



Sharing GOD'S STORY @ home

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

—Isaiah 61:8

MEALTIME PRAYER

God of mercy, thank you for the food we are about to receive. Thank you for the home we have. Thank you for the people in our lives who care for us. Thank you for everything. Amen.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

*As you read the Bible this week, ask yourself: **What is happening in each of these passages? And how are they tied to hope in God?***

Sunday	Isaiah 61:1-11	Isaiah's Prophecy of Hope
Monday	Leviticus 25:8-12	The Year of Jubilee
Tuesday	Genesis 1:1-5	The Spirit in Creation
Wednesday	Isaiah 42:1-9	A Light to the Nations
Thursday	Zechariah 9:9-17	The Coming Ruler
Friday	Luke 1:5-24	The Birth of John Foretold
Saturday	Luke 1:57-80	John the Baptist Is Born
Sunday	Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]	Mary and Elizabeth's Visitors

*If your household includes younger children, use a child-friendly Bible. You might find that the children's Bible you are using may not include the very story assigned for the DAILY BIBLE READINGS. **Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!***

SERVICE CHALLENGE

SERVICE is how we enact God's great love for the entire world.

Spend time with a close friend by going for a walk, getting coffee, or talking on the phone.

DEVOTIONS

Think about devotions as a continuation of our community's worship. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household's devotions. Adapt as necessary!

GATHERING

✠ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time."

✠ Prayer of the Week

Merciful God, show us your love and forgiveness. Clear a path for justice for those who have been oppressed. Be with us today as we center our minds and inhale your peace so that we can focus on you. Amen.

CARING CONVERSATION

Take a moment to check in with each other or to use the questions below.

- ❓ **Highs & Lows:** What is one thing you experienced that went right today? What is one thing you experienced that went wrong?
- ❓ **Thinking About This Week's Story:** God's people had been exiled, and now were returning to Jerusalem, their homeland. Moving forward, God promised to be their faithful leader by helping understand what was right and just. When did you act fairly today? When did you act unfairly?
- ❓ **Getting Ready for Next Week's Story:** Mary gets a surprise visit from an angel, who tells her she is going to have a baby. How have you been surprised today?

DAILY BIBLE READING

Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front. What do you want to remember from this reading?

PRAY TOGETHER

✠ Using pencil and paper, have each person write down or draw a prayer for peace in the world. Once done, read the prayers.

CLOSING

✠ If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotion time.

✠ Rituals & Traditions: A Blessing to Share

Mark one another with the sign of the cross on each other's hands or forehead, and say, "Go, and reach out to others with peace. Amen."

The "Four Key Faith Practices"—Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions—are a framework developed by the Rev. Dr. David Anderson of Milestones Ministry and used by permission from Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN (www.vibrantfaith.org). For more information about the Four Keys, go to <http://milestonesministry.org/>.