

**Tips for Leaders
Guide
2023-2024**



“Grow the Church by Growing People in Faith”

Taking Faith Home is a faith formation resource that is updated every year and available as a yearly purchase. It can be used in a variety of settings for individuals, households, small groups, congregations, and the larger community.

It is an excellent tool for faith formation and outreach when used as a:

- Worship bulletin insert each week
- Children’s sermon toolbox
- Sunday school and confirmation class resource
- Cross+generational tool for congregational and family gatherings
- Engaging rituals and traditions for church seasons like Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter
- Devotional piece for congregational staff, boards, committees, and teams
- Small group resource for study, prayer, and action
- Home devotional tool that includes numerous faith practices to nurture faith and strengthen family relationships
- Means for outreach to be used with family and friends who are not part of a local congregation
- Faith formation resource for use with those confined to homes, hospitals, and other care facilities
- Means to promote lifelong faith formation between weekly worship and Christian education opportunities

Key features:

- Biblically based weekly themes
- Includes a weekly prayer, Bible verse, mealtime prayer, and blessing
- Provides daily Bible readings
- Gives hands on ways to expand on each of the Four Key Faith Practices found in all Milestones Ministry resources (Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions)
- Based on the Revised Common Lectionary

This resource, for promoting Christian faith formation in the life of a congregation, can be used between weekly worship services, for Bible study groups, and in the home as well.

The home is church, too!



Taking Faith Home used as Missional Outreach gets the word of God out into the larger world beyond a congregational sanctuary, classroom, or meeting room. It provides numerous ways to gently and meaningfully connect with others to witness and experience the Christian faith.

Who should use Taking Faith Home?

- Families and friendship groups can use a variety of faith formation practices to enrich relationships and the faith life of the home
- Family and friends on vacation can worship and reflect on God, care for others and creation and engage in uplifting conversations and rituals and traditions that bond one another in faith, hope, and love
- Pastors and worship planners to prepare sermons and worship services by including biblical themes and practices so people can use them daily
- People leading children's sermons can highlight individual faith practices. For example, children and families can be instructed to use the blessing, mealtime prayer, or weekly prayer in the home
- Sunday school and confirmation leaders can use caring conversations connected with biblical texts and themes to create energized dialog in small groups. Examples are provided for ways the small group can serve together followed by rituals and traditions that reflect the Christian faith and life
- Congregational teams including staff, boards, and committees can begin their meetings with devotions and conversations that commit the group's agenda to the work and will of God

Where can it be used?

- During cross+generational events: especially during the festival seasons like Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter can benefit from concrete activities (e.g., rituals and traditions, prayers and blessings) that involve all age groups
- In Bible study groups to practice caring conversations, conduct devotions, discuss service, and develop rituals and traditions. More than just information received, this anchors their faith formation in faith practices
- With those living in one household, whether alone, or with family. Individuals can choose from a wide variety of options to discover what faith formation practices work best for them when using Taking Faith Home in the home
- In the community by parish nurses, pastors, and others who do home visits. Taking Faith Home helps move conversations into a deeper realm of reflection and prayer in the Christian faith
- By the church wanting Christians to be active witnesses of the love of God in Christ. There are practical suggestions for use among family, friends, and others (e.g., a mealtime prayer, a conversation starter, or a loving blessing to offer as people leave) who are not part of a Christian congregation

How does Taking Faith Home connect with others?

- By including the sharing of life's mountain highs and/or valley lows with each other
- By offering a table grace at mealtime with family, friends, and others
- By engaging in a meaningful moment using a caring conversation
- By encouraging others to be part of service to the world with specific service ideas
- By using the seasons of the church year with traditions people long to experience but no longer know how to do
- At an appropriate time and place, offering a blessing that brings God's grace, mercy, peace, hope, and love into the lives of the unsuspecting recipients



*Who is it for?
Everyone!*

How does a piece of paper get traction in people's lives?

- Used as a simple bulletin insert that brings God's word home to be used as daily spiritual food
- As a tool for worship and preaching preparation
- It makes a wonderful children's sermon resource that sends families home with many ways to practice the Christian faith in daily life
- As a talking point during announcements or during worship to encourage its use in the home
- For a team-building resource for groups that want to be grounded in God's living word (staff, council, vestry, session, and other governing boards, task forces, and teams)
- As a tool for meaningful contact with shut-ins and those in hospitals, and other care facilities
- As a simple way to maintain a spiritual bridge with distant people who are at college, deployed, traveling, or located out of your area
- In a cross+generational faith formation setting, it is a tool that can be used to supplement Sunday school anytime during the year
- As a meaningful resource for special seasonal gatherings like Advent and Lent

Not every part needs to be used by everyone.

Who uses it?

- Adults use it as daily Bible readings. Keep in mind: Though few do the daily Bible readings without fail, one day a week is better than nothing, and two is better than one
- Parents and grandparents use the weekly blessings and mealtime prayers with their children and grandchildren. They also use the weekly prayer at bedtime
- Families use the caring conversations and devotions to hear and discuss how God's love is with them always
- People on the go (most of us!) grab a prayer, a Bible reading, or something that connects them with God's living Word as part of their journey of faith
- Couples, parents, and teen mentors are drawn to the Caring Conversations as a tool to talk about their faith and build relationships in faith
- Those living alone use the Caring Conversations and Devotions as food for thought and contemplation
- Youth groups and families who use the Service ideas and Rituals and Traditions to enrich their faith lives



Any part of this resource can work for small group ministries: from weekly Bible studies to young adult gatherings to social groups to leadership teams that want to ground their relationships, work, decisions, and actions in the Christian faith.

***How can congregational leaders know if Taking Faith Home is working as a tool to help grow lives of faith?
Ask People!***



One of the most important ways to get Taking Faith Home used in congregations is to find out who is using it and ask how it is being used. This kind of research communicates an expectation that it is to be used and that it is a wonderful resource for staff, other congregational leaders, and the homes of those connected to the ministry of the congregation.

Here are some ways to raise the expectations for using Taking Faith Home:

- Ask leaders how they are using it in their daily lives
- Introduce it in sermons and children's sermons and then have follow-up conversations that ask people how they used Taking Faith Home during the week
- Use Taking Faith Home at various congregational gatherings. It reinforces the principle that if you want people to practice the faith at home, practice it at congregational events
- Check in with people. Find out what is working for different people and share the wonderful stories of how using this resource blesses people's lives. There is nothing like hearing "stories of success" to encourage others to give it a try
- Do random surveys with households and ask:
 1. *Do you know that we have Taking Faith Home?*
 2. *Do you take it home?*
 3. *Do you use it, and, if so, how do you use it?*
 4. *What stories can you share of how Taking Faith Home has blessed your life and relationships?*

You will be amazed at what you learn and how people will move from knowing they should use it to being excited when they do.

How do you purchase Taking Faith Home?

Go to the Milestones Ministry website, www.milestonesministry.org, and click on the Store tab, then the Taking Faith Home tab. It is available as a CDROM or download.

Taking Faith Home is available in digital format so people can be sent emails with the PDF file format and open it for use on tablets and smart phones.



Grandparents, parents, and other faith mentors use the digital format as a tool to relate with children, youth, emerging adults, and young adults to strengthen cross+generational relationships both near and far.

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

Enter into an affordable short-term coaching relationship with Debbie Streicher or David Anderson to help your congregation implement a number of strategies that move Taking Faith Home from being just another congregational resource to a pearl of great price in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

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