

Weekly Faith Formation Update

December 28, 2020- January 1, 2021

[Guiding Stars: An Epiphany Activity at Home | Building Faith](#)

“May we each be guided by our chosen star and find wonderful things this year. Amen!”

A Guiding Star for the Year

Epiphany, January 6, is the official end of the 12 days of Christmas. Many Christians celebrate this day by remembering the journey of the Magi. The Magi found their way to Jesus by following a bright heavenly body, usually represented by a star. This activity allows each member of the family to pick out a star that will guide him or her throughout the coming year. Designed for ages 10 and up



Supplies:

- Box or basket large enough to hold the stars
- 25 paper stars labeled with the star words listed below:
*Grace; Mercy; Love; Faithfulness; Peace; Patience; Kindness; Joy; Rest
Adventure; Attention; Imagination; Faith; Compassion; Friendship; Song; Art
Generosity; Time; Humility; Persistence; Dedication; Inspiration; Comfort; Wholeness*

Instructions:

1. This tradition is meant to be held on January 6, Epiphany. Ahead of time, one person in the family makes the 25 stars with the words on them and places them face down in the basket. When the family has gathered, read Matthew 2:10-12 out loud. It says, “When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They came to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”
2. Say, “This story is a story about how the Magi (or wise men) came to Jesus and brought him gifts. They determined which way to go by following a star. Today we are going to pick out our own star to guide us in the year to come. We will each reach into the basket and pull out a star that will be our guide for the year.”
3. [Note: This step is skipped the first year] Say, “Before we pick out our star for this year, let’s reflect on the star that was our guiding light last year. What was your guiding star last year? What did you think about it? How did you see it as your guiding light during the year?”
4. Say, “As we leave, we will each pick out a star to guide us for the coming year. We will pick one out of the basket, and not share what we have received with each other until next year. May we each be guided by our chosen star and find wonderful things this year. Amen!”
5. Everyone leaves by saying, “Happy Epiphany!”

Notes

- This activity requires a fairly advanced level of abstract thought. What does it mean to be guided by hope, for example? For this reason, the age is listed as 10+. For younger children, try one of the variations below.

- Teens may feel a special connection to this activity because of its “secret” component. If you have teens in your home, give this one a try!
- In contrast to most of the activities in this book that are created together as a family, I advise that one person oversee making the stars in advance of this activity. This allows the words to be a surprise to those who pick them out. As the stars become less numerous through the years, new ones can be added.

Variations (and suggestion for younger children)

- Make and decorate stars and hang them up in your house to remember and commemorate this day.
- Choose just one star as a family and let that star guide the whole family for the year to come.
- Take turns preparing the stars and coming up with words that will be used year after year.

The Legend of the Apple Star | *Before and After Christmas* by Debbie Trafton O’Neal

Once there was a child who wondered where the stars went in the daytime. He asked Grandmother, “Where do the stars go when the sun comes out?” Grandmother smiled and said, “Each star lives in a little red house with no doors or windows. If you go outside, you might be able to find one.”



So, the child began searching for the star’s little red house. When the child met a black cat, he asked, “have you seen a little red house with no doors and no windows that has a star inside.” “No,” said the cat. “Maybe the yellow duck has seen the little red house you are looking for.” “No,” said the yellow duck. “But maybe the bluebird in that tree has seen the house you are looking for.”

So, the child looked up in the tree where the bluebird was sitting and said, “I am looking for a little red house with no doors or windows but with a star inside. Have you seen it?” “Yes,” said the bluebird. “I have seen the house you are looking for. In fact, the little red house is here in this tree!” So the child looked up and guess what he saw? A red apple. (Cut a red apple crosswise and see the star formed on the inside by the seeds.)

Apple Prints

Supplies: Apples, pie tins or shallow bowls, paint, knives, paper or muslin squares, newspaper

Instructions: Spread newspaper on your workspace. Pour the paint into the pie tin or bowl. Cut the apples in half. Press the apple halves into the paint, and then press firmly onto the paper. To set the paint, put the fabric piece in the clothes dryer on high for 10 minutes.