

Season of Epiphany

Crafting the Liturgy — Seasonal Planning Page

The season of Epiphany is called “The Season of Light,” as the light of Christ has shined in the darkness of our lives. It is the culmination of all of our Advent waiting and watching and of all of our Christmas awakenings. It begins and ends with major festival days in the church year: the Feast of the Epiphany, the Baptism of Our Lord, and the Transfiguration. These days reveal the truth of Jesus’ identity: King of kings and Son of God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SEASON

The following are some ideas for helping to make the season distinct and memorable. Congregations are free to adapt these suggestions, or follow the customs of the congregation.

Preparing the Worship Space

During the Season of Light, consider adding more candles to the altar and chancel space to help worshipers focus on the theme of light. Different sorts of lanterns may be used to convey the message of light pervading darkness.

Liturgical Color

White is the color of the day for the Feast of the Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, and the Transfiguration of Our Lord. The other Sundays in Epiphany are green.

Alternate Worship Texts

Consider using the alternate prayers and texts for worship during Epiphany, unless you used alternate prayers during Advent and Christmas and want to return to a familiar setting. Changing parts of the liturgy seasonally can keep worshipers paying attention to what is being said and done in worship, as things tend to be rote with familiarity.

The Gathering

Use the Hymn of Praise “Glory to God” during Epiphany.

The Word

Consider using the song “Change My Heart, O God” (CCLI# 1565) as the Gospel Acclamation for Epiphany.

Consider preaching a sermon series on First Corinthians. Six of the Sundays in Epiphany have a second lesson from this letter. Possible themes might include:

Epiphany 2: Gifted in Christ

Epiphany 3: United in Christ

Epiphany 4: Fools for Christ

Epiphany 5: The Mind of Christ

Epiphany 6: Growth in Christ

Epiphany 7: Christ, Our Sure Foundation

The Creed

Use the Apostles’ Creed on Green Sundays and the Nicene Creed on White Sundays.

The Offering

Consider using the hymn *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* for the Offertory during Epiphany. (WOV 649; LSB 411; ELW 815)

REMINDERS FOR THE SEASON

- ✱ The Feast of the Epiphany is on January 6th, a Friday this year. Consider hosting a special youth event to honor the day. You can include the following themes: arrival of the wisemen, the star of Bethlehem, and light.
- ✱ The Baptism of Our Lord would be an appropriate day for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism if you have anyone preparing for the sacrament.
- ✱ Remember to have the Alleluias ready to hide for the Transfiguration of Our Lord. There are copy-ready “alleluia” strips on SOWeR’s Epiphany Seasonal Page.
- ✱ Also on SOWeR, check out the alternate hymn texts by Pastor Mark Ryman for the season of Epiphany. They are listed on each individual worship page online as well as being the first hymn on the Worship Worksheets. The hymn tune is a familiar one for easy singing.

LESSER FESTIVALS

Jan. 18–25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This international, ecumenical observance focuses on church unity among denominations of Christian believers. It begins with the Confession of St. Peter on Jan. 18 and ends with the Conversion of St. Paul on Jan. 25.

COMMEMORATIONS

Jan. 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968), Renewer of Society. Dr. King, an American Baptist pastor, was martyred in Memphis, Tenn., after many years of working in the American civil rights movement. He organized marches, preached freedom, and helped to mobilize a movement toward equal rights for African Americans.

Feb. 5: Jacob (Israel) (2006 BC – 1859 BC), Patriarch. Father of the 12 Tribes of Israel.

IDEAS FOR FAMILIES THIS SEASON

The Blessing of the Doorway

Consider encouraging families to do a blessing of the doorways to their homes. Hand out instructions on how families can do this together as a devotional practice. Read Matthew 2:1–12, then mark the doorways with chalk in this way: 20 + C + M + B + 17 which connotes the year, 2017, the first initial of the traditional names of the Wise Men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar) and three crosses.

Holy Families

Be sure to check out these great resources for families that SOLA has to offer! You can find them at www.holyfamilytime.com