

A.W.E: Children's Ministries  
in the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem  
presents



Advent to Epiphany  
Faith Formation in the Home  
Materials for home study and worship

Contents:

Parenting Corner

Saints in the Fall

Advent: A Background Reflection

Advent Activities: O-Antiphon Symbols,

Pine Cone Trees, Rebus Story, Word Game, and Prayer Cube

Christmas Activities: Picture Search, Gift Ideas, Pie Plate Craft

Epiphany Activity: Letter Exchange

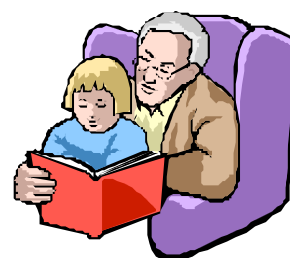
Epiphany: A Background Reflection

## Parenting Corner

Knowing that *Faith Formation in the Home* is read by a varied audience, the choices for the seasonal activities are considered with multiple age groups and family configurations in mind. I recently reread back issues of *AWESOME News* when its title was *Our Staff*. One regular column, provided by Char Molrine, was called *Parenting Corner* and it offered a variety of thoughtful, sensible, timeless advice for families. Here is one of the offerings.

### A Dozen Ways to Strengthen Your Family

1. Spend time with each other, do things together as a family.
2. Plan ahead with your family so things will happen not just happen.
3. Establish a reasonable balance between outside activities, work schedules, and your family.
4. Talk with each other and listen carefully to understand the other's viewpoint.
5. Show each family member consideration and appreciation, especially in everyday ways.
6. Respect each person - his/her ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
7. Develop pride in your family.
8. Resolve problems and conflicts in a constructive way.
9. Help each other and be willing to let others help you.
10. Contact and build ties with other families.



11. Take part in community affairs and use community services.
12. Develop a spiritual focus within your family.

## ***Saints in the Fall***

*Taddled from Saintly Celebrations & Holy Holidays by Bernadette McCarver Snyder*

### ***It's a Zoo in Here!***

October 4 is the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi who, as most children know, was a friend to the animals. Why not take some pet food to your local SPCA or visit the zoo. The animals there are not available to take home. A zoo trip could become an annual outing on or near the feast of Saint Francis. In October, the zoo may be a bit cool but also a lot less crowded than in the summertime, and that makes it more special and personal. For a snack, take along a small box of animal crackers for each child and one for the grownups too.



### ***May they Rest in Peace***

On November 2 we celebrate All Souls' Day. So when you say the blessing before dinner, add a prayer for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed. As a centerpiece, you might put a few framed photos of family members and friends who have died, interspersed with some lighted candles or vigil lights.



## Advent: A Background Reflection

Advent is a season in the Church year that gives us time to wait for something to happen. During four, usually long, weeks, we anticipate Christ coming into our lives in a special way at Christmas.

We wait expectantly and joyfully for Christmas. We often wait in our lives. We wait for people we plan to meet, wait at the doctor's office, wait for the bus to come, for vacation to begin, for our birthday to arrive. The Advent season gives us the opportunity to reflect on the way we live while waiting. This is the time to prepare for the awaited event of Christmas.

The word *advent* means coming. During Advent we not only remember Jesus' first coming into our world at his birth, but we also celebrate his daily comings into our hearts now and anticipate his future coming at the end of time. These comings present different aspects of the presence of God in our lives throughout all time.

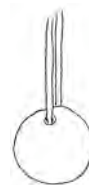
The Advent wreath and Jesse tree symbols help us to remember during Advent that all people of all times have awaited the coming of the Messiah. We join with them as one people making ready the way of the Lord. As a family or class, choose the ways in which you will prepare for the renewal of Christmas.

One way to await Jesus' birthday is to pray or sing the *O-Antiphons* from the 9th century or earlier. The hope-filled themes of the O-Antiphons come mainly from the prophet Isaiah. In these antiphons, Jesus is awaited under different messianic titles: O Wisdom, My Lord, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Sun, King, and God with us.

On the next two pages are the seven O-Antiphons and their symbols. There are also Biblical references for you to read. Create the symbols to be hung in a window or from the ceiling at staggered heights during Advent. Save them to be used as Christmas tree decorations next year.



1. Make two-sided, construction-paper symbols similar to those below for each O-Antiphon. The size should be at least 2 1/2" circles.



2. Attach a ribbon or string to the top of each symbol.



*Dec. 17*

*O Wisdom, you came fourth from the mouth of the Most high and reaching from beginning to end, you ordered all things mightily and sweetly. Come and teach us the way of prudence.*

*Isaiah 11:2-3; 28:29*

*Wisdom 8:1*



*Dec. 18*

*O Lord and Ruler of the House of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and on Mount Sinai gave him your law. Come and with outstretched arm redeem us.*

*Isaiah 11:4-5, 33:22*

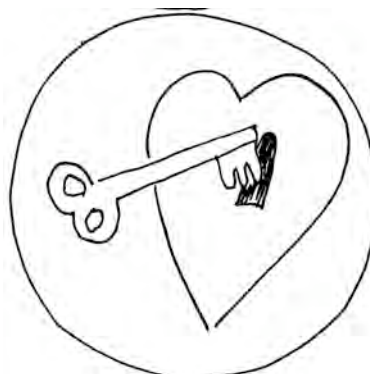
*Exodus 3:2, 6:6*



*Dec. 19*

*O Root of Jesse, you stand as a sign for the peoples; before you kings shall keep silence and to you all nations shall have recourse. Come, save us, and do not delay.*

*Isaiah 11:1,10 52:13-15, 53:2 Luke 1:32-33*

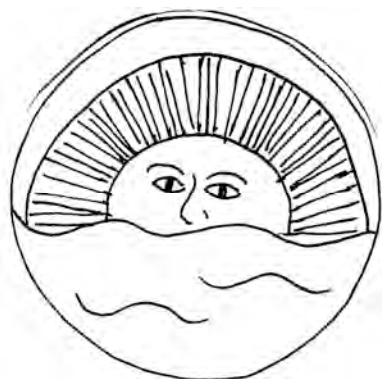


*Dec. 20*

*O Key of David and Scepter of the House of Israel; you open and no man closes, you close and no man opens. Come, and deliver from the chains of prison those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

*Isaiah 22:22, 9:6*

*Revelation 3:7*



*Dec. 21*

*O Rising Dawn, Radiance of the  
Light Eternal and Sun of Justice;  
come and enlighten those who sit in  
darkness and in the shadow of  
death.*

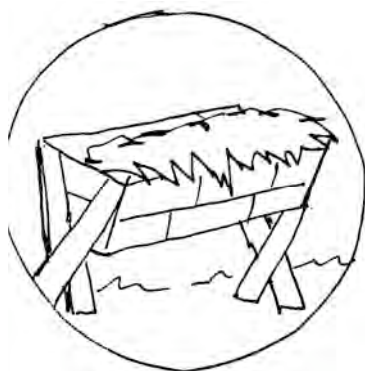
*Isaiah 9:1      Malachi 3:20  
Luke 1:78-79   2Peter 1:19*



*Dec. 22*

*O King of the Gentiles and the Desired  
of all, you are the cornerstone that  
binds two into one. Come, and save man  
whom you fashioned out of clay.*

*Isaiah, 2:4, 9:5, 28:16  
Jeremiah 10:7  
Ephesians 2:14*



*Dec. 23*

*O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver,  
the Expected of the nations and  
their savior. Come and save us, O  
Lord our God.*

*Isaiah 7:14 33:22*

The O-Antiphons are from *Praising the Names of Jesus: the Antiphons of Advent*  
by Jeanne Kun found at <http://www.rc.net/wcc/antiphon.htm>

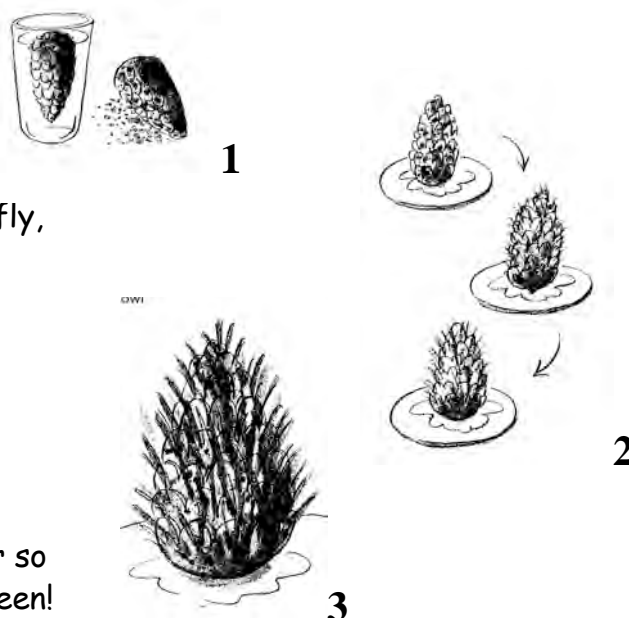
## Pine Cone Growing Tree

While you are waiting for Christmas, try this living craft.

1. Soak a large pine cone in water briefly, then roll the cone in grass seed.

2. Prop the cone on the bottom of a saucer or shallow bowl, leaving a thin layer of water in the bottom of the saucer.

3. Put it in a light place, wait a week or so and watch your "tree begin to grow green!



From *101 Things to do for Christmas* by Debbie Trafton O'Neal (1997, Augsburg Press).

## Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Mary

Read the story of Elizabeth, Zechariah and Mary in Luke 1:5-24, 39-45, 57-80. After you have read the story and talked about it. See if you can read the "picture story" (rebus story) below. Maybe you can tell another story from the Bible using pictures and words. ©1992 by Standard Publishing Company - *Great Worship for Kids* by Sarah Lyons - p. 1B.

Use the following pictures to help you read the story below.



Zechariah



Elizabeth



Mary



Angel



Jesus



John

was serving God in the temple. Suddenly an stood in front of . was afraid. The said, "Your wife, , is going to have a baby!" You will name him . will help people get ready for to come." One day came to visit . said, "Thank You," to God because she knew would give birth to , God's Son.



## Going in Circles

Circle every fourth letter. Write those letters on the lines below to discover the message.

P T B Y L R V O B A S U W M L A B J P R  
 R E F E J N P T A J L O M A L G M L A I  
 M W P V P J K E B T P H M K A I S J L M  
 Q U G T S D N H M A V E M L L N K A P A  
 M G P M M J P E S R A J M P F E B J L S  
 K E S U X T Q S D

**Message:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 1:21, NIV



## Dinner Prayer Cube

During the season of Advent, the beginning of the Church Year, begin a new tradition that will involve everyone in offering the prayer at dinner time. A Prayer Cube pattern is found on page 15.

### Directions for assembly:

1. Duplicate the cube on card stock weight paper. You can use a file folder that has been cut to  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by 11 inches.
2. Cut carefully along the outer lines.
3. Fold on all the lines, tucking the flaps under.
4. Use a glue stick or limited amounts of liquid glue on the tabs and put the cube together.
5. Seal the edges using transparent tape.

At dinner, select a person to offer the prayer. Roll the cube and read the prayer that appears on the top surface. Take turns sharing this joyous offering to God.



## Christmas Pie Plate Craft



### Materials:

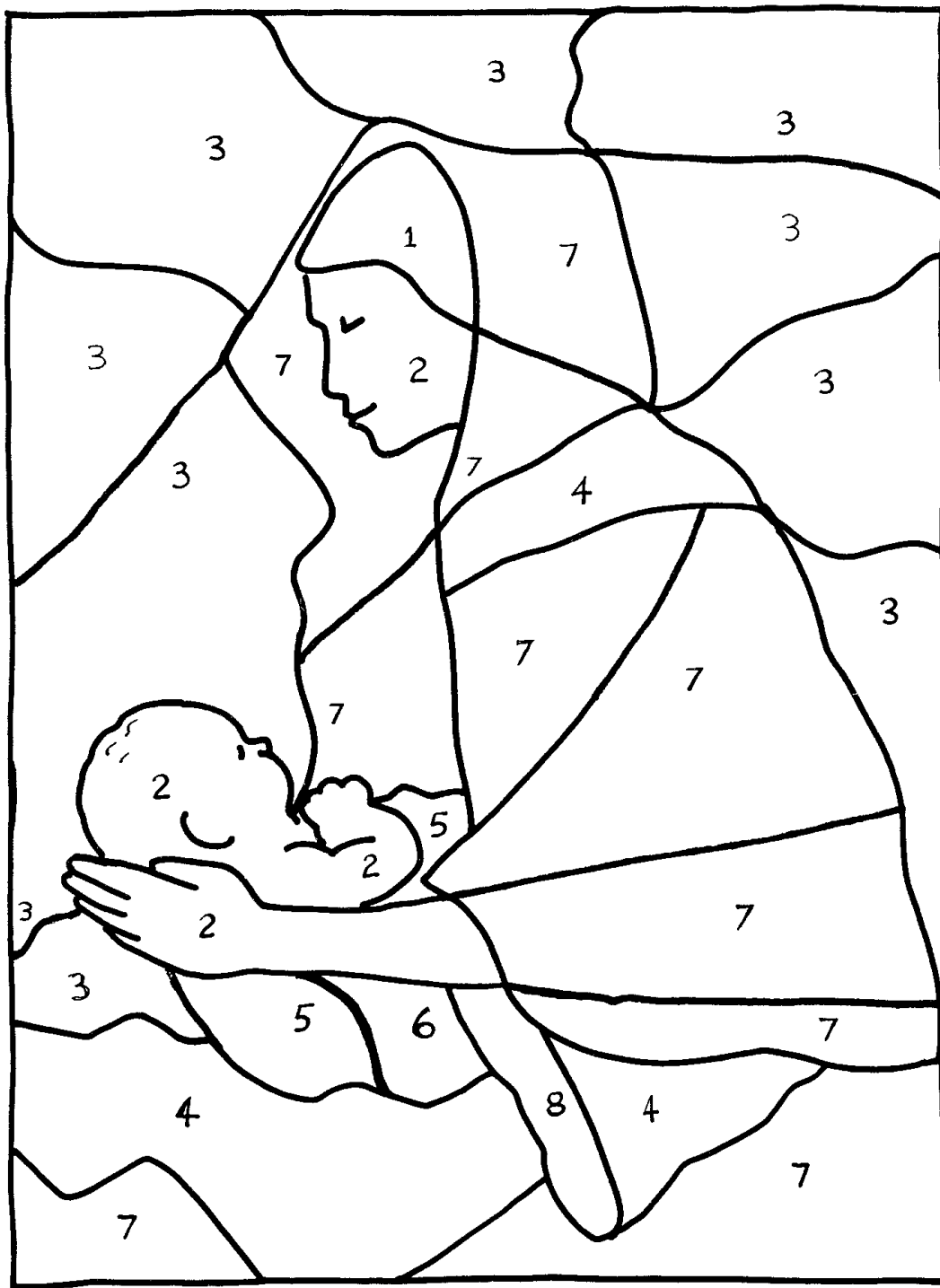
9-inch aluminum pie plate  
old newspapers  
tape  
push pins  
shoe polish (any color)  
soft cloth (an old sock)  
pattern on page 12

### Procedure:

1. Place the pie plate on a stack of newspaper.
2. Tape the pattern to the inside of the pie plate.
3. Use a push pin to make holes in each one of the pattern holes.
4. When all the holes have been made, remove the pattern.
5. Use a soft cloth to color the inside of the pie plate with shoe polish.
6. Add a picture hanger to the back of the display.

From *101 Things to do for Christmas* by Debbie Trafton O'Neal (1995) - Augsburg Press.

# Picture Search



From *Bible Games for Teams and Groups* by Judene Leon (1984) Winston Press.

1 brown  
2 pink  
3 red

4 blue  
5 green  
6 yellow

7 purple  
8 black

## Gifts to Share

### Hogmanay Shortbread Christmas Cookies of Scottish Origin

#### Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup unsalted butter or margarine  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar  
 2 cups all-purpose flour

#### Equipment:

Cookie cutters



#### Procedure:

1. Heat oven to 350. In medium bowl, combine butter and sugar; mix until light and fluffy. Add flour; mix with wooden spoon or hands until smooth and well combined.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thickness. With cookie cutters, cut into desired shapes such as leaves, ovals, or squares. Flute edges of cookies as desired by pinching dough with fingers. Place on ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until set. (Tops of cookies will not be brown.)

Makes about 2 dozen cookies.



## Note Pad Reminder

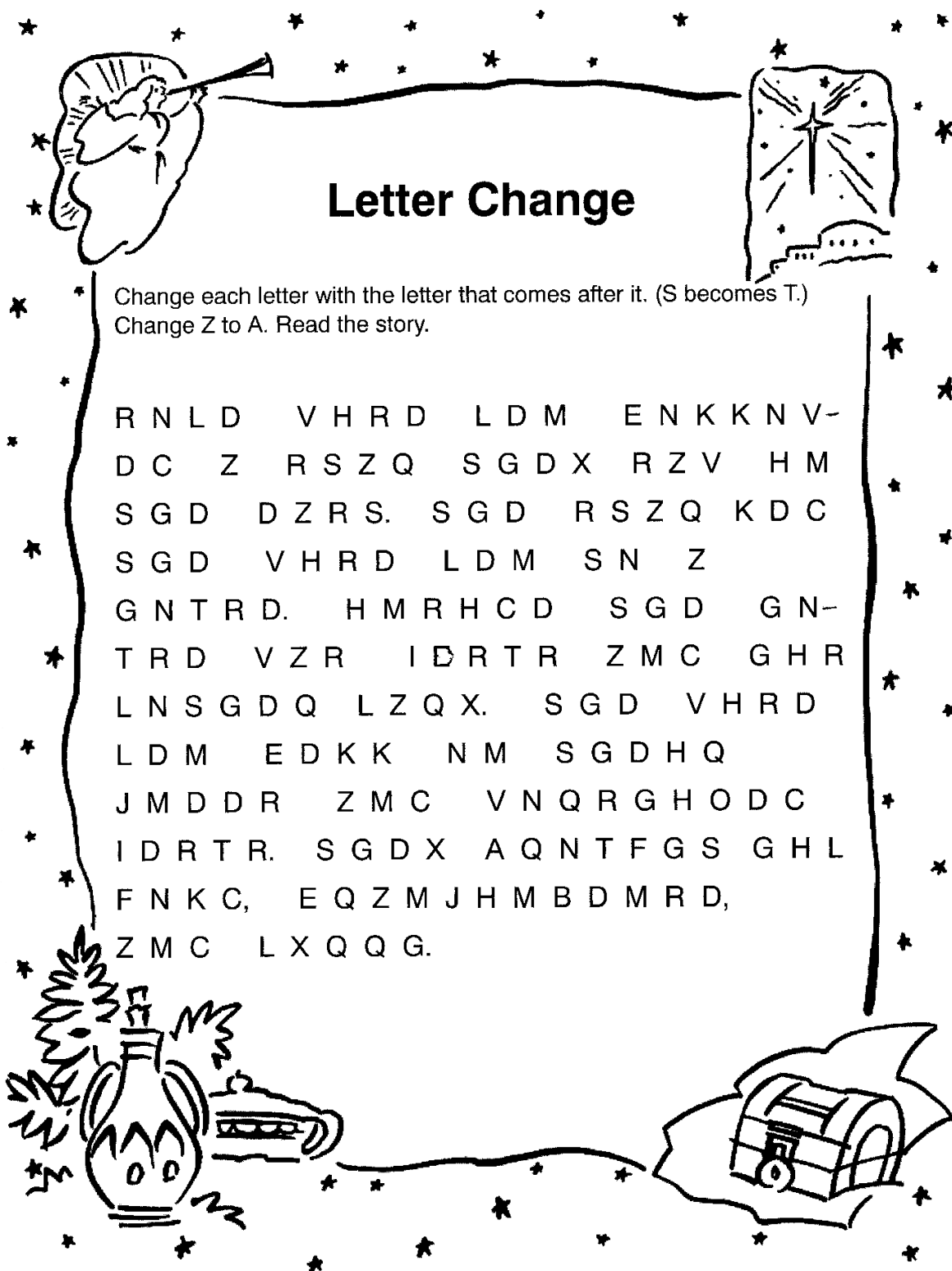
This is a great gift to make. Everyone needs to make a list or keep a note. You can give a part of yourself (at least a tracing of your hand!).



1. Trace the shape of your hand onto thin cardboard. Use a felt pen to add details to make it look like a real hand. Cut out the hand.
2. Tie a ribbon or yarn bow around the index finger as a "reminder" symbol.
3. Glue a small pad of paper to the center of the hand print. Glue or tie another piece of ribbon or yarn to the back or corner. Attach a pencil to the hand. Presto! Everything you need to create a note pad reminder to give to someone special.



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## Epiphany: A Background Reflection

The celebration of Epiphany originated in the Eastern Church during the third century and celebrated the manifestation of God in Christ to *all* people. The Magi, who came with gifts to honor Jesus, represent the *Gentiles*, that is, all of us.

Every nation tends to think of God as its own. In the history of Israel, the Jews thought of themselves as God's chosen people. Their special relationship with God helped give them identify as a people. The book of Jonah, however, written two centuries before Christ, reflects a Jewish insight into God's universal reign. Similarly, the apostles' biggest problem was realizing that non-Jews could believe in Jesus. Epiphany celebrates in a special way the universality of God's call to friendship. On Epiphany we celebrate Jesus the Messiah coming to bring salvation to everyone.

Since Epiphany is celebrated on January 6, it is sometimes called Twelfth Night because it is twelve days after Christmas. Traditionally, this celebration ends the Christmas season.

Stories about the Epiphany tell of a star guiding travelers from the East. In the retelling of these stories over the centuries, the travelers have become three in number and have been given a variety of names: Wise Men, Magi, Astrologers, and even Kings. Their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent products of the East. The central truth of the story in all its variations remains important for all of us: In Jesus, God reveals the plan of salvation for all people.

Traditionally, people blessed their homes on this day. During the Middle Ages, people performed plays about the visit of the Magi. In some countries, people baked cakes with a bean inside. Whoever received the bean became king for the day. Today some people exchange gifts of books as a sign of their search for the truth.

Each of us is called to follow our star, to search for truth and love. With Jesus we are all on a journey. We can become an epiphany for others so that together we can grow and honor Jesus as our King.

1. The Visit of the Magi, Matthew 2:1-12
2. The Baptism of Jesus, Mark 1:9-11
3. The Wedding at Cana, John 2:1-11
4. The Fishermen Made Disciples, Luke 5:1-11
5. Jesus the Teacher, Luke 8:16-21
6. Jesus the Healer, Mark 1:29-34
7. The Transfiguration of Jesus, Matthew 17:1-8

