

**Christmas and New Year's Greeting**

**Free Christmas Eve/Day Taking Faith Home Download**

**Free New Year's Eve Taking Faith Home Download**

**Christmas Tree Blessing, First Christmas, and New Year Milestone Moments**

**Taking Faith Home Cards**



## Christmas and New Year's Greeting From the Milestones Ministry Team

This past year we have been blessed by family, travels, and opportunities to partner with you in ministry.

We are thankful for the stories you tell us about the impact Milestones Ministry has had in your homes and congregations. We look forward to continually developing new and innovative ways to reach all ages with the good news of Jesus Christ.



David and Gloria Anderson



Burt and Debbie Streicher

We wish you and yours a very joyous Christmas and blessed New Year.

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6*

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We invite you to place caring conversations, scripture,



### Christmas Tree Blessing Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church. In Milestones Ministry provides a clear and usable model for congregations, homes, and community to connect faith formation resources with daily life experiences. The rich variety of life experiences represented in Milestones Ministry does the essential ministry of the church: promoting Christian faith formation with family, friends, and others with whom we can reach. The season of Advent signals the beginning of the church year and gives a wonderful opportunity for the congregation to help families establish rituals and traditions to be handed from one generation to the next. An Advent wreath provides a visual reminder in the home of Jesus birth and His coming again. It is a good time to introduce faith practices in the home through reading scripture, prayer, and lighting a candle each week. The Christmas tree is another visual reminder. The custom of the Christmas tree was introduced in Germany in the 16th century. Legend tells that the evergreen was chosen and decorated with candles to represent God's creation and the gift of God's Son as the Light of the World. This tradition is continued today as we use evergreen trees, strings of lights, and ornaments to decorate the tree in our homes. Milestones incorporate a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestones Ministry Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation.

Moments that cause us to pause and shift gears like the beginning of the church year and preparing for Christmas happen once a year and sometimes come all too quickly. Providing opportunities to take a breath and find God's presence in these moments is important. This Christmas Tree Blessing Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

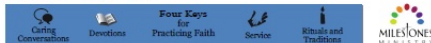
**Naming** – Taking time to put up the Christmas tree and decorate it together with family is important. Naming the tree as essential to building family rituals and traditions around the tree is significant.

**Equipping** – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations and provides prayers that point to Jesus as the Light of the World while we prepare for Christmas.

**Blessing** – Blessing the tree is a reminder of the role the home has in providing a place for faith lives to grow.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like a new ornament for the tree or a picture of family in front of the tree each year is a good way to establish a memory each year.

**Reinforcing** – It is a good idea to follow up after the Christmas Tree Blessing Moment by gathering again with family around the tree on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to share the journey you had together through the month and talk about ways to continue the practice of caring conversations and prayers throughout the coming year.



## Christmas Tree Blessing, First Christmas, and New Year Milestone Moments

Moments like preparing for Christmas or beginning the New Year come all too quickly. Providing opportunities to take a breath and find God's presence in these moments is important. The [Christmas Tree Blessing Milestone Moment](#), [First Christmas Milestone Moment](#), and the [New Year Milestone](#)

**Moment** incorporate a simple structure that names, equips, blesses, gifts, and reinforces these special times in our lives.

The importance of the role of the home in faith formation cannot be overstated. The home is church, too!

Suggestion:

- Download one or all three Milestone Moments and make copies.
- Place each one in a gallon plastic bag.
- Place an ornament with the one for the Christmas Tree Blessing or First Christmas and a candle in the New Year Milestone Moment bag.
- Place bags in a visible place and invite individuals and families to take one of each home to use as they gather with friends.
- Follow Up in the New Year by asking how they were used and invite invite stories to be told.

prayer, and blessings in the hands of friends and family by downloading the Christmas Eve/Day Taking Faith Home. It is reproducible and can be printed and placed in a bulletin or can be emailed in digital format to reach many more. At this time of year, many are traveling and unable to be with us for Christmas Eve or day.

Suggestion:

Place Taking Faith Home in the hands of those who have loved ones in the hospital or nursing homes at this time of year. A caring conversation and prayer with an added blessing may be very well received from one who is lonely or ill.

If you do not have Taking Faith Home in your congregation, we invite you to

[download the one for Christmas Eve/Day here.](#)



## Free New Year's Eve/Day Taking Faith Home Download

Excerpts from the New Year's Eve/Day Taking Faith Home:

### Caring Conversations:

*Discuss in your home or small group:*

- What were some of your joys and disappointments in 2017?
- What are your hopes and concerns for the coming year? - How did you experience God's love and care in the past year?

### Devotions:

Read: Revelation 21:1-6a.

The anticipation of a new year can be a reminder of how God promises to make all things new one day. Every tear will be wiped away. Every bit of sadness and even death itself will be no more. This promise is filled with great love like "a bride adorned for her husband" (v.2). As you reflect on the year past and the year ahead, take time to recall the good news of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, who is "making all things new" (v. 5) and who fills us with hope, love, and life.

Count your blessings by making a list of all the things you can think of to give thanks to God for this past year. Then use the following prayer.



### New Year Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. Milestones Ministry provides a clear and usable model for congregations, homes, and community to connect faith formation resources with daily life experiences. The rich variety of life experiences represented in Milestones Ministry does the essential ministry of the church: promoting Christian faith formation with family, friends, and others with whom we can reach. Many of us look to the New Year as a time to begin again. We may want to lose weight, stop smoking, commit to gathering with family more often, or envision other changes we feel would improve our lives. Whether we accomplish our goals or not, we have traditions we do to welcome in the New Year. In Spain, six grapes are eaten—one at each stroke of the clock. In Japan, rice cakes called Mochi are made. The Germans drop molten lead into cold water to see what shape it takes and predict the future. In the United States, a very celebrated event is the ball dropping in New York City. Traditions vary from country to country, state to state, and family to family. Recognizing God's presence as we gather to celebrate the New Year with family and friends may be the beginning of a new tradition for some. We encourage you to consider establishing a new ritual that can be done in your home. Milestones incorporate a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestones Ministry Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation.

Moments that provide opportunities for family to gather and value God's presence in the past year and seek ways to recognize it in the New Year are special and an important step along our faith journey. This New Year Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

**Naming** – Taking time to gather with family and friends in the home on New Year's Eve to recognize traditions and provide time for faith talk make time together memorable.

**Equipping** – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations and provides time to reflect on the past year and share thoughts, hopes, and dreams about the New Year.

**Blessing** – Blessing one another at this time when one year is ending and another begins, places an emphasis on God's presence in our daily lives.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like a candle that can be lit during this gathering and inviting each person to remember this time together by lighting the candle throughout the coming year during prayer times serves as a reminder of God's gifts.

**Reinforcing** – It is a good idea to follow up after the New Year Milestone Moment by gathering again with family in the New Year, perhaps on Valentine's Day, February 14th, to touch base with one another and share what changes there have been since the last gathering.



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## Taking Faith Home Cards



## Decks A, B, and C

There are three different decks designed from the Taking Faith Home bulletin inserts that are based on the Revised Common Lectionary Years A, B, and C. They feature a theme statement, key scripture verse, a prayer and blessing that complement the key verse, and a caring conversation and service question to provide meaningful and faith-forming conversations.

[Click on this link to see more.](#)

Pray: Dear God, you who are the beginning and the end, you who promise to make all things new, we give you thanks for how you care for us now and always. Amen. Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

[Download New Year's Eve/Day at no cost here.](#)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1*



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*The Milestones Ministry Mission is to provide congregations and households with resources and coaching services to nurture the Christian faith and reach out to others with the love of God in Christ.*

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