

Living Faith @



December, 2012

Dear Friends,

The time before Christmas is a special time in our family. We choose a night for the hanging of the greens. The tree is brought in, the garlands are hung, the Holy Family pieces are carefully placed in the Nativity Crèche. We enjoy plates full of our favorite appetizers, dips, Christmas cookies, and snacks. The ornaments are unwrapped from the tissue that has kept them safe all year. All while we talk about the memories of Christmas Eves past. Ok, we only got that to work one time But it is a treasured memory and it has become part of the family story we tell each year. Advent is about more than decorating and having great food. It is about preparing for the Christ Child. All the preparations are for anticipating His return.

Included in this issue are some ideas for spending precious time with family to preparing for the Messiah. Blessings, Elayne Werges, Diaconal Minister, MA, Mom, and Grandma

ADVENT: Getting Ready The Jesse Tree

Idea: Advent is the time of preparation in anticipation of Jesus's birth and his second coming. Start a new tradition this year with a Jesse Tree.

What you will need: 3 foot Christmas tree or branch in a pot of rock or dirt, cloth or paper to decorate the pot, paint. Craft supplies such as: heavy paper, scissors, glitter, clip art, glue, yarn, scraps of cloth, etc.

What to do: On each of the days of Advent your family can make a simple ornament to put on the Jesse Tree. Each of the decorations have a special meaning that will portray the spiritual heritage of Jesus. It is a kind of a visual family tree that is suggested in Isaiah 11:1. Make each ornament about 2-3 inches tall. They can be made as a craft or drawn on heavy paper and cut out. Find a time each day to meet as a family to read the Bible story and make the ornament. Talk about how the person is connected to Jesus. As you make the symbol, talk about how the symbol connects to the story. The final ornament is placed on the top of the tree on Christmas day.

Below you will find a list of symbols and the readings for each day in Advent.

Adapted from: The Jesse Tree by Raymond and Georgene Anderson

Day	Symbol	Reading	Day	Symbol	Reading
December 2	Jesse-Tree Stump&branch	1 Samuel 16:1-3	December 14	David-Harp	1 Samuel 16:14-23
December 3	Birth of Life-animals	Genesis 1:24-28	December 15	Shepherds-staff	Psalms 23
December 4	Adam & Eve-apple	Genesis 3:1-24	December 16	Solomon-Crown	1 Kings 3:3-28
December 5	Noah-Ark&Rainbow	Genesis 6:11-22	December 17	Elijah-Raven	1 Kings 17:1-16
December 6	Abraham-tent or camel	Genesis 12:1-7	December 18	Elijah&Healing-Hand	11 Kings 5:1-27
December 7	Isaac & the Ram	Genesis 22:1-4	December 19	Isaiah-Scroll	Isaiah 6:1-8
December 8	Jacob and the dream-ladder	Genesis 27:41-28:22	December 20	Jeremiah-Bible	Jeremiah 31:31-34
December 9	Prophecy-Rose	Isaiah 9:2-7	December 21	Nehemiah-church	Nehemiah 13:10-22
December 10	Joseph-Coat	Genesis 37:1-36	December 22	Angels & a candle	Hebrews 1:1-14
December 11	Moses-Tablets	Exodus 20:1-17	December 23	Zechariah&Elizabeth-Dove	Luke 1:5-25
December 12	Blessing of Aaron-	Numbers 6:22-27	December 24	Mary-Lily	Luke 1:36-38
December 13	Samuel & the Word-Lamp	1 Samuel 3:1-21	December 25	Christ-Chi Rho	John 1:1-18



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 or contact Elayne Werges at elaynewerges@gmail.com

Find us on

“Hands to Work, Hearts to God!”

Idea: Make an ornament for each member in your family that reminds your family of how they served God in 2012. And as you bring it out in future years a reminder of how much your children have grown.

Things You will Need:

- ♥ Assorted colors of stiff felt
- ♥ Sharp scissors
- ♥ Glue
- ♥ Yarn or ribbon
- ♥ Sharpies or pencil
- ♥ Heart template
- ♥ Glitter paint

Directions:

1. Trace around the hand of each family member onto a piece of felt. Let each person pick their own color.
2. Cut out the hands.
3. Trace a heart onto a contrasting color of felt. Cut it out.
4. Glue heart onto the felt hand.
5. Attach a piece of ribbon or yarn as a hanger.
6. Decorate as desired with glitter, ribbon, and yarn.
7. When dry hand on the tree or give as a gift.



1. Spread sand on the plate.
2. Place the candles on the plate. Four in a square shape & 1 in the middle.
3. Decorate the plate with evergreens, Christmas balls, or poinsettias.
4. Find a time to gather to light a candle. Sunday evening might be a time. Light the candle and read the Scriptures. Let the kids draw a picture to illustrate the readings.

1st Week: The PROPHET Candle-The youngest lights the candle. Read Isaiah 9:2-7

2nd Week: The BETHLEHEM Candle-The oldest lights the candle. Read Micah 5:2-4

3rd Week: The SHEPHERD Candle-The mother lights the candle. Read Luke 2:15-20

4th Week: The ANGEL Candle-The father lights the candle. Read Luke 2:8-14

Have a Baby Shower for Mary and the New Baby!

Idea: Have a service project as a family or Congregation. Collect baby food, formula, baby items, diapers, books, towels/washcloths, or toys. Donate what you collect to a women's shelter, food pantry, or other agency.

What you will need:

- Cake/cup cakes with and Ice Cream
- Napkins, cups, plates, and forks
- Your favorite juice
- Pretty tablecloths, balloons, and party decorations

What to do:

1. If you are a congregation; put a notice with the date and that you are collecting things for babies in the newsletter and bulletin.
2. Decorate the party space.
3. Have a party. Enjoy cake and treats.
4. Play fun games and chose someone to open the gifts.
5. Learn about how poverty affects children.

Table Talk



Conversation Starters: Use these when you gather for a meal or you are driving in the car.

- ✓ What are your blessings and booboos today/this week.
- ✓ What can we pray for today/this week
- ✓ What is the world's biggest challenge? Plan a family service project.
- ✓ Take turns talking about your favorite Advent tradition.

Gather the Family: Advent Wreath

Idea: Create an inexpensive Advent Wreath to celebrate the Sundays of Advent together.

You will Need:

- ♥ An old plate
- ♥ 5 tea light candles
- ♥ Colored Sand & greens



Directions:

