

Living Faith



Dear Fellow Soul Shapers,
Blessings to you as you prepare for the coming of the Christ Child and as we wait for Jesus to come again!

Each year my family and I put out our Advent Wreath and our Nativity. But at our house these things are more than decorations. They were a way to teach our children and now grandchildren about the stories of faith. We gather each of the four Sunday nights in Advent to light the candles in the Advent wreath and, and introduce the people in the story of the birth of Christ. The first week we put the stable in the living room where we will gather on Christmas day. We talk about Mary and Joseph, how they were a young couple living in Jerusalem. The government decided to count all the people (a census) and Mary and Joseph had to make a journey to Bethlehem. Then the children take turns placing Mary, Joseph, and a donkey on a journey to the stable. Each week the statues are moved around the house and new characters are added. On Christmas Eve, all the candles are lit and the whole story is read again from the Bible as the statues take their place in the story and in the stable. Finally it is time to place the baby Jesus in his manger. This month in LF@H you will find some information and ideas of how to use your Christmas decorations to pass on faith. Blessings on the Journey,

Elayne Werges, Diaconal Minister serving Cross Roads Lutheran Parish-Osage & Nora Springs

BAPTISMAL PROMISES

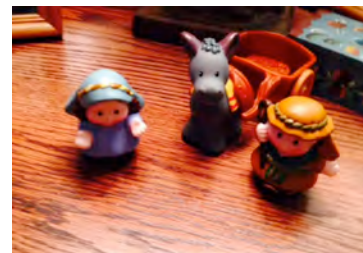
PLACE IN
THEIR HANDS
THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES



The Crèche

St Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first display depicting the birth of Jesus around the year 1223 in Italy. St. Francis was trying to help people celebrate the birth rather than focusing on material things. His living version was held in a cave. Animals were brought in and villagers dressed for their parts and were placed to represent how the story is described in the Bible.

From then on Nativities became hugely popular and quickly spread over the Christian World. Eventually the figures were made into statues and placed in churches, homes, and public areas.



This information has been prepared for you by the

Northwestern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network

for use by families and local congregations. For more ideas about how you can pass on faith in your homes go to:

http://www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/YouthFamilyResources.asp

If you have a comment or suggestion for future newsletters or are interested in joining the Home-Life Network please contact the synod office. Find us on Facebook!

Blessing of the Nativity Scene

Read Luke 2:1-14

Blessing of the Nativity Scene:

O Lord our God, with Mary and Joseph, angels and shepherds,
and the animals in the stable,
we gather around your Son, born for us.

Bless us with your holy presence and inspire us to help those
who have no place to dwell.

Be with us that we might share Christ's love with all the world,
for he is our light and salvation.

Glory in heaven and peace on earth, now and forever.

Amen.

Sing: Away in the Manger

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YOU CAN FIND
THE STORY OF THE
NATIVITY IN
YOUR BIBLE IN
THESE PLACES:
MATTHEW 1:18-24
LUKE 2:1-14

Make a Nativity Set!

Family traditions are important. If your nativity scene set is breakable you might not want to move those pieces around the house as we celebrate Advent. There are some inexpensive plastic versions available either through ordering on line or in your favorite toy store.

How about considering having the family make a nativity set. A nativity can be made out of virtually anything from rocks and chunks of wood to clay or popsicle sticks. You can order kits or you can search Pinterest for tons of ideas. Some of the ideas even have printable downloads that you can print off and use. There is even one that you make into a cube shape.



Celebrating with your Family & in your Congregation

Nativity Scenes are beautiful pieces of art and each of them have a story to tell, both the original story of the birth of Jesus, but also the owners story of how this manger came to be part of their families story. Perhaps it was a gift or a family heirloom. Possibly it was purchased on a trip to a far off place. Here is an idea to try in your congregation or with extended family. Invite people to jot down a few words about their crèche and invite them to bring them to one of the family gatherings or at a congregational event at the church, such as the Children's Christmas program. Display them in an area where they can be seen and enjoyed. Serve hot cocoa and cookies while sharing the history of each of them.

