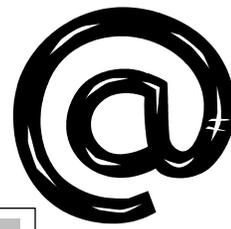


Living Faith @



Christmas

Everyone at our house gets exhausted after all the preparations and activities of Advent & Christmas Day. Did you know that Christmas officially begins on December 25th? The Christmas season lasts for the next 12 days ending on the Twelfth Night or Epiphany. Take advantage of this time to do some fun things as a family while the kids are off from School. This newsletter offers some ideas that you can do at home.

Merry Christmas,
Elayne Werges, Diaconal Minister

First Day of Christmas-December 25th

Draw for Secret pals.....

Do something for your pal on each of the 12 days....one the last day guess who was yours. You can do a simple chore for them or even give them an inexpensive gift that you made or bought. Remember it is a secret! Have an Epiphany Party on the Twelfth Day.

The 2nd Day of Christmas- December 26th

Have a family game night challenge

- Organize a Wii bowling Tournament. Invite the neighbors and their kids over for a fun evening. Offer fun prizes like a decorated chocolate chip cookie....or do it old school and play a board game.

Third Day of Christmas-December 27th

Have A Christmas Scavenger Hunt

Make a list of all the Christmas symbols you see around the house. Assign someone to write clues on post it notes or recipe cards for each item and have them announce. Or hand out the clues. The first person who figures out the clue gets a point. Give them a special activity to do that day.

Examples for clues:

- ★ I am round like a doughnut (Christmas wreath)
- ★ I ring in season (bell)
- ★ I remind you of God's everlasting love (evergreen tree)
- ★ I've got the Christmas Story between covers (Bible)
- ★ I pointed the way for three travelers (star)
- ★ It all started here (Nativity Scene)



4th DAY OF CHRISTMAS- DECEMBER 28th

Think about those who don't have enough....Clean out your toy box. Take the good stuff that you don't use anymore to a local agency that works with kids....or donate them to the church nursery. 'Quiet' toys and books are especially needed.

5th Day of Christmas- December 29th

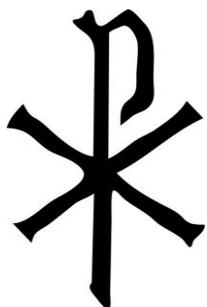
Look up the song "The 12 Days of Christmas". Have the kids rewrite the song into your own words. Have each of them write one of the verses. Sing your song at supper.

THE TWELVE Days of Christmas

Sixth Day of Christmas- December 30th

Make a Tree of Wisdom

You will need: Bibles, small pieces of paper, pencils, colorful tissue paper, ribbons, gold-foil wrapped chocolate coins or Treasures
Directions: Find wisdom in the Book of Proverbs and come up with some of your own. Write them on slips of paper. Fold the slips with a coin in the middle wrap in tissue paper. Tie them with ribbon and hang on the Christmas tree. Later in the day gather as a family to choose wisdom bundles to open and read. The gold coin is a reminder that wisdom is better than gold.



This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern 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 or contact Elayne Werges at

elaynewerges@gmail.com – Look for us on Facebook!

The 7th Day of Christmas-December 31st
Remembering your Blessings....

Celebrate New Year's Eve by inviting friends with children over for a pot luck supper and lantern launching. Have enough lanterns for each family unit (available at amazon.com). Write what your family's blessings for the year, what you are thankful for and what you are concerned about. Launch the lanterns and watch them float away. Celebrate the hopes and dreams for 2013!

Ninth Day of Christmas-
January 2nd

Pray for Your Family and Friends
As a family sit down and go through each of the cards and pictures that you received this year. Pray for each of the card senders and share how you know them and share your favorite memories.



Table Talk....

Conversation Starters to use when you gather for a meal, as you are driving in the car, or as you are preparing for bed.

- ✓ What are your blessings today/this week.
- ✓ What were your light places and dark places today/this week.
- ✓ What can we pray for today/this week
- ✓ Tell the story of Jesus's birth in your own words.
- ✓ Share one interesting fact you learned today/this week

8TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS
JANUARY 1ST

Find out what if your family has a traditional New Year's food. For many people with Norwegian heritage they would make Lutefisk, Lefse, and Meat balls. A Southern tradition is to make Hoppin' John, Corn Bread, and Collard Greens. What is your family's favorite meal. Give each person something to make or do to make the meal special.

10th Day of Christmas- January 3rd
Have a Talent/No Talent Show

Begin planning ahead of time.
Encourage everyone to develop some kind of an act...the goal is to have a good time! Encourage the kids to work together to come up with an act. Be Creative!

11th Day of Christmas-
January 4th

Idea: Make a Time Capsule to Open Next Year!

What you will Need.

- ★ a vessel large enough to store your things.
- ★ Items to include
- ★ Paper, pens, envelopes

What to do.

Get everyone involved. Find items that remind you of this Christmas season. Avoid putting anything that will attract bugs, so no food type things. Include a newspaper. Have everyone write a letter to themselves or to the entire family. Make a video or power point with pictures from everything you did, store it on a jump drive. Gather as a family to put everything into the time capsule. Open it in one year...Keep them from year to year.



Begins January 6th and
Ends on Shrove
Tuesday-February 12th

12TH DAY OF
CHRISTMAS-
JANUARY 5TH

Prepare for "Three Kings Day", the day of Epiphany that happens on Jan. 6th. It is the celebration of the arrival of the three wisemen who came to visit Jesus. Read about their visit in Matthew 2. To celebrate, make a King's Cake. Every year along the Gulf Coast people celebrate Mardi Gras with a Kings Cake. The cake is baked and decorated and a small baby doll is hidden in the cake, whoever finds the baby gets to be the King for the day and host next years celebration!



EASY KINGS
CAKE RECIPE:

2 tubes of Cinnamon Roll dough with frosting*

Purple, green, and gold (yellow) sugars

A small plastic baby (find in the party section)

Mardi Gras Beads

DIRECTIONS:

Prepare large cookie sheet as directed on the package. Open and remove the dough from the tubes. Arrange the rolls on the pan in a circle.

Overlap the dough slightly. Bake as directed on the package. When golden brown, remove from the oven. Frost with frosting provided. Sprinkle each color of sugar over warm frosting in sections.

*Homemade or Frozen cinnamon roll dough may be substituted.

THE COLORS OF
MARDI GRAS

Meanings: Gold-Power Green-Faith Purple-Justice