

Milestones Ministry for Faith Formation and Outreach

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Kairos Class: Milestones Ministry

Milestones ministry takes congregational and daily life experiences like baptism, graduation, marriage, retirement, as well as receiving a Bible, beginning confirmation, starting a first job, or becoming a parent or grandparent, and countless other occasions in life to nurture the Christian faith and reach out to others with the love of God in Christ. Milestones ministry began decades ago as a longer and later confirmation ministry. Now it serves as a lifelong affirmation of baptism in a way that brings generations together and connects people in the church with those still searching for the meaning and hope Christ brings. Milestones ministry manuals will be introduced and used as a starter kit to help congregations and homes experience the journey of faith formation and outreach. The basic structure of a milestone will be explored so that congregations and homes can create their own milestone events.

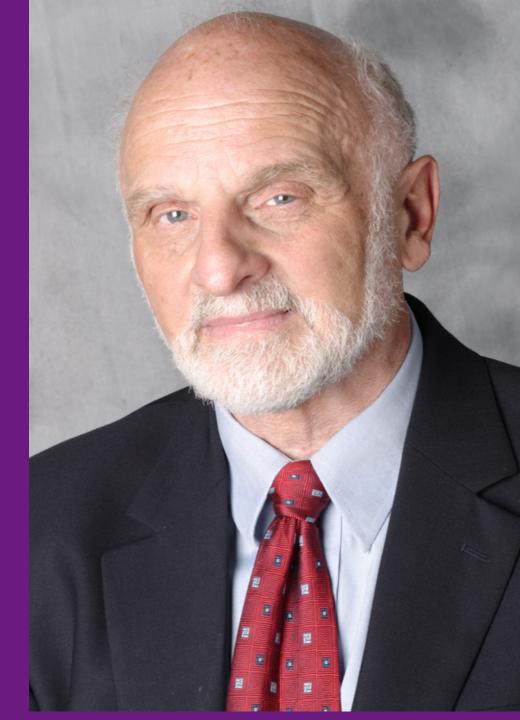




"Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:6-9)

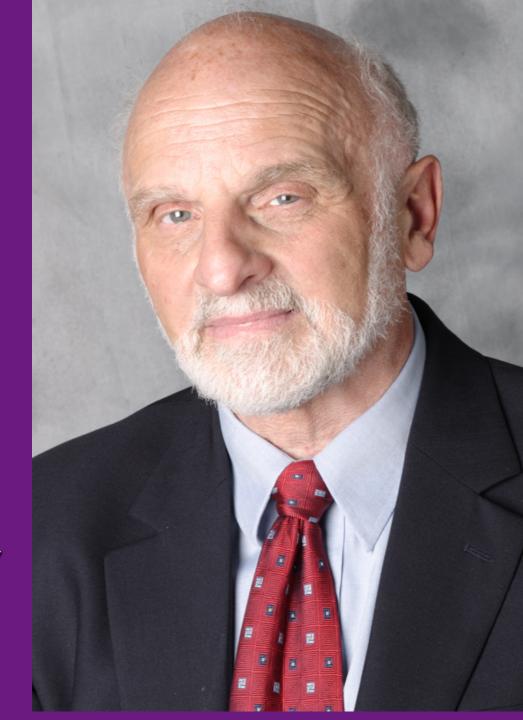
"Although the Bible has other agendas that are more central than that of family, it does drop hints along the way about the family that are worth considering. It is clear that in the world of biblical faith, the family is the primary unit of meaning which shapes and defines reality."

Walter Bruggeman
The Covenanted Family



"One major function of intergenerational life is to transmit the stories and the promises which identify the family, so that each new generation has an inheritance that gives both identity and roots and purpose and vocation."

Walter Bruggeman
The Covenanted Family



The Milestones Ministry Frame

Five Principles of faith formation and shepherding:

- 1. Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships-often in our own homes.
- 2. The church is a living partnership between home and congregation.





Milestones Ministry Frame

3. Where Christ is present in faith, home is church, too.

4. Faith is caught more than taught.

5. If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian adults who practice the faith with them.





Caring Conversations

Devotions

• Service

• Rituals and Traditions



Four Key Faith Practices

Watching You:

A Four-Key Video



AAA Christians/Shepherds

Authentic

Available



Affirming



"The Shepherd of souls is the personal care of others through caring conversations, faith-filled reflections, and prayerful engagement"

Shepherd of Souls

There were the "Nones"

Now there are the "Dones"

Church Refugees, Josh Packard and Ashleigh Hope

Two Concerns

- 1. Good, solid congregational leaders have left.
- 2. No sense of real community in the congregation to keep them there.

Now there are the "Dones"

Church Refugees, Josh Packard and Ashleigh Hope

Milestones Ministry:

Promotes "Congregational" Bonding

Faith Formed through Shepherding/Mentoring Relationships.



Families are not sitting around their kitchen tables waiting to learn how to bring faith home.





How can we help individuals and families speak the faith out loud?



Taking Faith Home

Milestones Ministry

Cross + Generational Events

Shepherd of Souls



OCTOBER 7, 2018 TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST *



Welcome God's kingdom as you welcome a child.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 10:2-16	Jesus blesses the children
Monday	Genesis 2:18-24	God creates a partner for man
Tuesday	Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12	God has spoken by his Son
Wednesday	Matthew 18:1-6	Welcoming a little child
Thursday	Deuteronomy 11:13-21	Teaching the children
Friday	Ephesians 6:1-9	Instructions for the household
Saturday	Psalm 8	God honors humanity
Sunday	Mark 10:17-31	A rich man goes away sad

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." Mark 10:14 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, you have made us responsible for the care of creation. Help us to offer care with the mercy and grace you have shown to us. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

With this food you make us strong. To you our life and love belong. Thank you, God! Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord Jesus Christ take you into his arms and bless you; may he protect and care for you, now and always. (Mark 10:16)



OCTOBER 7, 2018 HYMN OF THE WEEK

Now Thank We All Our God

CARING CONVERSATIONS







Discuss in your home or small group:

- How do people pay attention to you and make you feel important?
- How do you honor others you know or meet for the first time?
- Genesis 2, Psalm 8, and Mark 10:2-16 all address how God cares for and values human beings, including children. What does this say about God and our Lord Jesus Christ?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Mark 10:2-16.

It seems charming that Jesus compares the kingdom of God to the life of a child. However, what Jesus means by that comparison has been a challenge. Is the focus on sentimental reflections on a child? Is it the innocence of a child? Is it their trusting nature and child-like faith? In part, it depends on how the original Greek is translated. Some believe what Jesus meant was that one is to welcome the kingdom as one welcomes a child, someone who is vulnerable and weak (In Jesus' day, a child had little value or legal protection). In other words, to welcome the kingdom of God was like welcoming someone who was not powerful by worldly standards. Like Jesus' message in Mark 9:35-38, to be first in God's eyes is to be last and a servant. The kingdom of God is about care for the little ones, not honor and glory. This fits with the discussion on divorce in Mark 10:2-12. Women were seen as property without social power to protect themselves from the whims of a husband's loyalty or disinterest. Jesus defends women and, thereby, the protection of marriage. The kingdom of God cares for the vulnerable. Reflect on who might be the vulnerable in your setting.

Pray: Lord, we pray for those who need protection in our community and out in the world. Help us to offer care with the mercy and grace you have shown to us. Amen.

SERVICE



In Mark 10:2-16 Jesus speaks on behalf of children and married women, people in his society who were vulnerable and not protected by social, religious, and legal norms. Identify people in your community who need help and the church programs and other service organizations that assist them. Find ways to volunteer with a program that helps those in need, make a financial contribution to support such programs, or visit someone you know who needs care and attention.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



In Mark 10:2-16 Jesus cares for children, women, and married life. Take time this week in your home or with friends to care for each other by looking at childhood photos and talking about childhood memories together. When children are present, play a game or go on an outing with them. Conclude by blessing each other with: May the Lord Jesus Christ take you into his arms and bless you; may he protect and care for you, now and always.



In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

What Is Milestones Ministry?



A Meaningful Memorable Moment... Marked with the Cross of Christ





What milestones do you currently celebrate in your congregation? CONGREGATION MILESTONES

Baptism?

Mission
Trips?

Communion?

Bible?

Others?

Welcome to Worship?

Blessing of Backpacks?

FaithChest®?





What milestones do you recognize and celebrate in your home and daily life? HOME MILESTONES:

Birthdays?

Baptismal Birthdays?

Aniversaries?

Graduation?

Others?

First Day of School?

Driver's License?

Retirement?





What milestones do you recognize in the public world around you? COMMUNITY MILESTONES:

Easter Egg Hunt?

Graduation?

Summertime at the Park?

Memorial Day?

Others?

Trunk or Treat?

Souper Bow/?

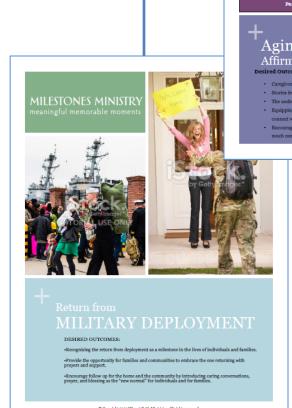
Thanksgiving?





Adult Milestones

- Caregivers of Aging Parents
- Return from Military Deployment
- Retirement
- New Home
- New Job
- First Time Parents
- Grandparents
- Wedding Anniversary
- Empty Nest
- Loss of a Loved One
- Faith Community
- Affirming Spiritual Gifts







Aging Parents Milestone
Affirming primary care givers

- Consider and others tells shout shouses and now living situation
- . Stories from the past are told and caregivers are affirmed in their choice to care for a pare
- The understanding of how faith can be shared in the home.
- Equipping caregivers with a ritual/tradition as familiarity and consistency can be a key tool
 connect with an aging parent.
- Encouraging the caregiver with a community of faith to graciously accept help and have

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ADULT COMMUNITY MILESTONES

Blessing a Home

Retirement

Becoming a Grandparent

Becoming a Parent

New Job

Empty Nest

Caring for Aging Parents

Loss of a Loved One





Sometimes Overlooked...

- We tend to limit milestones to parent and child
- Importance of Follow Up and Re-Connect
- Opportunity to invite whole community (not just the faith community)







New! Milestone Moments for the Home

- Broken Bone Milestone
- First Cell Phone Milestone
- **Back to School Milestone**
- Beginning School Milestone
- Reformation Anniversary
- Easter Egg Milestone
- Vacation Milestone
- Christmas Tree Blessing
- Confirmation Day
- Medicare Card









Broken Bone Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. Milestones Ministry provides a clear and usable model for congregations, homes, and life experiences. The rich variety of life experiences represented in Milestones Ministry does the essential istry of the church: promoting Christian faith formation with family, friends, and others with whom we can reach.

When someone we care about has experienced the pain and

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acture that includes , and reinforcing so that Moments that cause us to pause and shift gears like a broken bone happen in our daily lives. Providing opportunities to find God's presence in these moments is important. This Broken Bone Milestone Moment

Naming - It is important to recognize the changes that may take place in the lives of the one who has broken a bone and the lives of those who care for that person.

Equipping - This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations that draw out thoughts and concerns about changes in our lives and includes God's presence amidst the

Blessing - Praying for the one who has broken a bone and for those who will help and care for this person is a great ways to witness faith in action in daily life.

Gifting - Giving a tangible gift like get well notes, picture or cards or writing a special message in a Bible are good ways to help participants be reminded of this milestone in daily life. Be creative! Gift something that perhaps will help the person while the cast is still on.

Reinforcing - It is a good idea to follow up after the Broken Bone Milestone Moment by gathering one more time after the cast has been removed to share stories about life with and without a cast on and give thanks for healing.

MILES ONES













First Cell Phone Milestone Moment

God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. A Milestone Moment brings family and friends together to mark a special time in their lives and to acknowledge and affirm God's presence in their midst. Milestone Moments provide a model for connecting significant occasions in people's lives with the ongoing

Being given a cell phone to use for the first time is on the mind of many youth as parents struggle to make a decision about what age is most appropriate for their child to have a cell phone. A cell phone signals independence and provides youth with many ways to communicate in today's world. From conversations to texts to social media, the world arrives at one's fingertips and this step in the life of a family can be a stressful one for both parents and children.

Blessing - Praying for youth and families after this decision has been made is a great way to affirm God's The cost adds concerns and questions about the need for a cell phone. Talking about how a phone will be used is an important conversation for parents to have with their children. This Milestone Moment provides the opportunity for families to address questions, establish guidelines, and connect this new way of communicating with the life of

Milestones Ministry uses a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestone Moment will have a greater chance to take deeper root in one's lifelong faith for

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of Moments that cause us to pause and shift gears like parents deciding it is time for their child to have a cell phone happen in our daily lives. Providing opportunities to find God's presence in these moments is important. This First Cell Phone Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

> Naming - It is important to recognize the changes that take place in relationships and ways to communicate when one gets a cell phone. It is good to acknowledge how God is part of this new means to connect to the world.

Equipping - This Milestone Moment uses the Four Keys for practicing faith outline (see page 2) to connect getting a first cell phone with the life of faith.

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Gifting - Giving a tangible gift like a special sticker for the phone or a customized case for the phone is a good way to help participants be reminded of this Milestone.

Reinforcing - It is beneficial to meet again a couple of weeks after the initial use of the cell phone has begun. Check in and see how it is being used and how life may be different. Encourage honest talk about whether or not guidelines are being followed. It is also helpful to check in with one another throughout the year, (See page 2, left





New! Milestone Moments for the Home

- Birthday Milestone
- Learning the Lord's Prayer
- Learning the Apostles' Creed
- Learning the Ten Commandments
- Transition to Assisted Living
- Blessing of the Animals
- School Reunion
- Congregational Anniversary
- Report Card
- and more









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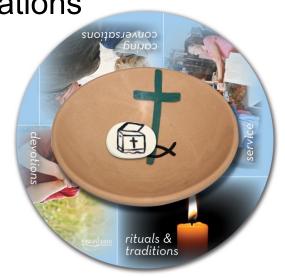






How Milestones Moment Works

- The Design: Easy-to-use format
- Four Keys (Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals/Traditions)
- Involves everyone: all the generations
- Worship/Blessing
- For the Home
- Follow-up Session
- Focus on Outreach







+ Birthday Milestone Moment

For a Small Group or Family Gathering



Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away

"and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise."

Deuteronomy 6:7l

A follow up for the Birthday Milestone Moment can be done with caring conversations to remember this special day and revisiting the basket full of acts of kindness to talk about what has been done. In what ways have the acts of kindness been a gift to the birthday person or to someone else. Stay in touch with the person who was honored through a phone call or visit.

An important step after experiencing the Four Keys for practicing faith in the small groups or home setting is to bless and equip friends and families to continue practicing faith by using the Four Keys daily as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.

A suggested resource for continued caring conversations

Taking Faith Home Taking Faith Home Cards

Additional Milestones and Milestone Moments can be found at: www.milestonesministry.org



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Key Faith Practices: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. As you celebrate an individual's birthday, think about how that person's life has been filled with the love of God through family and friends. Let this Birthday Milestone Moment be a time to celebrate the birthday person's life through Christian faith, hope, and love.



Caring Conversations

Process these thoughts and questions:

- Birthday person: Tell us some of the joys, challenges and blessings you have experienced.
- Guests: Tell a story about the birthday person.
- · Birthday person: What hopes do you have for the future?
- Guests: What hopes do you have for the birthday person?



Devotions

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

God is the creator of all life, including the gift of this day.

- Talk about how this day is a gift from God.
- · How has the birthday person been a gift to you?

Pray: Dear God, today we especially thank you for the gift of (name), who is celebrating his/her birthday. We thank you for (name) and for your love for all through the gift of this day. May we respond with joy for the life of (name) and for the gift of life we all share together. In the name of Jesus Christ, your only Son born into the world that we may have life in his name. Amen.



Service

Think of an act of kindness that can be done for the birthday person or be done to honor the birthday person at some point within the next year and write it on slips of paper. Place the slips in a basket and gift them to the honored person.



Rituals and Traditions

Before the traditional birthday cake and opening of gifts, bless the birthday person. Surround the person and hold hands or lay hands on the honored person and bless them:

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord teach you to count each day so that you may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)





Introducing the new look and design...

How can this be about ministry?









"By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

Proverbs 24:3 (NRSV)

→ New Home Milestone: Affirming the Physical, Spiritual and Emotional Transition to a New Living Space

Desired Outcomes

- · Talk about changes and challenges of new living situations
- Share memories of previous homes and hopes and dreams for the future in a new home
- · Understand how faith and worship can be practiced in the home
- Equip those in transition with a ritual/tradition for moving into a new home
- Provide resources for rituals/traditions which can be consistently practiced in the new home















Backpack Milestone

Many congregations have found the blessing of backpacks to be a very meaningful way to mark the passage of summer. It is a helpful transition for children, youth, and adults to the new fall schedule. It is also an opportunity to discover God's presence with us at home, school and work, and to be reminded that Jesus is always with us.

Going to school for the first time or returning to school for another year carries with it the challenges, anxieties, hopes, and opportunities that fill the lives of children, parents, and other caregivers with rany diverse emotions and wonderments. Therefor prime time to acknowledge our depen 5 Part Structure and God's goodness. love end-Mile unce or Jesus, "have no fear," and much provide a way to begin the year and each school day with the Four Keys that nurture the Christian faith: caring conversations, devotions, service, and rituals and traditions.

We bring children, parents, and other adults together to recognize this time of the year by providing the opportunity to bless backpacks by incorporating a simple structure that includes:

Naming – It is important to recognize this time of year as the end of summer and the beginning of new, and sometimes hectic, schedules for families.

Equipping – All ages are given the opportunity to practice the Four Keys and have time to take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and claim values and faith that establish and direct our lives beyond the fears, amxieties, and pressures of life.

Blessing – The blessing of the backpacks allows us not just to imagine, but also to experience the larger picture of life—the one that says life is not dominated or formed by pressures and uncertainties.

Gifting – You may give a gift as a physical reminder of this occasion, such as a zipper pull or key chain. (See Appendix 1.)

Reinforcing – It is a good idea to follow up after the Backpack Milestone by connecting this group one more time to share stories about how their school year is going. The Backpack Milestone Follow Up is on page 7.

Caring Conversations











- 1. Name it
- 2. Equip it
- 3. Bless it
- 4. Gift it
- 5. Reinforce it





FOUR KEYS For Practicing Faith

- Caring Conversations
- Devotions
- 3. Service
- Rituals and Traditions

+ Cross+Generational Event

Begin the session with an introduction that emphasizes the importance of learning for everyone, including the students beginning another year at school. Acknowledge that all people are beginning their fall schedules.

Preparation:

- · Light snack of honey and crackers, and napkins
- · Servers for set up and clean up
- Have some new backpacks available as gifts to children in the local community. Have gift-wrapping and/or gift note cards ready so that the groups can wrap the backpacks and/or write personal notes of encouragement to those students who will receive the backpacks.
- Nametags

Event Outline:

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Caring Conversations

Ask people to have a discussion in their small groups. Complete these sentences:

- A favorite personal story of mine about school is...
- · A funny or meaningful story about school I remember is . . .



Devotions

Read Scripture: Proverbs 9:10 (CEV)
Respect and obey the Lord! This is the beginning of wisdom. To
have understanding you must know the Holy God.

After reading the Scripture, talk about how it may relate to learning and the new school year. Give honey and crackers to each small group, and have each person give another person a cracker with a drop of honey on it and say the following: May the sweet taste of honey remind you of the sweetness of God's love and instruction for your life. As you continue to learn for a lifetime, remember that respecting and obeying the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.



Service

- Take some time to name people who have taught you in the past. What did they teach you? Thank God for this person.
- Think of a skill you have or something you know that you could teach to someone. Plan a time to do so.



Rituals and Traditions

Gather again in circles and close by praying together: Dear Lord, you have blessed us with many people who have taught and mentored us in life. Bless us now as we go forth from this place with an excitement for learning and a desire to use our skill and knowledge to care for people and all creation. In the name of the Pather, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bless one another before dismissing: "May you respect and obey the Lord."

Worship and Blessing

Choose a time during a worship service to recognize students and their backpacks. Invite all who are students, from children to adults, with and without backpacks, to come forward for the blessing.

Leader:

At this time, we are delighted to invite forward those who participated in the Backpack Milestone. We encourage them and all of us to continue the faith practices of caring conversation, devotions and service to build a ritual and tradition in all our homes as a way of life. (Distribute additional gift, if desired, for all as a physical reminder of this milestone. See Appendix 1.)

Leader:

Let us pray. God of all knowledge and wisdom, these students and backpacks remind us that a new school year has begun. We pray your blessing on them and upon all students, young and old, as they begin a new year. Help them discover and develop the gifts you have given them. And as they grow in knowledge, help them also grow in kindness and compassion, learning respect for themselves and for others. We ask your blessing on parents, teachers, school staff, and all those who care for these students. Strengthen these students with encouragement, support, and love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.







Devotions

Read Scripture: Proverbs 24:3-4 (CEV)

"Use wisdom and understanding to establish your home; let good sense fill the Rooms with priceless treasures."

After reading the Scripture, finish these sentences:

- 1. A piece of wisdom I learned in my own home (or grandparents' home or other significant adult's home) as a child is . . .
- 2. A treasure I carry with me from my old home to my new home is . . .
- 3. When I think about using wisdom and understanding to establish my home, I wonder . . .





For the Home



Blessings in home and congregation with intention to do outreach



Milestone for Small Groups or Home

There are times when celebrating a milestone can be done in a small group setting or more intimately in homes. Take time to enjoy a meal or dessert together and to invite conversation with the following outline. You may also wish to use portions of a Cross+Generational Event found in this Backpack Milestone.



Caring Conversations

Begin with conversation:

- One of the highlights of the summer was,
- Now that summer is over, I can't wait for



Devotions

Read Deuteronomy 7:11 (CEV) So be sure to obey his laws and teachings I am giving you today.

God made promises to our ancestors. He loves us and is with us always. He gave them and us a commandment to keep his words in our hearts and recite them to our children. In school, we don't have commandments. We have rules.

- What rules do you have in your school?
- · What happens if you break the rules?



Service

Our lives are filled with learning. We learn through many social contacts. We learn at school, in the home, in the congregation, on the job, through various media, and in the community.

- Make a commitment in the next month to be of service by helping someone else learn.
- Be a "book buddy" at school or help somebody learn how to run a computer program at work or develop a skill with a tool.



Rituals and Traditions

Prayer.

Lord, you have blessed us to be a blessing to others and grow in wisdom. Help our lives to reflect your grace and will as we serve you. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Bless one another: "May you obey His laws and teachings."

Online Links

Resources to establish faith traditions in the home

Caring Conversations

Devotions

Service

Rituals and Traditions

4 Key Faith Practices Mat





Place a candle in the

Place a blessing bowl in



Add a milestone to the bowl to encourage caring conversations









+

Backpack Milestone Follow Up Encouraging a time to check in

Reinforcing

An important step after role modeling the Four Keys in a cross+generational or small group setting is to biess and equip families to continue practicing faith by using the Four Keys in their homes.

Approximately one month after the initial event, bring students and families back together for a follow up to continue building relationships and facilitating the Four Keys as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the congregation and at home.

Four Keys

Caring Conversations

After school has begun, gather once more for a special time together. Begin with conversation:

- My favorite part of the school day is __
- Something I like about my teacher is_
- · Something I look forward to in school this year is

Devotions

Read Luke 2:52 (CEV)

Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.

 Jesus became wise and strong. How do you become wise and strong?

Service

- Talk about children who may not have backpacks, lunch money, and school supplies. Go together as a family or group and buy supplies and donate to a local shelter.
- Pray for children who do not have the benefit of an education that they find a means to grow in their knowledge and faith.

Rituals and Traditions

Pray together:

Dear God of knowledge and wisdom, as we are given the opportunity at school to learn something new each day, we ask for your blessing. Help us to develop and grow the gifts you have given us. Remind us that wherever we go, you are always with us. Amen.

Bless one another by making the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads and say, "Jesus goes with you wherever you go."





Outreach into the community is a major gift of Milestones Ministry as developed by Milestones Ministries, LLC. These milestones are written with the larger community in mind. More and more, congregations are exploring ways to include non-members in Milestones Ministry opportunities. It is a lifelong faith formation ministry that can serve and bless other people besides congregational members.



Blessing of the Backpacks
Driver's License
Middle School
and High School Graduation
along with the newest addition:





Adult Milestones such as Aging Parents, and Deployment are all good examples of milestones that can be celebrated as a community event where friends and neighbors are invited.



Three Stages of Milestones Ministry Development

Milestones Manual



Stage 1 - Program





Three Stages of Milestones Ministry Development



Stage 2 – Life Cycle





Three Stages of Milestones Ministry Development

Milestone Blessings Bowl and Mat



Stage 3 – Way of Life





Remember ...

The Key Elements:

- Naming
- Equipping
- Blessing
- Gifting
- Reinforcing



The Challenge:

- More than parent and child
- Importance of Follow Up
- Invite whole community
- "Congregational" Bonding





Caring Conversations

Devotions

• Service

Rituals and Traditions



Four Key Faith **Practices** for Milestone **Moments**



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