



# Taking Faith Home

**“Grow the Church by Growing  
People in Faith”**

## **User Guide**

*Lectionary Year A  
2016-2017*



[www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)



*This resource for promoting Christian faith formation in the life of a congregation can be used for home devotions, Bible study groups, and other small group settings, including congregational boards and committees. It significantly deepens daily and lifelong faith formation.*

## Suggested use for the various parts of Taking Faith Home (TFH):

**Weekly Theme:** This gives the theme for the week based on the Bible passages used for each particular Sunday in the church year. Reflect on this as you use other parts of TFH.

**Daily Bible Readings:** Find a preferred time of day to read and meditate on these Bible passages. Having a dependable routine increases the likelihood of using these daily readings. Reflect on what words or images come to mind as you read these passages.

**Hymn of the Week:** This provides a suggested hymn that complements the weekly theme and scripture readings. See the [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org) website under the toolbox/guides tab for a complete listing of text and music authors.

**New for 2016-2017!**

**Weekly Theme**

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Scripture Verse**

**Prayers and Blessing**

**Conversations**

**Devotions**

**Service**

**Rituals and Traditions**

**Hymn of the Week**

NOVEMBER 27, 2016  
FIRST SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT

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Advent is a season for waiting and watching.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 24:36-44	The sudden coming of salvation
Monday	Matthew 24:3-14	Persevere to the end
Tuesday	Romans 13:11-14	An urgent appeal
Wednesday	Matthew 24:45-51	The faithful servant
Thursday	Luke 17:22-37	The coming of the Son of Man
Friday	Joel 3:14-21	The day of the Lord
Saturday	Psalms 122	A song of praise
Sunday	Matthew 3:1-12	Prepare the way of the Lord

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK**

(Jesus said) "Always be ready! You don't know when the Son of Man will come." Matthew 24:44 (CEV)

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for the Week:**  
Lord Jesus, may our faith in you keep us ready for your return and direct our lives to be filled with love and peace. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**  
Lord Jesus, please bless our Advent eating and our Advent waiting. Give us hearts that are ready and faith that is steady. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**  
May the promise of Christ's return fill you with hope and courage. May your faith burn bright each and every day.

NOVEMBER 27, 2016  
**HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
Wait for the Lord

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**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell about a time when you were waiting for something or someone to come.
- Jesus asks his followers to be ready, as he could return at any time (Matthew 24:42). How do we stay ready for Jesus?
- Tell about how the promise of Christ's second coming gives meaning to each day.

**DEVOTIONS**

Set up an Advent wreath to use in your home in the weeks leading up to Christmas. An Advent wreath contains five candles: four in a circle and one in the center. The circle represents the eternity of God, and the four candles are usually blue or purple. The center candle is usually white. It represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, in the first week of Advent, light the first candle.

Say: This is the first week of Advent. Advent means "coming." We are waiting and watching for the coming of Christ. Let us light the first Advent candle, the candle of waiting. (The candle is lit.)

Read: Psalm 130.  
Pray: Lord God, thank you for Advent. In this season of waiting, make us ready for Jesus to return. Amen.

**SERVICE**

Romans 13:13 tells us to live as people whose actions are seen clearly in the day. Those actions include deeds of love and mercy. As you prepare for Christmas, purchase or make a gift that will be given to someone in need who is not a family member or friend.

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

Make an Advent paper chain with a link for each day of December up to Christmas Day. Write one of the instructions listed below on each link. Remove a link each day and do what it says:

- Say what gives you peace.
- Describe what gives you joy.
- Share what gives you hope.
- Give a compliment to someone.
- Read Jeremiah 33:14-16.
- Sing or pray an Advent hymn.
- Tell about a Christmas memory.
- Read Isaiah 11:1-3.
- Say what you like about Advent.
- Sing a Christmas carol.
- Tell what you like about Christmas.
- Read Micah 5:2-4.
- Tell the nativity story to each other.
- Make a Christmas card for someone.
- Read Isaiah 7:14.
- Sing another Christmas carol.
- Do an act of service for another.
- Make Christmas cookies.
- Read Isaiah 9:6-7.
- Go for a walk.
- Draw a Christmas picture.
- Read Luke 1:26-38.
- Read Matthew 1:18-24.
- Read Luke 2:1-7.

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MILESTONES MINISTRY In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

*You will be amazed at how people will move from knowing they should use TFH to being excited when they do.*

**Scripture Verse for this Week:** This text matches the weekly theme and provides a devotional anchor to your daily faith formation. Consider memorizing this verse each week.

**A Prayer for the Week:** Use this prayer with the Scripture for the week, the daily readings or any other part of TFH.

**Mealtime Prayer:** Offering a prayer at mealtime is a foundational faith practice that blesses our daily faith formation with a spirit of thanksgiving and praise.

**A Blessing to Give:** Receive this blessing as a gift of the faith community to you and extend these words to loved ones in your life. By doing so you experience how you are blessed to be a blessing to others. An option would be to mark the sign of the cross on the forehead as you offer the blessing.

**The Four Keys:** *(for practicing faith)*

*Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions are the Four Keys for practicing faith that are the foundation to any other faith practice the church uses to nurture the Christian faith.*

**Caring Conversations:** These conversation starters provide meaningful reflection on biblical texts and our daily lives. It helps you bond with others on the journey of faith. It also helps you in the important task of talking about your Christian faith.

**Devotions:** Being devoted to God's word serves as the foundation for practicing the presence of God and blessing you with faith, hope and love. Having a special time of day to do devotions increases the regularity of this important practice in your life.

**Service:** Christ tells us to serve others. By living the faith in love, we learn the value and joy of the Christian faith. Serving others reminds us of the breadth of the Kingdom of God and that our faith is personal but not private. Faith motivates us to serve the world in love.

**Rituals and Traditions:** Symbolic actions grounded in the Christian tradition throughout the year provide a beautiful and holistic way of experiencing the grace of God. As you practice rituals and traditions, continue to use the ones that fill you with peace, passion, meaning and hope.



**Do you want to dig deeper into Taking Faith Home as a vital tool for lifelong faith formation for all ages?**

- Explore our website under the Taking Faith Home tab and get more ideas.
- Enter into an affordable short-term coaching relationship with Debbie Streicher or David Anderson to help your congregation implement a number of faith formation strategies.

**Please share your stories at: [info@milestonesministry.org](mailto:info@milestonesministry.org)**

# Taking Faith Home

*Lectionary Year A*  
2016-2017

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