



Taking Faith Home

**“Grow the Church by Growing
People in Faith”**

User Guide

*Lectionary Year A
2019-2020*



www.milestonesministry.org



This resource for promoting Christian faith formation in the life of a congregation can be used for home devotions, Bible study groups, and other small group settings, including congregational boards and committees.

It significantly deepens daily and lifelong faith formation.

Suggested use for the various parts of Taking Faith Home:

Weekly Theme: This gives the theme for the week based on the Bible passages used for each particular Sunday in the church year. Reflect on this as you use other parts of Taking Faith Home.

Daily Bible Readings: Find a preferred time of day to read and meditate on these Bible passages. Having a dependable routine increases the likelihood of using these daily readings. Reflect on what words or images come to mind as you read these passages.

Hymn of the Week: This provides a suggested hymn that complements the weekly theme and scripture readings. See the www.milestonesministry.org website under the toolbox/guides tab for a complete listing of text and music authors.

Weekly Milestones: This allows for a moment to share or think about recent mountain highs and/or valley lows in your life.

DECEMBER 1, 2019
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking faith home

Advent is the season of hope.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS
These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 24:36-44	The coming of salvation
Monday	Isaiah 2:1-5	Peace that lasts forever
Tuesday	Romans 13:11-14	The day when Christ returns
Wednesday	Hebrews 11:1-7	The great faith of God's people
Thursday	Psalms 125	A song of trust in God
Friday	1 John 1:5-10	God is light
Saturday	Psalms 122	A song of praise
Sunday	Matthew 3:1-12	Prepare the way of the Lord

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK
O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!
Isaiah 2:5 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING
A Prayer for the Week:
Lord Jesus Christ, you who are the light of the world, guide our steps to walk in your light. Amen.
Mealtime Prayer:
Dear God, may we eat and drink with thankful hearts this day, for all that you provide every day and in every way. Amen.
A Blessing to Give:
May all go well with you and may peace be within you, through Christ our light and our salvation.

DECEMBER 1, 2019
HYMN OF THE WEEK
This Little Light of Mine

WEEKLY MILESTONES
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS
Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
• Talk or think about a time you were waiting for someone or something with excitement.
• Advent means arrival or coming. How do you get ready for the coming of Jesus?
• In dark times Jesus brings light and hope. How do you experience hope?

DEVOTIONS
Read: Isaiah 2:1-5.
Advent is a season of hope and anticipation of God's action to redeem and save the world. That is Isaiah's message, too. Isaiah sees what others do not. Isaiah sees Jerusalem as the highest mountain, but Psalm 125:2 sees other peaks as higher. Isaiah sees the people walking in the paths of the LORD's teaching, but before and after Isaiah 2, judgment is announced for the people's disobedience. Isaiah sees weapons of violence and destruction that are turned into farming tools, but the nations of Israel and Judah were utterly destroyed by its neighbors. The message of Isaiah is a message of hope that the Christian faith holds to while brokenness and sin are still seen every day of our lives. What hope do you cling to as a follower of Jesus?
Pray: Come Lord Jesus, come and bring peace between nations. May we see the light of your glory in all the world. Amen.

SERVICE
In Psalm 122:8 it says: For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you." During this season of hope, list ways you can give hope to those who are sad or anxious and help them to feel "the peace within." How will you choose to let your light shine through acts of service to others during the four weeks of Advent?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS
Set up or make an Advent wreath for your home. There are four candles in a circle on the wreath and one in the center. The circle represents the eternity of God. The four candles are often blue to signify the hope of the Advent season. The center candle is white. It represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This first week you will light one candle. Say: This is the first week of Advent. Advent means "coming." We are waiting and watching for the coming of Christ. Let us light the first Advent candle, the candle of Hope. [light one candle]
Read: O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD! [Isaiah 2:5]
Respond: Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives us hope.
Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope. May we walk in the light of the Lord and live in peace with all that you have made. Amen.

New for 2019-2020

Weekly Theme

Daily Bible Readings

Scripture Verse

Prayers and Blessing

Hymn of the Week

Weekly Milestones

Conversations

Devotions

Service

Rituals and Traditions

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MILESTONES MINISTRY
In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

You will be amazed at how people will move from knowing they should use Taking Faith Home to being excited when they do.

Scripture Verse for this Week: This text matches the weekly theme and provides a devotional anchor to your daily faith formation. Consider memorizing this verse each week.

A Prayer for the Week: Use this prayer with the Scripture for the week, the daily readings or any other part of Taking Faith Home.

Mealtime Prayer: Offering a prayer at mealtime is a foundational faith practice that blesses our daily faith formation with a spirit of thanksgiving and praise.

A Blessing to Give: Receive this blessing as a gift of the faith community to you and extend these words to loved ones in your life. By doing so you experience how you are blessed to be a blessing to others. An option would be to mark the sign of the cross on the forehead as you offer the blessing.

The Four Key Faith Practices:

Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions are the Four Key Faith Practices that are the foundation to any other faith practice the church uses to nurture the Christian faith.

Caring Conversations: These conversation starters provide meaningful reflection on biblical texts and our daily lives. They help you bond with others on the journey of faith. They also help you in the important task of talking about the Christian faith.

Devotions: Being devoted to God's word serves as a foundation for practicing the presence of God and blessing you with faith, hope, and love. Having a special time of day to do devotions increases the regularity of this important practice in your life.

Service: Christ tells us to serve others. By living the faith in love, we learn the value and joy of the Christian faith. Serving others reminds us of the breadth of the Kingdom of God and that our faith is personal but not private. Faith motivates us to serve the world in love.

Rituals and Traditions: Symbolic actions grounded in the Christian tradition throughout the year provide a beautiful and holistic way of experiencing the grace of God. As you practice rituals and traditions, regularly use ones that fill you with peace, passion, meaning, and hope.



Do you want to dig deeper into Taking Faith Home as a vital tool for lifelong faith formation for all ages?

- Explore our website under the Taking Faith Home tab and get more ideas.
- Enter into an affordable short-term coaching relationship with Debbie Streicher or David Anderson to help your congregation implement a number of faith formation strategies.

Please share your stories at: info@milestonesministry.org

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