

Dear Faith Shapers,

I don't know about you but I am feeling weighed down by all that is happening in our world. It is hard to focus on hope when we hear so much worry and negativity. How can we proclaim God's message of hope and peace in this world? How do we teach our kids to proclaim God's story of hope and redemption?

It's by how we live. I am hopeful as I write this newsletter. You are people who are teaching your kids to reflect God's light each day, you are teaching kids to change the world, you are passing the faith to the next generation. This is what we do and this is who we are. Keep telling God's story, keep serving God's people and keep praying for our world.

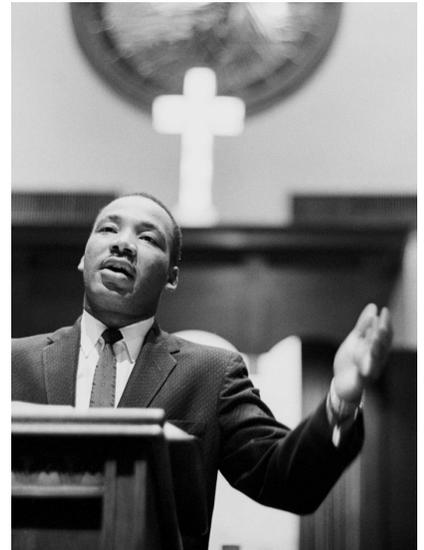
O God, grant that your holy and life-giving spirit may move our hearts to break down barriers that divide us and give us strength to work towards peace and justice in your world.

Lisa Kammerer
Associate in Ministry

5 Martin Luther King Jr. Values to Instill In Our Kids

1) Equality

Martin Luther King Jr. is most remembered for leading the civil rights movement to end segregation. MLK Jr. quote, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."



2) Faith

MLK Jr. was deeply religious. He was the son of a minister and became a minister. He said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

3) Non-violence

MLK Jr. said, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."

4) Love

MLK Jr. believed love, rather than hatred or violence, is the answer to the world's problems. He said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

5) Service

MLK Jr. lived a life of service to God and God's people. He once said, "Everyone has the power for greatness, not for fame but greatness, because greatness is determined by service." and "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

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Northeastern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network
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January 6th is the day of Epiphany. Epiphany is a day and a season of the Church year. On the day of Epiphany we celebrate the Magi visiting Jesus. Epiphany means manifestation and revelation. Epiphany symbols and images include: light, incense, and gift giving. The season of Epiphany begins on January 6th and will last until Ash Wednesday on February 10th. Epiphany is a time to bring gifts to Jesus, whose face we see in people who have needs. Consider serving others as a family. Volunteer at a nursing home, food pantry, or other community organization that serves. You may even want to give the gift of kindness and focus on Acts of Kindness you can do each day.



Lent is sometimes called a journey or pilgrimage. A journey through Lent to bring us to Easter joy. Most people pack a bag to take on a journey. What are the things we need to put in our lent luggage?

Prayer? Fasting? Self examination? Repentance? Reading God's Word? Daily Devotions? Asking forgiveness? Service? Restarting or returning to a discipline?

Just as you prepare for a trip, make plans with your family as to how you will observe Lent together this year. Will you give things up together? Add something? Serve together? Read daily devotions? Light candles each week of Lent? Read the Bible together? Spend time planning and pick one thing to focus on during Lent.

Not your typical Lenten give ups.

We give up or add things during Lent to remind us of Christ's suffering. As we miss those things or are adding new things, we remember all Christ has done for us. Here are some non-traditional things to give up or add this Lent:

- Text four people a day to see if you can pray for them and then pray for their requests*
- Pick 4 sets of clothes to wear all of Lent*
- Recite a Bible verse before each meal*
- Check you phone only 3 times a day*
- Leave a huge tip every time you eat out*
- Post a Bible verse each day on social media*
- Leave kind notes of encouragement*
- When you buy a treat, buy one for someone else*
- Go one day a week without make-up*
- Use Instagram to take pictures of people you love and are thankful for*
- Turn off your phone when you are with your family*