

# Taking Faith Home

January 1, 2012

## **Scripture Verse for this Week:**

Isaiah 60:1 (CEV)

“Jerusalem, stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. The glory of the LORD shines brightly on you.

- Say at mealtime, read at bedtime, and try to commit to memory

## **Mealtime Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you light our path and make bright our days; receive our gifts of thanks and praise Amen.

## **Our Four Keys to Passing on the Faith**

### **Caring Conversation:**

- Share about a memorable trip you have had.
- Wise men travelled from the Far East to visit the child, Jesus, guided by a star. What can you remember about their adventure?
- The wise men brought special gifts to give to Jesus. What gifts would you give to him? Why?

### **Devotional Practices:**

January 6 is the festival day of Epiphany in the church. The word epiphany means to show, make known, or reveal. It is linked to the visit of the wise men who brought royal gifts to the Christ child, revealing him to the world as Lord and King. Light is a key image or symbol associated with Epiphany. As part of your home devotional times this week, read the story of the wise men’s visit from a Bible or Bible storybook (Matthew 2:1-12). If possible, act out the story as a household. Discuss what gifts you offer to Jesus in your lives. To finish, sing together the carol, “We Three Kings.”

### **Rituals and Traditions:**

There are many wonderful household traditions associated with Epiphany. Choose one or more of the following ideas to introduce into your home:

1. Have a home candlelight evening – turn off all lights and use only candles to guide you. If it is a clear night, take a few minutes to look at the stars.
2. Have an Epiphany treasure hunt – “hide” a baby Jesus figure somewhere in your home and have household members search for it.
3. Make stars out of cardboard and paint them gold or yellow. Hang them throughout your home.
4. An old Epiphany tradition involves hiding small items in a cake. On the night before the feast of Epiphany, a special cake would be served with three beans hidden within. Whoever found the beans would be the Kings at the Epiphany feast. In line with this tradition, bake a cake with coins inside. Give those who find the coins a paper crown to wear.

### **Service:**

A bright star guided the wise men to the home of Jesus. Bake or prepare star-shaped cookies to give away as gifts to people in your church or local community. Write the “Scripture Verse for this Week” onto small labels to attach to your gift packages.

# Taking Faith Home

January 8, 2012

## **Scripture Verse for this Week:**

Genesis 1:1 (CEV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- Say at mealtime, read at bedtime, and try to commit to memory

## **Mealtime Prayer:**

For all you've created, and give us to share, we thank you, O God. How great is your care! Amen.

## **Our Four Keys to Passing on the Faith**

### **Caring Conversation:**

- What do you know or remember about the day you were baptized?
- What happened when Jesus was baptized?
- What did God do for you when you were baptized?

### **Devotional Practices:**

As part of your home devotional time this week, share a rite of baptismal remembrance. Gather a jug of water, an empty bowl, a larger center candle, and a smaller candle for each person. Pour the water into the bowl and say these words (a leader says the words in italics, all say the words in bold).

*For your gift of water:* We thank you, Lord.

*For the water of baptism:* We thank you, Lord.

Now light the center candle.

*For your gift of light, which warms and guides us:* We thank you, Lord.

*For the light of Christ:* We thank you, Lord.

*By being baptized, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.*

Each person now lights his or her candle from the center candle, as the leader says:

*In baptism we were joined to the life of Christ. Let us shine for him.*

Household members may dip their fingers into the bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads, saying these words:

You are a baptized child of God, who is well pleased with you.

### **Rituals and Traditions:**

Go for a household nature walk. Take a digital camera or paper and pencils. When you return, make a poster using your pictures or drawings. Write the words of Genesis 1:1 in the center. Place the poster in a prominent place in your home.

### **Service:**

God calls us to help him in taking care of his creation. As an act of community service, take a few plastic bags and walk around your neighborhood picking up litter (remember to wear gloves).

# Taking Faith Home

January 15, 2012

## **Scripture Verse for this Week:**

John 14:6 (CEV)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life!” Jesus answered. “Without me, no one can go to the Father.”

- Say at mealtime, read at bedtime, and try to commit to memory

## **Mealtime Prayer:**

God bless this food, God bless this day, God keep us safe in every way. Amen.

## **Our Four Keys to Passing on the Faith**

### **Caring Conversation:**

- Philip looked for Nathanael and brought him to Jesus. Who has brought you to Jesus?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- In what ways is your life different because you follow Jesus?

### **Devotional Practices:**

Psalm 139:13-16 tells how each of us was specially and uniquely created by God and of his intimate love and concern for each of us. Read these verses in your home devotional time this week:

You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother's body. How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that. What you have done is wonderful. I know that very well. None of my bones was hidden from you when you made me inside my mother's body. That place was as dark as the deepest parts of the earth. When you were putting me together there, your eyes saw my body even before it was formed. You planned how many days I would live. You wrote down the number of them in your book before I had lived through even one of them.

Share stories of where and when you were born. If possible, look at baby pictures of household members. Say prayers of thanks for each other.

### **Rituals and Traditions:**

Make up a “Fun Box” that can help your household become more intentional about spending quality time together. The Fun Box will contain slips of paper listing activity ideas for the household. It can be plain or decorated, but with a lid of some sort. Working together as a household, make up a list of fun, inexpensive activities you can do together, and write each one down on a different slip of paper (e.g. going for a walk, playing a game, singing favorite songs, making biscuits, reading a favorite book together). When you feel the need for some “together time,” have a household member draw out a slip of paper and then work on making the activity happen!

### **Service:**

The weeks following Christmas are a good time to review the material possessions we have. Have each household member choose at least one item (of good working order!) they no longer use or could do without. Take these to a local charity or community resource center. Say a prayer of thanks for the many ways God provides for us.

# Taking Faith Home

January 22, 2012

## **Scripture Verse for this Week:**

Mark 1:17 (CEV)

“Jesus said to them, “Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish.”

- Say at mealtime, read at bedtime, and try to commit to memory

## **Mealtime Prayer:**

Come, Spirit of God, and make this food sweet.

Give strength to our hands and guide our feet. Amen.

## **Our Four Keys to Passing on the Faith**

### **Caring Conversation:**

- Have you given up something to follow Jesus? Share your story.
- What did Simon, Andrew, James and John give up to follow Jesus? How do you think they felt?
- What does it mean to be a “fisher of people”?

### **Devotional Practices:**

In your home devotional times this week, pray for people who do not know Jesus. Make a list of names (perhaps in the shape of a fish!) and pray for each of the people in turn. Reproduce the list for each household member to carry with them during the week.

### **Rituals and Traditions:**

For many centuries the fish has been an important Christian symbol. In times of the early church, it was dangerous to be known as a Christian in some parts of the Roman Empire; so believers developed a code language to reveal their faith to others who were Christian. A Christian would draw on the ground the upper half of a fish symbol. If the other person were a Christian, they would recognize this and add a second curved line to complete the drawing of a fish.

- Place the fish symbol in different parts of your home to symbolize your faith in Jesus.
- Go on a “chalk walk” in your local community. Use chalk to draw the fish symbol on footpaths in your neighborhood. When you do so, pray for the people who work or live nearby, that they may live with faith in Jesus.
- Come up with your own household code language to symbolize your faith in Jesus.

### **Service:**

St. Francis of Assisi is credited as having said, “Preach the gospel always; if necessary, use words.” Our acts of loving service to others are part of what it means to “fish for people.” Is there a non-Christian in your circle of relationships that you could serve in some way this week? Discuss together and plan an act of service (e.g. invite them into your home for a meal; offer to help with childcare; surprise them with a gift of baked goods).

# Taking Faith Home

January 29, 2012

## Scripture Verse for this Week:

Psalm 35:10 (CEV)

“Every bone in my body will shout: “No one is like the LORD!”

You protect the helpless from those in power; you save the poor and needy from those who hurt them.”

- Say at mealtime, read at bedtime, and try to commit to memory

## Mealtime Prayer:

Lord, without your love we'd go unfed. Thank you for our daily bread. Amen.

## **Our Four Keys to Passing on the Faith**

### Caring Conversation:

- Share about a teacher you liked and respected. What did you learn from them?
- Read Mark 1:21-22. Why do you think people were amazed at Jesus' teachings?
- What do you find amazing about Jesus?
- What do you wish to learn from Jesus?

### Devotional Practices:

Make it a focus of your home prayer time this week to pray for teachers, including those who teach others about Christ in seminaries, schools and churches.

### Rituals and Traditions:

If you have a household member who is a student, share a household time of prayer and blessing. Here is a prayer you can use:

Heavenly Father, be with \_\_\_ in his/her studies. Keep \_\_\_ safe from anything that would harm him/her in body, show your love to others at school and to do what is right. And help \_\_\_ to remember that you are with him/her every day, whatever happens; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Martin Luther's Small Catechism:

The Gospel story from Mark shows Jesus' power over evil. In the Lord's Prayer we pray, “Deliver us from evil.” This is what Martin Luther wrote about this prayer in his *Small Catechism*:

“In this prayer we sum up all our prayers. We are asking: ‘Father, save us from every kind of evil – anything that could hurt our body or soul, our possessions or reputation. Be with us when we die. Be kind to us and take us from the troubles of this world to be with you in heaven.’”

### Service:

Think of a teacher you are thankful for. Phone them with a word of encouragement, write them a letter, or send them a card.

mind or spirit. Help \_\_\_ to gain enjoyment from learning and to learn well. Help \_\_\_ to be happy at school and to have good friendships. Help \_\_\_ to