



FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

January 2024

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...
Amen.

Goals

- Introduce family to the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord and the tradition of the Epiphany blessing/chalking the door
- Reflect on the First Luminous Mystery, the Baptism of the Lord, and on Jesus' mission
- Explore how we answer God's call to live our Baptism

Materials

- Blessed chalk
- Holy Water
- Baptismal candles/sacramentals/clothing, photos
(Family items gathered)

Ice Breaker

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?

What does Epiphany mean?

Have you ever celebrated Epiphany Sunday, or

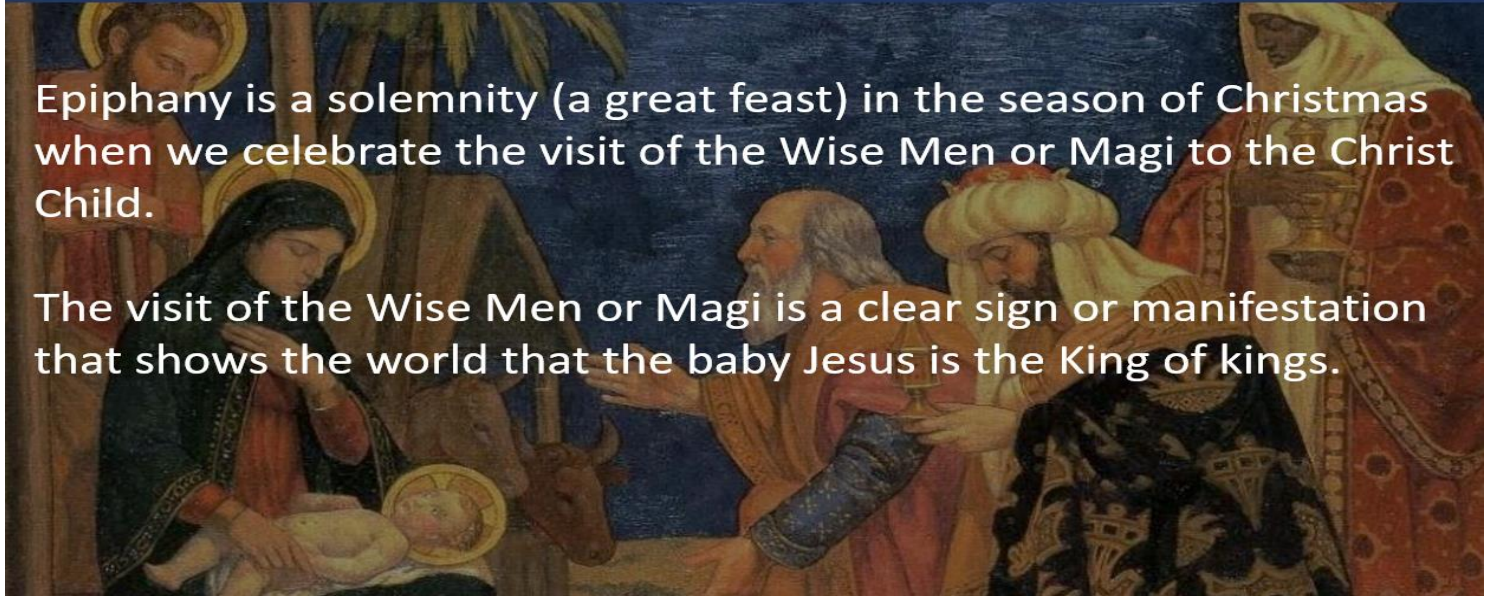
*Have you ever heard of any special ways families
celebrate the Solemnity of Epiphany?*

If so, how?

Topics

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.



WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPAFQakL-JE>



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

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star,

and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VySzDA07N-c>

Family Epiphany Blessing "The practice of writing a special code over the entrance to a home with blessed chalk is a centuries-old traditional blessing that takes place each January. It's a reminder of God's presence in our daily lives, and a dedication of the year and everything that will happen during it, to God. It's also a great witness for our guests, not to mention that it looks pretty cool!"

How to do it...

1. Take a stick of chalk that's been blessed by a priest or deacon, and write above your home's front entrance (inside or outside).

20 + C + M + B + 21. (Replace 21 with the last two digits of the current year)

2. A family member reads this explanation:

"The letters C, M, and B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi who brought gifts to Jesus sometime soon after his birth: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which translates to "May Christ bless this house." The '+' signs represent the cross and the numbers, the year."

3. The head of the house leads the prayer:

Dear God, we ask your blessings on our home and family and anyone who visits here. We invite your Son, Jesus, to be a part of our family and to always be with us in our home, in our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows. We thank you and we love you. We make the following words of Joshua our own: "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). *Hail Mary...* We ask all this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen





Watch Baptism videos:

For younger children videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR1w-YBtI0A>



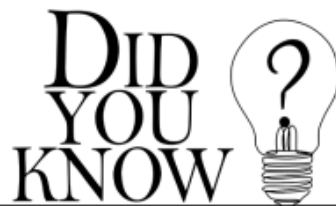
on FORMED.org • Born into the Kingdom: The Miracle of Baptism, Brother Francis Episode 4

<https://watch.formed.org/brother-francis-1/season:1/videos/born-into-the-kingdom-the-miracle-of-baptism>



For tweens & teens: • Catholic Central – Baptism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKisfEgd3IY>



The Christmas season concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

How did/will you continue to celebrate Christmas?

(For example, some families leave up their Nativity crèche or other decorations.)

January is full of important days for our country and for our Church. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the third Monday of January and is a federal holiday in the United States. We remember Rev. Dr. King's courageous witness for racial justice and for the intrinsic and equal dignity of every human life, no matter the color of one's skin, place of origin, or ethnic background. January 22 is a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children in the dioceses of the United States, and we continue to pray for an end to abortion and strive for a culture that reverences all human life. January 25 is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, an amazing witness of the power of God's mercy and grace. How will your family observe these days?

Ice Breaker

Imagine that you are living in a space station. All of a sudden, the space station malfunctions, and you have to evacuate. You are only allowed to take 3 items with you. Which items would you choose?



Scripture

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?"

Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him.

After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

After John baptizes Jesus with the water of the Jordan river, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove, and Jesus hears the voice of God the Father: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Jesus’ baptism shows him to be the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. It is the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Jesus, as the beloved Son of the Father, has an important mission to save all of humanity by His divine love, shared in and through Jesus’ own humanity (as true God and true man). When we are baptized, we also become sons and daughters of God in the Son and by the Holy Spirit, and we too share in Jesus’ mission to spread the love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in our homes, communities, and throughout the world.

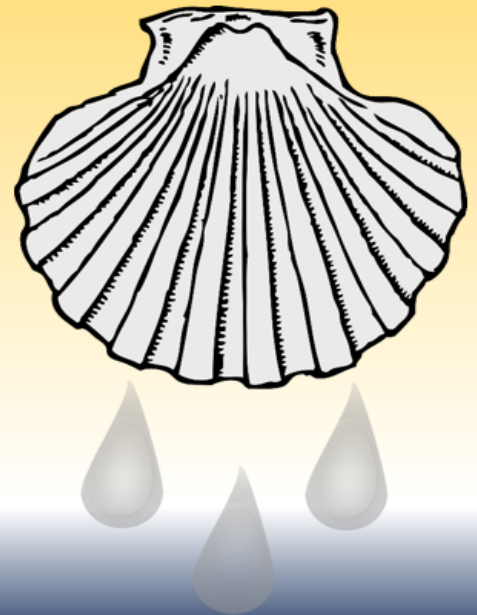
Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLBFUuPxrlQ&t=5s>

Family Sharing

Show baptismal mementos and sacramentals

Conversation

- How old were you when you were baptized?
- What do you know about your own baptism?
- If you were baptized as an adult, why did you want to be baptized?
- How do you think you are answering God’s call to live out your baptism?
- Has Jesus helped you to live out your baptism and if so, when or how?
- What do you remember about each of your children’s baptism?
- Why was it important to you that your children be baptized?
- What do you hope for your children as they answer God’s call to live out their baptism and share in Jesus’ mission in the world?
- What do you hope for your parents as they answer God’s call to live out their baptism and share in Jesus’ mission?



Prayer

Blessing each other with holy water

Dear Heavenly Father,
We thank you for loving us and for sending your beloved Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Now that we have reflected on the Baptism of Jesus as well as our own baptisms, we ask Jesus with the Holy Spirit to be in our midst. As families we come before to you as we bless one another with holy water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Leader: Do you reject Satan? **R. I do.**

Leader: And all his works? **R. I do.**

Leader: And all his empty promises? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? **R. I do.**

Leader: God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven our sins. May we always remember who we truly are, God's beloved sons and daughters in whom He is well pleased. May we live with the Trinity as children of the family of God for ever and ever. **R. Amen.**

IT'S STILL CHRISTMAS

A GUIDE TO THE LITURGICAL CHRISTMAS SEASON



**Dec. 24-
Jan. 10**

The Christmas season officially begins on Christmas Eve. It lasts until the Baptism of the Lord, which is usually the second Sunday in January.



**Dec. 25-
Jan. 1**

From Christmas Day until Jan 1st, the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is the **Octave of Christmas.**



Jan. 1

January 1st is the **Solemnity** of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where we honor her role as mother of Christ and His Church.



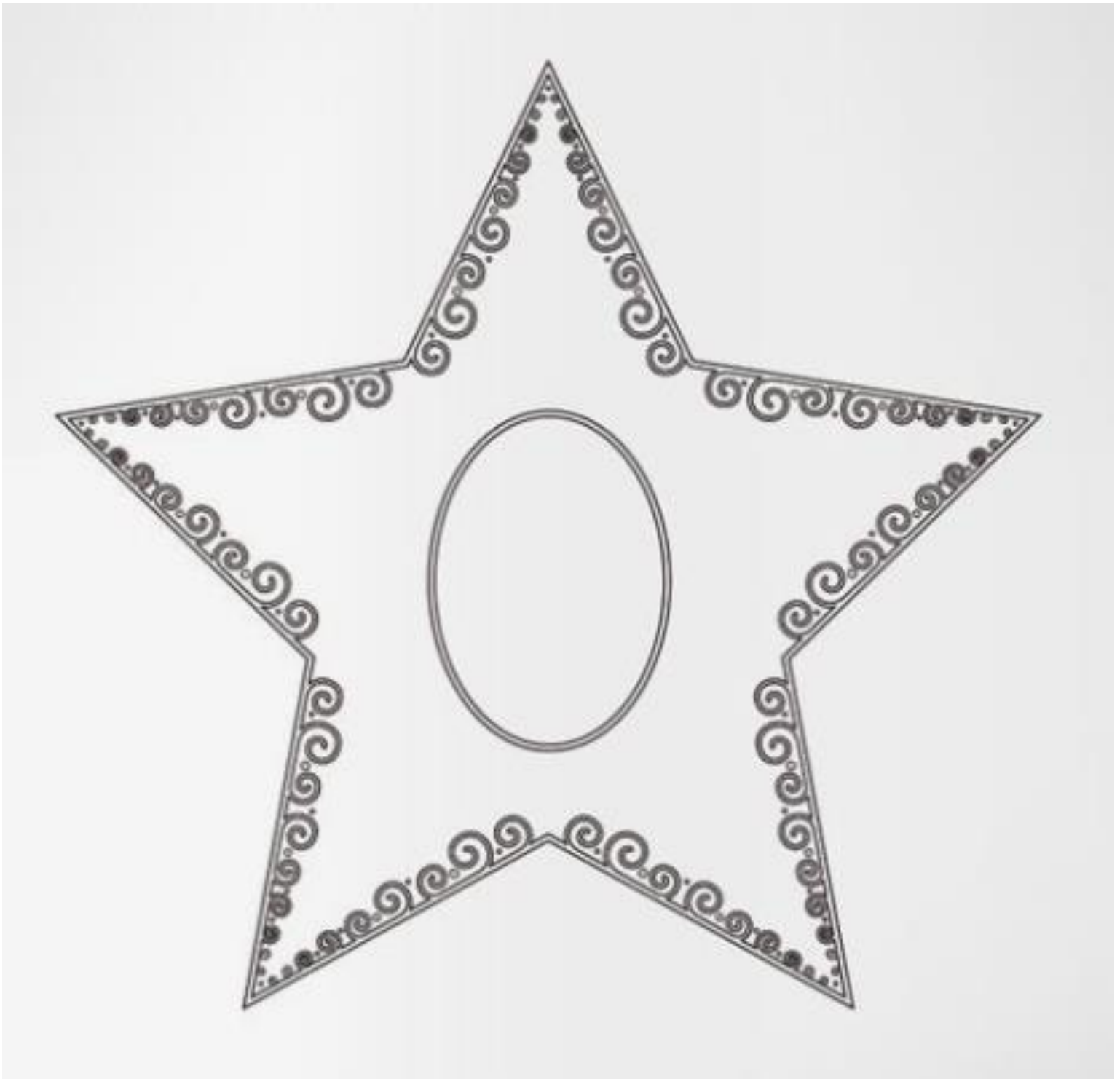
Jan. 6

There are many feast days this season (Holy Family 12/30, Holy Innocents 12/28, etc.) **The Epiphany**, commemorating the visit of the Magi, always falls on Jan 6.

The Epiphany of the Lord teaches us that Jesus' coming into the world was important to the whole world. The good news of Jesus Christ is meant for Everyone.

Look at the star below. Draw a picture of yourself or attach a photo of yourself. On the five points of the star write five ways you can be a light for others. Decorate and display your star.

{Print one star for each family member on cardstock}



SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018), nos. 15, 19-20:

Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: “Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better”. In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. [...]

A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.

That mission has its fullest meaning in Christ, and can only be understood through him. At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life. It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him. But it can also entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love.

Prayer

1: Pray together the Hail Mary

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.

