

Suggestions for using the Blessing Bowl:

1. Display on a table or desk: Use for devotions during small group or family times by choosing a stone and sharing stories about what this particular moment meant and continues to mean in each person's life in Christ.
2. Give a bowl as a gift to families who are having a child baptized and gift stones one at a time throughout the child's faith journey to place in the bowl and serve as a way to initiate conversations in the home as a reminder of each milestone.
3. Gift to parents, grandparents, or godparents as a resource to use at home for faith conversations.
4. Use in small group gatherings, during Sunday school, or in confirmation. Talk about the meaning of each stone and the importance of it as part of a lifelong faith formation journey.
5. Use in a new member class as a conversation starter to help individuals begin to talk about their faith stories and discuss how they would like to continue and deepen their faith life together.
6. Use in a pre-baptism class with parents as a preview of all the faith milestones that are related to baptism.
7. Use in a Christian parenting class or support group to help parents understand and live the promises God made to their child in baptism and the promises they made on behalf of the child in baptism.
8. Use one stone a month as a topic of an article in the congregation's newsletter to help refresh an awareness of the promises that they, as a congregation, made to each child baptized in their midst.



Bowls and stones created by Liturgical Artist
and Potter Dawn Deines-Christensen

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Blessing Bowl for Congregational Milestones (related to the life of the congregation)



*Four Key Mat sold separately.

"...what do those stones mean to you"
Joshua 4:6b

MEANING OF THE STONES



Baptism

Baptism is the foundational milestone in the life of a Christian. This stone serves as a reminder of this occasion. Use the stone to celebrate every meaningful, memorable moment as an occasion to recall and give thanks for baptism and the lifelong journey of faith.



Anniversary of Baptism

It is good to recall one's baptismal anniversary. This stone recognizes this special moment, not just for the baptized individual, but for the congregation that supports and equips the baptized for a lifetime journey of faith. In the home, this milestone can be recognized every year.



Entering Sunday School

Entering Sunday school is an exciting and potentially scary time for children. Parents and the congregation should gather together for a special blessing to observe this milestone as the child begins Sunday school. This helps all ages work together to nurture the Christian faith in both children and families. The Entering Sunday school stone helps families recall that Sunday school is an important contribution to Christian faith formation.



Communion

In today's church, communion can take place anytime at many stages of life, most often between one's baptism in infancy or childhood and middle school years. Whenever it happens, the Communion stone is a reminder of this milestone and that we are disciples of Christ and Holy Communion is food for the daily journey of faith.



Bible

Bibles and storybook Bibles can be offered at many times during our lives. Recognizing the gifting of a Bible for children, youth, and adults helps people gain an appreciation for the sacred gift of Scripture and grow in their knowledge of the Bible along the way. Having the Bible stone also lifts up the sacredness of the Bible and is a good reminder as one opens the Bible to learn, be inspired, and strengthened for a life in Christ.



Beginning Confirmation

Beginning the journey of confirmation instruction for youth is often overlooked. It is important to acknowledge not just those beginning confirmation but also include families and the congregation in this part of a young person's faith journey. The Beginning Confirmation stone serves as a reminder and celebrates the cross+generational aspect of one's faith life. The stone is a reminder to all ages of this communal faith formation experience.



Confirmation

Celebrating one's confirmation is best done as a cross+generational event. It reminds the church that confirmation is more than youth ministry. The Confirmation stone reminds all youth and adults in a congregation that confirmation is a lifelong journey of faith for youth and adults of all ages to walk together.



Graduation

The importance of graduation from high school, college, vocational technical schools, and other places of learning and training is to remember that a graduation implies not only an ending, but new beginning with all kinds of new questions, excitements, and fears. The Graduation stone is a reminder of this milestone and emphasizes graduation as an important step in one's journey of faith.



Marriage

Although not everyone will experience this milestone, it is a wonderful connection to the congregation and life of faith for those who do. The Marriage stone serves as a reminder and helps to emphasize the link between childhood faith and living the faith into an adult life with adult responsibilities and privileges and provides a way to share the faith with others for a lifetime. The stone reminds couples of the commitment they made to God and to one another.



Blank

There is a powerful partnership in ministry between the church in the congregation and the church in the home. People experience a wide variety of milestones in life that simply cannot be contained in or limited to the normative milestones of the congregation. This stone allows one to identify their own milestone that deserves attention and affirmation from the community of faith. Use a permanent marker to draw a design on the stone that signifies the milestone being experienced and let that moment be filled with the hope that is ours in Christ.