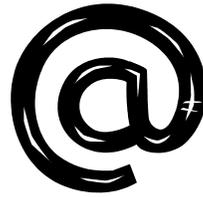


Living Faith



Dear Fellow Soul Shapers,

“25 (ish) Days until Christmas!” was a commonly heard proclamation at our house on or about December 1. This proclamation transcended generations. We were so excited that Christmas was coming. It was in this atmosphere that I learned to tell the story of the Baby Jesus. When Christmas finally came, our tradition was to go to worship, go to grandparents Stoen’s house, go to Grandparents Lien’s house and inbetween all that, we had Christmas at our house. We had something to eat, we did the dishes, we acted out the nativity story, and then we could open the gifts. It was soooo exciting!!!! And we loved every minute of it.

It is times like these in families around the world where the seeds of faith are nurtured and encouraged. Not with the exchanging of gifts, but with the spending time together and passing on the story.

I pray that each of you have a blessed Advent, a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Blessings on the Journey,
Blayne Werges, Deacon
Cross Roads Lutheran Parish-
Osage and Nora Springs, Iowa



Show & Tell “the Story”



A few Ideas to celebrate Advent and Christmas:

Look for resources online,

- Make a Jesse Tree and Ornaments-Tell the story of Christmas through Jesus’ family tree. (See the Living Faith @ Home December 2012 issue)
- Celebrate the traditions of other cultures. The “LA Posada” is the search for a place for Mary and Joseph to stay in Bethlehem. Talk about what it is like not to have a place to call home.
- Gather your favorite books, especially Advent and Christmas stories...Wrap them up and put them in a special basket. Take one out each day and read it as a family.
- Start a yearly Christmas journal-Jot down your highs and lows, a special memory from this year. Each year take out the journal and add to it. Add pictures!

This information has been 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> Find us on Facebook!

Family Litany of Thanksgiving for Christmas

Family Gatherings can be a special time... After you enjoy your delicious meal but before the gifts, take some time to reflect by answering the questions below, bless each other, and Pray together.

- What you will need: Items that are colored red, green, yellow, blue, white. Like colored popsicle sticks, Legos, or M&M's. Adapt colors accordingly. You can give each person their own item, or have one set of colored things that is passed around.

Red-Share a memory of a Christmas past

Green-Share your favorite Christmas Story

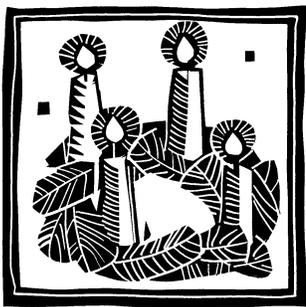
Yellow-Describe the best Christmas Meal

Blue-What is your favorite Christmas Tradition

White-Share a hope for the New Year

Blessing-Make a sign on the sign of the cross on another and say these words: "You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and Marked with the Cross of Christ Together. Pray your favorite table prayer.

Telling the Story



Look Up the Story of the first Christmas from
Matthew 1:18-25 or
Luke 2:1-20.

- Read it right from the Bible or read a children's version.
- Have the kids act it out.
- Or use props such as a flashlight for the star. Give everyone a sound to make such as baaing for the sheep and mooing for the cattle.
- Tell the story by singing the songs of Christmas.

Blessing the Christmas Tree

Gather at the Decorate tree and say this prayer to bless your time together.

God our creator, we praise you for this Christmas tree, gift of the earth and sign of your evergreen presence. As we illumine this tree, let your blessing come upon us. Send us your Son, the tender branch of Jesse, who brings us light and life. May we who stand in its light eagerly welcome the true Light that never fades. All glory be yours now and forever. Amen.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

