to pray for each other and for our world.

As we start this special time of Lent, let's pray that God will be close to us.

### Opening Prayer

Wonderful God  
your light shines into our world  
and brings happiness and peace to our hearts.  
As we begin our journey of Lent today  
give us your blessing and strength  
so that we show may care for one another.  
Encourage us, creator God,  
to be close to you.  
Amen.

### Reading from Scripture (Isaiah 55:1-2)

The Lord says,

Come, everyone who is thirsty –  
here is water!  
Come, you that have no money –  
buy grain and eat!  
Come! Buy wine and milk –  
it will cost you nothing!

Why spend money on what does not satisfy?  
Why spend your wages and still be hungry?  
Listen to me and do what I say,  
and you will enjoy the best food of all.

### **Come to the Water!**

*Pupils are invited to lead this section of the liturgy, reading the parts shown. Photographs of Rosena can be found in 'Rosena's story' powerpoint and can be used in this part of the assembly( [cafod.org.uk/lent](http://cafod.org.uk/lent))*

Reader 1                      The reading from Scripture shows God's invitation to drink, eat and celebrate!  
It's an invitation for everyone to share in the wonders and blessings of God's  
creation – no matter who you are, where you come from, or whatever your  
background is. God says that every person is part of his family and we can all  
share in his goodness.

Reader 2                      Sadly, though, we can see that our world doesn't always share this same view.  
Not everyone has the same chance to share in the richness of God's earth.

Reader 3                      In Zambia, Rosena is someone who has come to appreciate God's blessings  
more and more. A few years ago, she would spend many hours each day  
walking the long distance to the river, where she would collect water for  
drinking, cooking and bathing. She would carry large containers of water on her  
head many miles. Very often she would be late for school because the task was  
so tiring and took so long.

Reader 4                      Can you imagine setting off to the nearest river to collect water as soon as you  
woke up in the morning? Can you imagine what it would be like to carry a  
heavy bucket of water on your head for many miles?

*[This section of the liturgy is optional. A pupil should be primed to pretend to volunteer to carry a bucket  
of water on his or her head, through the congregation. In fact, the bucket of water will be empty (or  
could contain confetti or scraps of paper) and the pupil will use their best acting skills to pretend to carry  
the water, wobbling around the worship space, before 'tripping' and spilling the 'water' over pupils.*

Reader 5                      Well, instead of trying to imagine it, let's put it to the test. Could we have a  
volunteer, please?

*The primed pupil is chosen and comes to the front*

Reader 5                      To try and imagine what it might be like for someone like Rosena, we're going to ask you to carry this bucket of water very carefully to the back of the room.

'Volunteer'                That sounds easy enough.

Readers 1-5                *Together* On your head!

*The 'volunteer' reluctantly puts the bucket on their head, with the assistance of one or two readers, pretending that the bucket is heavy. They then walk carefully towards the back of the room, ideally inbetween rows of pupils. The 'volunteer' should look as if they are about to trip, before finally dropping the bucket and covering some of the congregation with the confetti.]*

Reader 6                      Not so easy! Rosena had a bad back, was often exhausted, and often missed out on learning time at school because she was busily collecting water.

Reader 7                      And to make matters worse, the water she collected from the river was often dirty and infected. Drinking dirty water made many people ill through a disease called cholera. Rosena's own grandmother was infected with cholera, too, and very sadly died.

Reader 8                      Using dirty water is dangerous. So CAFOD have been working with Rosena's family to bring about a solution.

Reader 9                      Now Rosena's village has a borehole nearby where she can collect clean water. The family also have a water tank outside their home so they can collect rainwater. These are two simple things, but they've already made a huge difference to Rosena's life.

Reader 10                    Now she doesn't have to walk for miles each day to collect water. Rosena has much more time to go to school and to play with her friends. The water from the borehole is clean and fresh – so the whole village is now much more healthy.

Reader 11                    God said, 'Come, everyone who is thirsty!' Now Rosena can accept that invitation!

### **Droplets**

*Explain how Rosena's story coincides with the CAFOD theme **Make a Splash! Give it up for Water!** Through fundraising this Lent, CAFOD can provide more boreholes, tanks and clean water for more communities like Rosena's village.*

*All pupils, staff and other participants are invited to show their commitment to God and to fundraising for CAFOD through the symbolic action of bringing forward a card symbolising a drop of water. These can be prepared in class beforehand, cut out, decorated and illustrated. Older children could be encouraged to write a particular action or commitment that they will try to achieve during the season.*

*Children are invited to come forward, line by line, and to place their drops of water in a central place. As more drops are added, reference can be made to the central theme of Lent Fast Day: that individual drops might seem small and unimportant, but when all these drops come together they form oceans. Our individual promises have much more impact when they join together.*

*Quiet instrumental music can be played during this time.*

*If you wish, this liturgical action can be combined with the Reception of Ashes. See below.*

### **Reception of Ashes**

*If children are to receive ashes during this service, they can do this as part of the Droplets action, above. Children place their raindrops in the central position and then move to either side to receive ashes (distributed in at least two places). As ashes are placed on the forehead, the following words are said:*

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel

*It may be important to remind pupils of the significance of the ashes and the reason for wearing them on this day.*

### **Prayer of the Faithful**

Loving God, we pray for our school family as we begin this season of Lent. Help us to be generous in our actions.

We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

Caring God, we pray for children who are only able to drink dirty water. Through our fundraising, help us to bring clean water to more and more families.

We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

Gentle God, we pray for those who have become sick through dirty water. As we support the work of CAFOD, let us never lose hope for a fair and just world.

We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

Wonderful God, we pray for one another as we journey through Lent. As we pray, give up, and think of others, inspire us to be kind and compassionate to those in need.

We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer!**

### **Closing Prayer**

Be close to us, Lord Jesus,

as we journey through Lent.  
As we pray and share with others,  
help us to see that all people are precious,  
and that we are all blessed by your love.  
Amen.

### **Closing Hymn**