



On your marks

The season of Lent begins and ends with the cross. On Ash Wednesday there is the tradition of receiving the cross of ashes on the forehead to mark the beginning of a six-week period of prayer and reflection before Easter; and on Good Friday, we finally come to the cross of history on the hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus died.

The following outline would provide a link to further work during Lent on crosses that are found in the *Barnabas* book [A-cross the World](#).

This idea could be used in a variety of ways:
as material for a Sunday group session with children to prepare for Lent
as a resource for a special event with children and adults on Ash Wednesday
as part of a special Lenten display.

This outline also contains an idea for a Bible Focus using a parable that connects to the story and meaning of this particular cross.

Get set

It will be helpful to obtain a copy of [A-cross the World](#) from *Barnabas*. This book has information and creative ideas based on 40 different crosses from around the world. It also includes ideas for all-age worship, study sessions, games, outlines for special events, collective worship in school and also for R.E. lessons.

Go!

1. **Ash Wednesday** marks the beginning of Lent.

The key theme of course is *repentance*.

On the Sunday before Lent you could prepare your group for a whole series on the cross by telling them about the custom of the cross of ashes given to worshippers on this day.

2. Under supervision you will need to burn some of the palm crosses from last year to create some ash. At the end of your session together you can use this ash to make cross marks as the 't's of the first and last letters of the phrase ' **T**he season of Len **T**'. Each child can make a copy of this as a preparation for Lent
3. In Baptism we are signed with a cross on our foreheads, though of course this is done in water. It marks our new beginning in Christ. The cross of ashes on our foreheads marks our decision to say sorry for what we have done wrong and to get ready to make a fresh start with Jesus again.
4. A Bible parable for this day would be that of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-24), focusing



particularly on the younger son. It is about repentance and coming back to God. His journey home - during which he rehearses his special repentance speech for his father - is a picture of the journey we make through Lent. For a reflective story version of this in the style of Godly Play «page:click here=1895» .

5. For this session there are a number of possible ideas for prayers, both formal and creative, in *A-cross the World*- see pages 113 -119 and pages 123 -128.