



Taking Faith Home

“Grow the Church by Growing
People in Faith”

User Guide



MILESTONES
MINISTRY

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 (TFH):

Weekly Title: 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 TFH.

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.

The diagram illustrates the components of a 'Taking Faith Home' page for November 29, 2015 (First Sunday of Advent). Blue arrows point from various sections of the page to labels on the left and right sides:

- Weekly Title:** Points to the title 'NOVEMBER 29, 2015 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT'.
- Daily Bible Readings:** Points to the 'DAILY BIBLE READINGS' section, which includes a table of readings for each day of the week.
- Scripture Verse:** Points to the 'SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK' section.
- Prayers and Blessing:** Points to the 'SAY, PRAY, AND BLESS:' section, including a prayer for the week and a mealtime prayer.
- Conversations:** Points to the 'CARING CONVERSATIONS' section, which includes a discussion prompt.
- Devotions:** Points to the 'DEVOTIONS' section, which includes instructions for an Advent Wreath.
- Service:** Points to the 'SERVICE' section, which includes instructions for making Christmas decorations.
- Rituals and Traditions:** Points to the 'RITUALS AND TRADITIONS' section, which includes instructions for a Christmas Tree Blessing.

The page content includes the following text:

NOVEMBER 29, 2015
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking faith home

The words of Jesus will always be with us.

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

Sunday	Luke 21:25-36	The coming of the Son of Man
Monday	Daniel 7:13-14	A vision of the Son of Man
Tuesday	Joel 3:14-18	The day of the Lord is near
Wednesday	Micah 4:1-7	The Lord's coming reign of peace
Thursday	Luke 17:22-37	The day of the Son of Man
Friday	Romans 13:11-14	Our salvation is near
Saturday	Psalm 90	Prayer for life from God
Sunday	Luke 3:1-6	Prepare the way of the Lord

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK
Jesus said, "The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will."
Luke 21:33 (CEV)

SAY, PRAY, AND BLESS:
A Prayer for the Week:
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. In you I place my trust, O God. Amen. (Psalm 25:1-2)

Mealtime Prayer:
Jesus, bless our home with hope this Advent. As we enjoy your gifts, make us ready for your coming. Amen.

Blessing to Give:
The Lord give you strength in your heart, so that you are ready when Jesus comes again. Amen. (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

CARING CONVERSATIONS
Discuss in your home or small group:
• Share about something you really look forward to.
• Jesus tells us that one day he will come again in glory. How do we care for others as we await Christ's return? (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

DEVOTIONS
The Advent Wreath is a great home devotional tool. Make a wreath from greens, wire, or Styrofoam and place four purple or blue candles with a white candle in the center. Light one candle during the first week of Advent, another during the second week and so on. On Christmas Day, light the white candle in celebration of the birth of Christ. Use this simple liturgy for lighting your first Advent candle this week:
Leader: The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be the hope of the nations. Our Advent candle is the candle of hope. As we light it, let us celebrate the hope that Jesus gives us. (Light the candle.)
All: Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving us hope. Fill our home with hope this Advent. Amen.

SERVICE
Make some Christmas decorations using various craft materials (cardboard, colored paper, glue, glitter etc.). Give them away to neighbors and friends as a sign of Christmas cheer.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS
Have you set up and decorated your Christmas tree? When this is done, take some time for a Christmas Tree Blessing. Gather round the tree and use the following ritual.
Leader: This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful and of God's goodness. It stands in our home as a tree of light, a sign of Jesus' presence with us as the Light of the World. He was the shoot that grew from the stump of Jesse to become a branch that gives us shelter.
Reader: Jeremiah 33:15-16
All: God of all Creation, we thank you for this tree. Bless us as we gather around it. May it light up our hearts with your love, joy and peace, and may the gifts placed under it remind us of the great gift of your Son Jesus. Amen.
Finish the ritual with a "countdown" towards the lighting of your tree. Have each family member point out their favorite Christmas tree decoration.

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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 TFH 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 TFH.

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 Keys:

Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions are the Four Key faith practices that are the foundation for 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. It helps you bond with others on the journey of faith. It also helps you in the important task of talking about your Christian faith.

Devotions: Being devoted to God's word serves as the 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, continue to use the 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 a short-term coaching relationship with Debbie Streicher or David Anderson to help your congregation implement a number of strategies.

Please share your stories at: info@milestonesministry.org

Taking Faith Home

Lectionary Year C
2015-2016

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