

Welcome to a Year of Celebration!

Week 2: January 9-15, 2022

Celebrate Epiphany

This year, we are focusing on who God is and how we can celebrate him and the life that he offers to us. We will draw deeper into a relationship with the Lord through examining his nature and desire for personal intimacy with us as his people, and we are going to do so in such a fun way! We are going to journey in 2022 through practical ways to celebrate various holidays! We will look at many of your favorite celebrations: Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and much more. We will explore the historic, liturgical holidays of the year, learn about the Jewish festivals of the Bible days, and even consider some of the celebrations of other religious faiths. I'm so glad you will be on this journey with us.

In this packet, you will find some ideas for you to grow closer to God, your family, and others. Nothing is required. It is all for fun and your personal enjoyment and growth. There are enough activities that you could do one or two per day during the week if you want. If you don't want to do something, skip it. If another idea comes to mind, do it. Watch for God's abundant goodness and celebrate it.

Come Join Us as We
CELEBRATE GOD!



**“They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.”**

Dr. Patrick Wilson

(Psalm 145:7)

2022



Video Devotional

Go to Patrick Wilson's YouTube page and watch the video devotional for this week: Celebrate Epiphany. Then, consider and discuss with your family/friends the following questions:

- When was a time that you had an epiphany?
- What benefits come from light? Jesus as our Light?
- How do you think the magi knew that Jesus was the king they were searching for?
- What need do you have that you should bring to Jesus?
- What gifts can you bring in your worship of Jesus?
- How will you let the Morning Star rise in your heart this week?

Craft: Make 3D Scene

1. Print out instructions on white paper (2 pages) from:

<https://www.mylittlehouse.org/uploads/2/1/0/0/21005170/instruction-3d-picture.pdf>

2. Print out the scene on cardstock (3 pages in 2 versions—print in color or print and you color) from:

<https://www.mylittlehouse.org/uploads/2/1/0/0/21005170/3d-picture-visit-magi.pdf>

3. Follow instructions to cut out the frame and the figures.

4. Assemble the frame.

5. Glue foam onto the back of the figures to add a 3D effect.

6. Once complete, add a string to hang your art on the wall.

Supplies:

- printer
- white paper
- cardstock
- scissors
- foam pieces
- glue
- string (optional)



Foods to Prepare

“Bulgarians celebrate Epiphany with a special loaf of bread, called a cluster loaf, for their festive dinner. This accompanies a main course of pickled cabbage leaves stuffed with grouts drizzled with water and sauerkraut juice. A sweet follow-up for this Bulgarian main course is Stara Zagora-style wheat.


“Tuscan tradition calls for appetizer platters of Tuscan cheeses and salamis. Broccoli accompanied by crostini with chicken liver pate often follows appetizers. The pasta course might include a tubular pasta, such as penne, tossed with hot Tuscan olive oil, or a fancier stuffed ravioli with rich duck or rabbit ragu. An abundance of pork sausages served with pieces of lamb and pork usually appears as the main course at Epiphany dinners.

“Epiphany, known as the holiday of light, finds representation with a dish of oranges, blood oranges, clementines or tangerines on the dinner table. Dried figs nestle among the dessert treats, which include spicy, exotic cakes.” (Karin Barga, eHow)

NOTE: In various cultures, a Three King’s Cake is a fun, family tradition. Consider making a Three King’s Cake and hide a figurine, treat, or bean in the cake. Here’s a sample recipe, but there are many versions available: <https://www.bettycrocker.com/recipes/quick-mardi-gras-king-cake/a285aa15-62d7-493b-8d34-b00038646c81>

Activity: Star Gazing

Go out for a walk or a car ride to the countryside and look up at the stars. Reflect on the astronomical event that captivated the attention of the magi and how they traveled to see the King of Kings the “star” pointed to. If possible, lay down on the ground, and talk about the stars you see. Look up some of the constellations that are visible. Reflect on the creative majesty of God. Pray and thank God for the stars that remind us of the Light of the World—Jesus!



Movies to Watch

If you are movie fan, pick out a favorite movie to watch alone or with family/friends. Here are some movies that focus on the story of the wise men, but you certainly are not limited to this list. If you'd prefer, end the holidays by picking out your favorite Christmas movie to watch one last time this season. Pop some popcorn, curl up on the couch, and enjoy the show!

Epiphany Movies:

- The Star
- The Nativity Story
- The Star of Bethlehem
- The Fourth Wise Man
- Chasing the Star

The Wise Guy/Gal Game

As a variation of *Apples to Apples* and other similar games, you will vote on the best or "wisest" answers. Here's how to play:

1. As a group, write down a possible scenario. It could be something that actually happened to you or your family, something you saw on a TV show, or something totally made up. The scenario can be anything. Write it down. Continue this process until you have a list of various, unrelated scenarios.
2. The first player will read one of the scenarios. Then, go around the circle and ask each person to say what he/she thinks would be the best or "wisest" thing to do. The person reading the scenario doesn't answer but will judge/determine the best answer and award a point to that person.
3. Then the person to his/her left reads the next scenario and play continues.
4. The first person to get 3 correct answers wins. Play fair!
5. For added fun, use various treats or candy as tokens or points.

Call the prize tokens, "gold," "frankincense," and "myrrh."



Bible Study

“Because of your temple at Jerusalem, kings will bring you gifts.” (Ps. 68:29)

Psalm 68 is a royal psalm that was likely sung at the time that the ark of the covenant was brought by David into Jerusalem, the new capitol of the kingdom. The psalm depicts God as King over Israel, defeating the foreign kings and providing care for the people of the nation.

The temple (or tabernacle) was viewed as God’s palace with the ark being his throne. God reigned over the nation and its people.

Thus, both the people of Israel and the emissaries of other nations come in procession to pay tribute to the King of Kings.

In verse 29, we are told that kings of neighboring lands will come and bring their gifts to the Lord at his temple. What kind of gifts might foreign dignitaries bring to the King? This week, we are focusing on Epiphany, a day of celebrating the magi (dignitaries from the East) who came to bring their gifts to young Jesus and bow down to him as the King of Kings.

What gifts do you have to bring to the Lord? Consider this week how you can use your time to serve the Lord. Think about ways that you can use some of the money and material objects you have to honor King Jesus. Contemplate the skills, talents, and passions you have. How might you use what God has gifted you to bring a gift to God? As you celebrate God this week, bow down and worship the true King above all kings.

Prayer Time

Make a list of some of the gifts God has given to you in each of the following areas of your life: 1) relationship with God, 2) family, 3) friends, 4) education/career, 5) health, 6) possessions/money, and 7) skills/talents. Then, spend a few minutes each day focusing on one of the lists you made. Thank God specifically for these blessings and ask him to show you how to best use them for his kingdom.



Service: Gifting

Gary Chapman first popularized the concept of identifying our love languages. In his book, *The Five Love Languages*, Chapman asserts that most people gravitate to one primary (and sometimes one or two secondary) love language. The five are: 1) words of affirmation, 2) quality time, 3) physical touch, 4) acts of service, and 5) giving gifts. If you have not taken an inventory to identify your prominent love language consider doing so at:

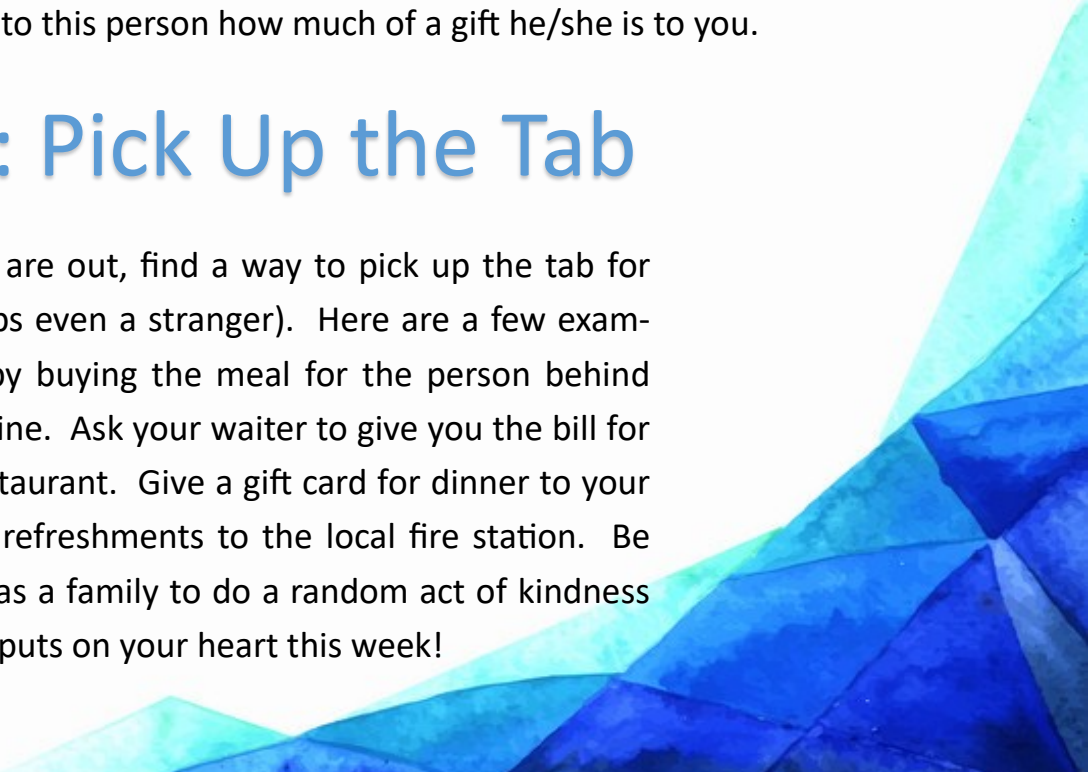
<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language>

This week, we will focus on giving gifts. If this is your love language, you are really good at giving gifts. If not, it may be something to work on. This week, take time to do the following service project. You will find great joy in doing it, even if gift giving is not your primary love language.

1. Try to identify someone in your life that you think has the gifts love language.
2. Intentionally think of something that you can buy or make for this person for no particular reason (not his/her birthday, anniversary, etc.).
3. Find an intentional time to give them the gift, possibly in front of others.
4. Verbally express to this person how much of a gift he/she is to you.

Connect: Pick Up the Tab

This week, when you are out, find a way to pick up the tab for someone else (perhaps even a stranger). Here are a few examples: Pay it forward by buying the meal for the person behind you in the drive thru line. Ask your waiter to give you the bill for another table at a restaurant. Give a gift card for dinner to your child's teacher. Take refreshments to the local fire station. Be creative! Find a way as a family to do a random act of kindness to someone that God puts on your heart this week!



Worship

Carve out some time to listen to worship music, hum or sing along. Here are some great songs to get you started. These songs focus on God's gracious gifts and acceptance. Look them up on YouTube if you don't have them in your music repertoire.

Pick your own songs and spend time worshipping and celebrating who God is to you and all the ways that he has blessed your life.

Epiphany Worship Songs:

- Way Maker
- Gifts from God
- One Thing Remains
- Who am I
- Your Grace is Enough
- Forever Reign
- Jireh
- Raise a Hallelujah
- Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Challenge: Gifting the Needy

It is easier for us to give gifts to those we love and care about. It can be more challenging for us to give to those in need. This week, instead of finding things around the house that you no longer need or use to donate, go out and buy something new. Find someone who is in need at the local shelter or even on a street corner and just give it away. Share with them that God is working on your heart and invited you to share this gift with them. No strings attached. Be the embodied presence of Jesus to him/her. Who knows? Maybe they will bring the joy of Jesus into your heart. Let Jesus rise in you!

“By grace I understand the favor of God, and also the gifts and working of his Spirit in us; as love, kindness, patience, obedience, mercifulness, despising of worldly things, peace, concord, and such like.” —William Tyndale