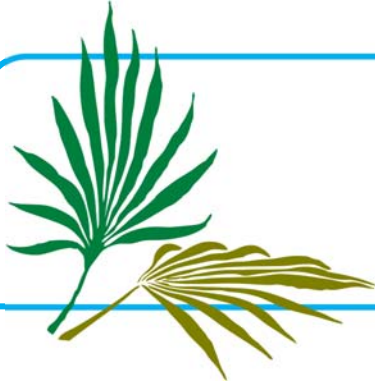


Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Ashes and Elements

**Directions:** Read the short passage below about the science and symbolism of ash. Then, answer the reflection questions that follow.

When something burns, like wood or dried palm leaves, the heat causes the material to change into gases and fine gray dust called **ash**. Scientifically, ash is what remains after all the energy and carbon in the material are used up. It contains minerals such as calcium, potassium, and magnesium—tiny elements that once helped the plant grow. Spiritually, ash holds deep meaning on **Ash Wednesday**. The ashes placed on foreheads remind people of **mortality**—that life is fragile and precious. Yet, they also symbolize **renewal**, because ashes can return to the earth and help new things grow. In both science and faith, ash shows that endings can lead to new beginnings.

### Questions:

1. What happens to materials when they burn and turn to ash?
2. Name one mineral found in ash and explain what it once helped the plant do.
3. What does ash symbolize in the Christian tradition?
4. How can the idea of ashes helping new things grow connect to renewal in life?
5. In your own words, explain how faith and science both show that change can lead to something good.