

FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

EPIPHANY AND THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

TOPIC: EPIPHANY AND THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – JESUS' MISSION

SACRED SCRIPTURE

**MC 5:2;
IS 40:3;
MT 2:1-12;
MT 3:13-17**

REFERENCES:

**CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
nos. 528 & 535-37**

CREED

nos.
430-55,
528/35-
37/56,
711-30

LITURGY

nos.
1213-
28/57-
84

LIFE

nos.
1691-96,
1813/30-
32,
2017/28

PRAYER

nos.
2598-
2600,
2652,
2757

Goal(s):

- To introduce families to the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord and the tradition of the Epiphany blessing/chalking of the door
- To reflect on the First Luminous Mystery, the Baptism of the Lord, and on Jesus' mission
- To explore how we answer God's call to live our Baptism

Materials:

- Blessed chalk (Supplied by parish to be used during Week 2)
- Holy Water (Supplied by parish to be used during Week 3)
- Baptismal candles/sacramentals/clothing, photos (Family items gathered Week 2 to be shared on Week 3)

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Spirit of Wisdom, bless us and grant us the grace of conforming our lives fully to God's holy Word, so that we may have compassion for one another, especially those who are poor, lonely, or afraid. *Our Father...*

(adapted from Catholics For Family Peace)



ICE BREAKER

If virtual, hold up 1 finger for the first choice, or 2 fingers for the second choice, in response to the question:

Would you rather...

Eat ice cream or cake?

Have the super strength of Samson or the wisdom of Solomon?

Watch basketball or football?

Watch Jesus heal a blind man or watch Jesus walking on water?

Play baseball or soccer?

Would you rather live at the beach or in the mountains?

Be a shepherd or a magi?

Would you rather be a bodybuilder or a professional golfer?

Name the animals or build the ark?

Go fishing with Peter or be baptized by John the Baptist?



TEACH

1. Hook/Question

What does Epiphany mean?

(Let families discuss among themselves, and then unmute to share with the larger group.)

Have you ever celebrated Epiphany Sunday, or have you ever heard of any special ways families celebrate the Solemnity of Epiphany? If so, how?

(Family discussion first; then share with larger group.)

2. Introduce Topic

- Epiphany is a solemnity (a great feast) in the season of Christmas when we celebrate the visit of the Wise Men or Magi to the Christ Child.
- The visit of the Wise Men or Magi is a clear sign or manifestation that shows the world that the baby Jesus is the King of kings.

3. CONTENT

A. **Show** *What is Epiphany?* (2 min, Concordia Publishing)

B. **Explain:** The Epiphany is “the manifestation [epiphany] of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world” (CCC, no. 528).

C. **Ask** everyone to sit and close their eyes, while you calmly read the story of the Visit of the Magi from Matthew 2:1-12.

D. **Pause** for at least 30 seconds after you have finished reading to give everyone time to think about the story.

E. **Explain:** Now I invite each member of your family to share privately about what stood out to him/her in the story of the Visit of the Magi to the Christ Child that we just read.

F. **Give** families time to share privately.

G. **Share** what stood out to you and then...

H. **Invite** large group sharing.



4. MISSION

Step 1: Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

Step 2: Explain Activity

- During Week 2, you will watch one or both of the short videos about the Visit of the Magi to the Christ Child.
- Then, as a family, you will mark the mantle of your front door (with blessed chalk if possible) and pray the Family Epiphany Blessing. It is very simple to do, and the explanation and the prayer can be found on your Week 2 Hand-out.
(Use the Week 2 Handout to review the Epiphany Blessing.)
- Next, you will find baptism items or sacramental(s) that were received by each family member at his/her baptism. These could be baptismal candles, or other sacramentals, such as a prayer book, rosary, or crucifix/cross, or even the baptismal clothing and photos.
- Make sure you have at least one candle for your family to light at our Week 3 gathering. Place these items on your home altar or prayer space.
- Watch the Baptism videos appropriate for your child's age.
- Be prepared to show your front door mantle with the chalk marking and your baptismal sacramental(s) on your home altar/prayer space at our next gathering.

Step 3: Model for the Families

- a. Pray the Family Epiphany Blessing and show them how you marked your own front door mantle with chalk. (use a picture or video as necessary)
- b. Then show examples of your baptismal sacramental(s), a candle, and photos from your baptism or from the baptism of someone in your family that you have placed on your home altar/prayer space.

5. REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

Review briefly the goals of the lesson and remind everyone of the expectations for weeks 2 and 3.

Option 1: Prayer together the Hail Mary.

Option 2: Lord Jesus, may you bless each of the families that have gathered together today. Help us to grow continually closer to you. This we pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), nos. 264-65/73:

Personal encounter with the saving love of Jesus: The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. [...]

Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life. Whenever we encounter this anew, we become convinced that it is exactly what others need, even though they may not recognize it [...]

I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing. [...]

Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), no. 1:

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.