

Season of Epiphany

Crafting the Liturgy — Seasonal Planning Page

As the LBW Manual on the Liturgy reminds us, “The Epiphany season serves as a bridge between the birth of Jesus and his passion.” The church moves from the nativity of our Lord to the time when Jesus begins his public ministry following his Baptism in the Jordan river. The worshipping community hears the stories anew of Christ’s first miracles and teaching, and through these Scriptures we are shown the divinity of the Light of the World. We walk with Christ in the glorious light 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 local customs of the congregation.

Preparing the Worship Space

Many congregations will wait until after Epiphany on Jan. 6 to remove the Christmas tree and nativity scenes. That decision is up to local tradition and convenience for those who do the work in the parish.

For the season, it would be appropriate to emphasize themes of light and baptism. This season includes some of the year’s shortest days in the Northern Hemisphere, so extra light will likely be a noticeable and welcome addition to the worship space.

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.

Liturgy

For the Day of Epiphany, use both the Kyrie and the Hymn of Praise. For the rest of the season it is appropriate to use one or the other, but this can be left up to local custom and preference.

For the Gospel Acclamation during Epiphany consider using, “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light,” (WOV 649, LSB 411, ELW 815, or if your congregation has a CCLI license you can print the words — song #89848).

It might be fun to use Hank Williams Sr.’s “I Saw the Light” during Epiphany for a different, yet nostalgic, worship feel (CCLI #45064).

The Creed

Use the Nicene Creed on the Day of Epiphany. Use the Apostles’ Creed on the rest of the Sundays.

Offertory

For something different for the Offertory this season, consider using the song, “This is My Offering,” (CCLI #4495699). Using something more contemporary and unfamiliar in the midst of the liturgy can awaken the worshipping community to what is truly going on around them. There are times when we “fall asleep” in the liturgy because it has become rote and overly familiar. An occasional change can spark the worshipping imagination and breathe new life into the hearts of the people.

Closing Blessing

As part of the Benediction, consider singing together, “He Who Began a Good Work in You” by John Mohr. It is short, so it could be sung through twice as the congregation ends their time together in worship. (CCLI #15238) 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 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.
- ✦ In the new calendar year, take some time on a Sunday to install new parish leaders. You can find a service for this on the Liturgies and Services page of SOWeR.

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. 10: Basil the Great of Caesarea (c. 330 – 1 January 379 AD), Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329 – 25 January 390 AD), and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 – c. 395 AD), Pastors and Confessors.

Jan. 27: John Chrysostom (c. 347 AD – September 14, 407 A.D.), Preacher

IDEAS FOR FAMILIES THIS SEASON

The Blessing of the Doorway

In the new year it has long been a custom to bless the people who live in one’s house. A code of sorts is written on the front door post (in chalk, perhaps):

$$20 * C + M + B * 27$$

The year is represented by the outside numbers, while the letters stand for the three wise men whose names, according to tradition, were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. A prayer is said to accompany the etching of the code — for Christ’s light and love, for blessing of each member of the household, and for following the Lord.

Read Through the Bible in a Year!

To promote daily Bible reading in your parish, go to the Seasonal Page for Epiphany on SOWeR and download and print the one-page guide. It’s a great time to encourage discipleship through Scripture reading — beginning of the year, beginning of the Bible!

NEW WEBSITE!

Be sure to check out Sola’s new and updated website for more resources to use during the Epiphany season.