



## Christian Education Bulletin Insert January, 2004

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### **Epiphany - Jan 6**

This is the last day of the twelve days of Christmas, and the evening before is often called Twelfth night. In many homes Epiphany is the time when the Christmas tree and decorations are taken down. The word epiphany comes from a Greek word - Epiphania, which means revelation or manifestation. These are difficult words for children, but we might explain that they mean that Jesus, the baby in the manger, became known as a great king and ruler when the wise men visited him. They had read the words of the prophet, Micah, "*But you, O Bethlehem, . . . from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule over Israel,*" (Micah 5:2) and they came from far away to worship him. Then they returned to their own lands to share what they had seen and heard. Plan a special Epiphany meal for your family. Try to use candle light only for this Festival of Light, and have purple napkins as a symbol of royalty. Use the best china and flatware. As a substitute for incense, boil up some sticks of cinnamon. They will give a wonderful scent throughout the house. Let the children help to make **star shaped cookies** ahead of time and have fun decorating them with icing and/or sprinkles.

Read the story of the visit of the magi to see Jesus in Matthew 2:1-12 or in a children's Bible. Then discuss the following:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out." John 1:5 (TEV) Jesus is the light of the world and his birth changed the world for ever. Pass a candle around the table and ask each person to talk about the changes they hope will happen in the coming year, either in their lives or in the world. When everyone has had a turn, make these hopes into a prayer.

**Stargazing** If it is a clear night try to go outside after your meal and look at the stars, especially if you have someone with you who is able to explain what you are seeing. If not, the next best thing is to visit the website of the American Museum of Natural History. Go to

[www.ology.amnh.org](http://www.ology.amnh.org). Click on astronomy and go from there.

### **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18 - 25**

The Rev'd Paul Watson, founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement-Graymoor, began this special week in 1908. The week was specially chosen because it is close to the Feast days of the Confession of St Peter and the Conversion of St Paul. Peter is especially significant to Roman Catholics and Paul to Protestants.

Mr Watson hoped that Christians throughout the world would focus for a while on what they have in common.

How many Christian denominations can you name? Choose one and think what you know about it. Then try to find out more. If you have a neighbour or friend who is not Anglican, arrange to interview them about their beliefs. (They may quiz you too, so make sure you know what it means to be Anglican!)

In your prayer time this week, pray that differences might be set aside in order that the church might win those who do not know Christ. Try to pray for a different denomination each day.

### **Spending time with children**

The adults in children's lives are often so pressured today that it's hard to find time to be with and listen to the children. You might think about trying one or more of these ideas:

- ! Occasionally walk with your children to school - even though they are old enough to go alone. If they usually go by bus, try to take them by car once in a while, or meet them from school.
- ! On the weekend, go for a drive. Let the children choose the destination. Have a winter picnic (in the car if necessary) when you get there.
- ! Ask children to teach you their favourite video game. Then teach them one of the board games you enjoyed as a child.
- ! If you do a regular workout, involve the children occasionally. Do something they can share such as snow shoeing, walking or running a local indoor track, skating, sliding, skiing, or following an aerobics video together.

### **For Fun**

What starts with E, ends with E and only has one letter?

What do you call a blind dinosaur?

An envelope.  
An I-don't-think-he-saurus.