



Taking Faith Home

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

User Guide

*Lectionary Year B
2023-2024*



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:

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 Taking Faith Home.

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 website under the toolbox/guides tab for a complete listing of text and music authors.

Weekly Milestones: This allows for a moment to share or think about recent mountain highs and/or valley lows in your life.

Weekly Theme

Daily Bible Readings

Scripture Verse

Prayers and Blessing

DECEMBER 3, 2023
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking faith home

Advent is a season of hope.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 13:24-37	When the Son of Man appears
Monday	Isaiah 64:1-9	A communal prayer for help
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	God is faithful
Wednesday	1 Peter 1:13-16	A call to holy living
Thursday	Psalms 147:7-11	Praise for God's care
Friday	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10	The Thessalonians' faith
Saturday	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. Psalm 80:19 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:
God of awesome power, give us hearts filled with hope and gladness as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
Dear God, we thank you for food and drink that gives us strength for the day and hope for the future through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May the Lord's face shine on you with hope through Christ Jesus.

DECEMBER 3, 2023
HYMN OF THE WEEK
Come Now, O Prince of Peace

WEEKLY MILESTONES
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS
Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- As you look to the future, what are some of your hopes?
- God came to us in the form of baby Jesus. How did this bring us hope?

DEVOTIONS
Read: Isaiah 64:1-9

Advent is a season of hope, that is, waiting and longing for what is not yet present. It is more than a season; it is a way of life for God's people. This is dramatically seen in Isaiah 64. We want the sense of awe to witness the presence of God that descends from the heavens above. It is as grand as mountains quaking and nations trembling. The divide is vast that separates us from the righteousness and power of God because of our brokenness, our sin. Our hope is not in our goodness but in the everlasting love of God who remembers us like a parent caring for a child. In Jesus we see our hope in God realized. As our God descends in the form of a babe, we hope and believe God has not forgotten us or left us to our own self-destructive ways. We are left in awe at the love and goodness of God that we not only see in Bethlehem, but also at the end of time when we witness "the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). Hope with a sense of awe is healthy for daily life and for our faith in God in Christ.

Discuss: What do you hope for during this Advent season as we await Christ's coming?
Pray: Almighty God, your glory is seen in all that you do; give us eyes to see the hope we are given through the coming of Jesus as a baby and as the Son of Man at the end of time. Amen.

SERVICE
Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you encourage someone to live with hope in the future?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS
Make an Advent wreath and decorate it with evergreens. Place four candles on the wreath. Place the wreath on a counter or table where you can gather each week during Advent to light the candles. The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week, we light one candle, the candle of hope. Think or talk about what hope you imagine when you read Psalm 80:3: "Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved." Light the first candle of hope and say: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

taking faith home

Weekly Milestones

Conversations

Devotions

Service

Rituals and Traditions

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

You will be amazed at how people will move from knowing they should use Taking Faith Home 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 Taking Faith Home.

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 Key Faith Practices:

Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions are the Four Key Faith Practices 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. They help you bond with others on the journey of faith. They also help you in the important task of talking about the Christian faith.

Devotions: Being devoted to God's word serves as a 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, regularly use 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

Taking Faith Home

*Lectionary Year B
2023/2024*

Published by Milestones Ministry, LLC.

Revisions and updates for the 2023-2024 Taking Faith Home Year A were provided by:

Rev. Dr. David Anderson
Gloria Anderson
Debbie Streicher
Dr. Burton Streicher

Page layout and format update provided by Dr. Burton Streicher



© Copyright 2023 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

Taking Faith Home may be reproduced for use in the local setting and sent in emails or in an e-news. Permission to place in a members only part of a website is granted.

Reproduction for resale or use in paid presentations is strictly prohibited.

Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible
© Copyright 1989 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Contact information: info@milestonesministry.org
David Anderson: danderson@milestonesministry.org
Debbie Streicher: dstreicher@milestonesministry.org



Order Taking Faith Home and other Milestones Ministry resources at: www.milestonesministry.org