



Home Rituals

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St. Ignatius Loyola Parish

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Introducing Rituals into your Home.

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After Christmas — Epiphany & Such



As all parents know, there's the birth of a child, then there's the rest of life. We cannot remain frozen in the scene of the Nativity as we watch revelation unfold. In these days we see this birth touch the world, beginning with the locals, the shepherds in the field and spreading to the world with the arrival of the wise men or the three kings. One might picture Christmas as the pebble tossed into the pond where the ripples spread throughout the whole.

But there is more than proclamation at hand. This sacred time involves our own response to the birth of Jesus. Do we, like the shepherds, follow the invitation of the angels to come and see? Do we, like the wise men or the three kings,

come bearing gifts? Do we spend time reflecting on what all of this means for us and for the world? In other words, do we let the idea of "epiphany" take hold. For those that don't know, "epiphany" means more than a day, more than a God's appearance, it is a sudden insight or intuitive perception of a deeper reality. It is the folks gathered in a stable who suddenly recognize "God with us" in this infant child. It is the folks who recognize and return to their lives changed, seeing God's power not in might but in humble circumstances. It is those who proclaim God's favor in ways previously unnoticed or discounted. How might you go forward from the Nativity to an Epiphany? What do you see and what do you proclaim as a result of "being in the manger"? How might change to live out the revelation that you have witnessed? And how might you explain all this to your children this year.

Epiphany Conversations/ Blessings

Boston College has been providing information for dinner conversations, mostly for adults, with their Faith Feeds series. One of the series is on Life Epiphanies. See <https://view.publitas.com/boston-college/ffs-life-epiphanies/page/1>. You may wish to skip ahead to page 9 and read the article entitled “Our Children’s Wisdom” and then take a gander at the conversation questions on the following page. These can, of course, be adapted for various ages.

Home Blessing for Epiphany from Assumption of the BVM Parish O’Fallon, Missouri

<https://assumptionbvm.org/Resources/News/ID/219766/The-Epiphany-of-Our-Lord-January-6-2022>

Home Blessing for Epiphany from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops

<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany>

As a pdf: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer/pdf/22767/en>



Epiphany Traditions

If you have been to New Orleans or participated in Mardi Gras, you may know the tradition of the King Cake where hidden in the cake is a small infant Jesus. But, surprise, the King Cake isn’t really for Mardi Gras, it’s for Epiphany. This article from folks at Baylor University introduces some of the traditions of Epiphany, including the King Cake. <https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/159118.pdf> The finding of Jesus in the cake symbolizes the King’s discovery of the baby Jesus in the unlikely place of a manger or stable.

The article includes two other symbols associated with this feast: the Blessing of the Magi and the use of candles and light for the stars that light the way as well as Jesus, the light that shines in the darkness.

While we may take Epiphany as an extension of the Christmas season, the writers point us to many different gospel events where Christ the light shines in the darkness.

The King Cake, the candles and the blessing of the Magi might be something that you would wish to incorporate as mini-rituals in your home. A great opportunity for fun, creativity and education all together. Always a great trivia question, “What were the names of the three wise men?”

See also Our Sunday Visitor and their Teaching Catholic Kids for more Epiphany traditions and ideas.

<https://teachingcatholickids.com/family-traditions-for-epiphany/>

Little Christmas

Ever hear of Epiphany as Little Christmas? Well this article speaks of a special tradition in Ireland where it is sometimes known as Women's Little Christmas. Unlike Boxing day when the servants were given a day off, Women's Little Christmas gave the women of the family a chance to visit with friends or visit the pubs.

Maybe a new tradition for your family. <https://christmas.lovetoknow.com/little-christmas>

Of course you can learn a little bit more by turning to Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Christmas. While it may not give you a whole lot more information, you might just come up with a good bit of fun trying to pronounce all the different national/ethnic names for the feasts.

Want to hear more, visit <https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/womens-christmas-nollaig-na-mban-celebrate-ireland> for some additional support to have a day off for the women and some cooking and cleaning chores for the men.

I'm sure Mary would have thought it a wonderful idea.



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Finding God in All Things

[Perspectives for the New Year](#)

- ◆ PBS Kids, New Year Countdown
<https://youtu.be/1nzopp23sTI>
- ◆ Review of the Year → Review of History in the Bible
<https://youtu.be/lkmdajgVN3o>
- ◆ Solemnity of Mary → Kids talking about their Mum
<https://youtu.be/IMdYL6bHs54>

What about New Year's?

Good Housekeeping has a great list of traditions for New Years from around the world. Everything from the food you eat (round or long) to the color of the underwear you wear.

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/g25360543/new-year-traditions/> What about hanging bundles of onions above your doors or banging Christmas bread on the walls of your home? You may find a new tradition for your family.

Check out the Almanac (as in *Old Farmer's*) for their list and/or articles on New Year's Traditions. You can pick up a recipe for Hoppin John (a version of black-eyed peas) to celebrate the day.

<https://www.almanac.com/new-years-traditions-around-world>

Compare to the list from Reader's Digest. <https://www.rd.com/list/good-luck-new-years-traditions-world/> There's even more if you follow the links like Reader's Digest's Sources. You never know what you might find.

Have fun.

