

Dear Faith Shapers,

The 12 Days of Christmas is a great time to say thank you for the amazing gift of Christ and to share that with all that you meet. Random Acts of Kindness are a great and easy way for children and families to share the gift of love in small and simple ways. Challenge your families to do one act of Christmas kindness a day to spread the love that is brought to all of us in the baby in the manger. These 12 days following Christmas lead us to Epiphany when the wise men come to visit baby Jesus and worship him. Don't put your nativity scene away right after Christmas! Leave it up and add your wise men on Epiphany (January 6th) and talk about Epiphany (check out the idea on the second page). Whatever you do as a family, enjoy time together and the wonder and awe of this season of joy as we welcome our king!

In Christ,
Deb Ford



12 Days of Christmas

The 12 days of Christmas are more than the silly Christmas song we all know and love. Many people think the 12 days lead up to Christmas are the actual 12 days, but the actual days are the ones following Christmas—Christmas day through the eve of Epiphany on January 5th. Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th. In the calendar of the church year, the 12 days of Christmas are the season of Christmas.

Here are some ways to celebrate the Christmas season.

- *Use a white tablecloth of placemats.
- *Light your advent wreath. All four candles and the white Christ candle in the center.
- *Write the names of Jesus on ornaments. Here are just a few from Scripture: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Immanuel, Holy One of God, Christ the Lord, Lamb of God, Messiah, King of Israel, Bread of Life, Good Shepherd, The Way the Truth and the life, Root of Jesse, Lord of Lord, King of Kings, and Morning Star.
- *Make a birthday cake for Jesus.
- *Hold a baby shower for Jesus and bring the gifts to your local organization that helps new moms.
- *Make a 12 Days of Christmas Kindness calendar using random acts of Kindness. Check out some ideas on the second page.



This information is prepared for you by the **Northwestern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network** for use by families and local congregations.



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Random Acts of Kindness Ideas

Take time as a family to set up 12 Days of Christmas Kindness or 12 Random Acts of Kindness. Do an activity each that is kind for someone else.

Examples include:



- *Make a card for someone in your neighborhood and deliver it
- *Do a chore without being asked or one that is not your normal chore
- *Share something with a friend
- *Give compliments to every member of your family
- *Tell or read a story to someone
- *Hold the door for someone
- *Tell your parents or children about a happy memory you have with them
- *Fill a bag full of clothes to donate
- *Fill a bag full of books to donate to a library
- *Help make dinner
- *Tell people you meet to "Have a nice day"

Celebrate New Year's Day

Give each person a candle. The first person tells their favorite memory from the past year and one thing they are looking forward to in the coming year. Then they light someone else's candle. This continues until every candle is lit. Close with prayer asking God to help and guide you in the coming year.

Epiphany is a season immersed in the imagery of light. Light from the star that led the wise men to Jesus, Jesus the light of the world, and our call to be light in the world. Celebrate Epiphany by:

EPIPHANY



*Making pomander balls and remembering the spices the wise men brought to Jesus

*Changing the candles in your advent wreath to white and continuing to light them each day.

*Make cinnamon star ornaments

*Add star decorations to your Christmas tree.



*Save a present to open on Epiphany