

Ash Wednesday

What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the day after Shrove Tuesday. It is the first day of Lent in the Christian calendar.

The time of Lent lasts for 40 days, which is the same length of time Jesus was in the desert. Many Christians see this as a time to get ready for Easter, think about Jesus' time in the desert and how they might avoid the temptation to do things they should not.

How Did It Begin?

In the Bible, it is written that Jesus Christ spent 40 days in the desert, where he fasted – didn't eat – during the day. The Devil joined him and tried to make Jesus prove that he was the Son of God. The Devil tempted Jesus with different things. Jesus never gave in.

What Happens on Ash Wednesday?

On Ash Wednesday, many Christians go to church. The priest will ask people to go to him and he puts ashes on their forehead. The ashes are put on in the sign of the cross. The priest will say, "repent and believe in the Gospel". This is to help people ask God for forgiveness for anything bad that they have done.

Where Do the Ashes Come From?

Traditionally, during the Palm Sunday celebrations, the palm leaves, which are used in a church, will be burnt and made into ashes. The ashes are saved for the next year so that they can be used on Ash Wednesday.

Modern Traditions

From Ash Wednesday, people often give something up until Easter Day, such as sweets, biscuits or chocolate. This is because these type of foods are seen as temptations and it reminds people of how Jesus fought temptation in the desert. Often, people see it as a time to do good things, like volunteer at a charity or help others in need.



Questions

1. What day does Ash Wednesday follow?

2. What did the Devil try to make Jesus prove?

3. How long does Lent last?

4. Some Christians use the time of Lent to get ready for something. What is it?

5. What does a priest put on people's foreheads?

6. What sign does he use?

7. What are people asking God for if they have ashes on their heads?

8. Something is burned to make the ashes. What is burnt?

9. Sweets, biscuits and chocolates are thought to be _____ by some people.

What word is missing?

10. What else might some people do during Lent?
