

ZION'S FAITH AT HOME
MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER
theParentLinkSM

February 2012



CELEBRATE SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

Marking children's physical "firsts," such as first steps and first words, is an exciting and memorable part of parenting. Just as important, and just as worthy of celebration, are spiritual firsts, or faith milestones.

These milestones help children know they're growing up as Christians and continually reconnecting to their faith family. Milestones also allow churches and parents to partner together to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus.

Spiritual occasions that warrant family celebrations include:



Baptism—In Baptism every child is marked a Child of God and becomes a member of the family of Christ. Romans 6:4 tells us that in Baptism we are buried with Christ into death and that "just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." By witnessing a baptism, fellow church members agree to partner with parents to help raise children in the Christian faith.

Receiving a First Bible—When children receive God's Word, it's like their very own special love letter from God. He wants us to read the Bible and apply it to our lives. Making a "big deal" out of getting a Bible shows kids how important the book is to our faith and its growth.

Transitioning to the Preteen Years—Leaving behind elementary school symbolizes that preteens are beginning to "own" their faith. Somewhere along their spiritual journey, they'll decide whether to draw closer to God or reject him. When they do decide to Affirm their Baptism they are saying that yes- "this is what I believe." The great thing is that God is always there, waiting for young people to find him. And he's always there for parents, too, guiding us as we lead our children through faith milestones.

PowerSource

Ask God:

1. To help you nurture your children's developing faith.
2. To show your children how he's with them as they grow.
3. To help you make faith milestones important.

Lent 2012

Walk in Jesus' Footsteps from Palm Sunday to Easter, experience His Passion, deepen your faith.

Beginning Ash Wednesday there will be devotionals available in the narthex. Please feel free to take one for yourself and your family.



Elementary Youth



The Faith at Home team is looking for volunteers to donate Easter candy and small treats for the annual Egg Hunt. Please drop your donations off in the church office or contact Danielle Acay @ dacay.zionkent.comcast.net or 253.631.010 with any questions.



Sunday School Offering
February's offering focus is Cereal!
Let's help provide families in need with breakfast. Donations will go to the Kent Food Bank.

Family Experience: **Journeys With Jesus**

Use these activities to celebrate your family's past and future.

- **Family Timelines**—You'll need a 6-foot piece of butcher paper, markers, masking tape, and a Bible. Tape the butcher paper to a wall. Together, create a timeline of your family's journey with God using words, drawings, and Bible verses. Include marriages, birthdays, and milestones, such as when a child entered preschool or when you moved. Add fun memories and difficult times that affected everyone (illnesses or injuries, births and deaths, vacations, job or school changes, and so on).

Afterward, discuss these questions: "What are our best memories? What difficult events have we overcome? How did those events make us closer? How have you seen God moving in our family through the years? How have we experienced God's faithfulness? What are our future dreams for our family?"

- **God's Path**—You'll need a map of your hometown, a highlighter, a Bible, and a red marker. Mark important spots on the map, such as your home, school, church, friends' houses, and more. Highlight the roads your family uses most often. Read aloud Psalm 139:1-3. Say: "God always knows where we are, what we're doing, and where we're going. He has big plans for us as we grow and get to know him better. God loves us and will always be with us." With a red marker, draw a large heart around all the map sites you've highlighted. Hang up the map as a reminder of God's promises.



Parenting Insights

In *Shift* (published by Group), Brian Haynes discusses the value of at-home "Faith Talks" for leading kids spiritually:

1. **Faith Talks should occur regularly and be age-appropriate.** Each week, set aside time to focus on biblical truth in a relational way.
2. **Faith Talks should focus on God's Word.** Read the Bible together, celebrate it, and adjust your lives accordingly.
3. **Faith Talks don't have to be difficult or formal.** Make them fun; for example, go outside on a hot day and compare standing in the sun and shade. Then read and discuss Psalm 121:5.
4. **Faith Talks are a priority.** They shouldn't depend on children's choices or attitudes. God instructs parents to be intentional about leading their children spiritually.

Encourage teenagers to strive for integrity

If recent news reports are true, cheating is rampant among today's teenagers. Some people say technology is to blame because it makes academic dishonesty easier to pull off. Others attribute the problem to our competitive society and its message that you should do anything possible to get ahead.

People of all ages are tempted to cut corners to achieve success, wealth, and popularity. Why put in extra effort when other people take unethical shortcuts? Why pay for media when you can (illegally) download it? Why put relationships in jeopardy by being honest? The reason is that God commands us to be truthful. Disobeying his laws leads to consequences—even if we aren't "caught" and punished by earthly authorities.



In a *Group Magazine* survey of more than 26,000 teenagers, half agreed with this statement: "I've done things no one really knows about that impact my ability to feel loved by God." Sinning makes us feel far apart from God, but the good news is that he offers forgiveness and grace.

Church isn't the only place kids can hear this message. Parents play a bigger role than you might expect. Christian apologist Josh McDowell says, "The most powerful impact upon a child's ethical, moral, and spiritual development is the relationship with the parents. It is 300 times greater than the church."

Remind your teenagers that Jesus knows what it's like to battle temptation and struggle with God's will. He not only set an example for us but also offers us strength to make wise choices and display Christian character.

The small-group resource *Guy Talk, Girl Talk 2* (Simply Youth Ministry) offers helpful Bible-based advice that young people can follow when they're tempted to compromise their values:

- 1. Run away from the situation.** "Flee the evil desires of youth..." (2 Timothy 2: 22a, NIV). This may seem like a strange way of dealing with temptation, but even the greatest of superheroes had weaknesses. Superman never did well against kryptonite, so he avoided the stuff altogether.
- 2. Run toward what's right.** "...and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace..." (verse 22b). Beating temptation has a lot more to do with saying "yes" to right living than it does with saying "no" to whatever is tempting us.
- 3. Run with brothers and sisters who are pursuing pure living.** "...along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (verse 22c). If we aren't running with other people who are going in God's direction, we won't be running for very long.

Living Word

Sixth-Eighth Graders

During the month of February we will be learning about Parables that Jesus told- the Good Samaritan, The Parable of the Lost and Found and the Parable of the Vineyard. Then we will hear more about the Rich man and Lazarus and Sheep and Goats.

What's Coming?

February 26th: Lutherhaven Meeting for 6th-8th graders and their parents! This is an informational meeting to learn more about Lutherhaven and to sign up to attend with our church! Questions? Please call Kelly Mullin at 253-631-0100 or kmullin.zionkent@comcast.net.

March 2nd :Service Day Retreat for all 6th-8th graders. Let's get together to serve our church, our community and our members. Please sign up on the bulletin board for a great day of service activities. Bring \$5 for lunch.



Focus on Prayer

PRAY THAT:

1. Your teenagers will desire to develop a character that reflects their relationship with Christ.
2. Your teenagers will be able to resist temptations to cheat, lie, and steal.
3. You're able to set a strong example of integrity for your kids.

Verse of the Month

**"Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good."
(Romans 12:21)**

Part of the problem in our battle with temptation has to do with our approach. This verse is one example of how Scripture is clear that we don't overcome temptation merely by saying "no" over and over. We conquer, or overcome, by doing good. Our focus must be on developing good habits through the power of the Holy Spirit, not on breaking bad habits through the strength of our own will.

Senior High Youth

Faith Café

"Live" Curriculum for February

We Reach Out...(John 4:1-24)

We Connect with others (John 17:20-26)

We Grow in our Faith (Matthew 20:20-28)

We Honor God with everything (Luke 22:41-44)

We thank God for families for teaching faith in the Faith Café.



Mission Trip Information
If you are currently in High School and are considering going on our mission trip this summer, please contact Berit Wright or Tania. What I know to be true of "our" mission trips is that - Faith increases!

"Acquire the Fire" March 30th-31st \$45.80 for a night

and day of worship, teaching, theatrical productions and Faith Building! *This is a highly charged spiritual event, creating an atmosphere that exceeds the bounds of mediocrity, where extreme life changes become a reality! What Jesus did on the cross was not normal. Neither are His followers!* Interested? Contact Berit Wright at bwright.zionkent@comcast.net.



Come and join us on...

February 22nd: Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00 pm

February 26th: Middle School informational meeting about Lutherhaven at 12:00 pm

March 2nd : Middle School Service Project 9 am – 3 pm