

LittleBox *of*
Good News TM
Faith Formation for *Families*

Parish BOX:

Manna

(English Version)



LittleBox^{of} GoodNews[™] | Cajita^{de} Buenas Nuevas[™]

Today is a good day!

You have chosen to equip your families with fun faith formation that they can do *together*.

You will receive the same version of the Manna Box that families receive so that you can understand the contents and better support them.

In the box, there are activities to help discover the following:

- What is manna?
- Manna within themselves
- Manna in their homes
- Manna in their family
- Manna in the community
- Manna in the world

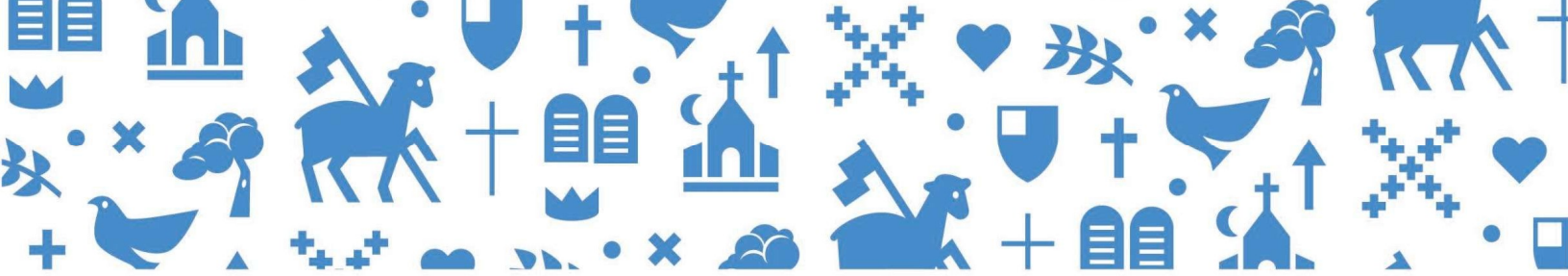
The Little Box of Good News[®] is a family-centered faith formation program created by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. One goal is to assist parishes with bringing the Good News into homes and equipping parents and caregivers, who are the primary faith-builders in the family. Together, we are helping the next generation realize and embrace their identity as beloved children of God!



Grace Rose
Grant Manager

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1623 Seventh St.,
New Orleans, LA 70115



Posters Enclosed:

Little Box of Good News®

This poster introduces families to the box and encourages them to subscribe. If your parish wants to sponsor boxes or provide a discount, there is space on the poster to include that information. *Please contact us to help you set it up!* littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org

Little Circle of Good News

Encourage your families to participate in your Little Circle of Good News gatherings or the contact person for your Little Circle.

See "Little Circle" section for more information.

Little Weekend of Good News

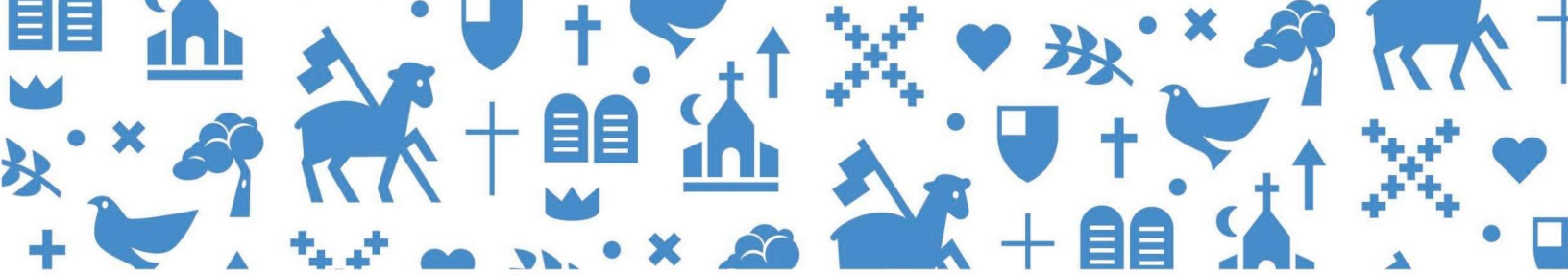
This is a regional family camp experience for the whole family, specifically building on what they are learning and doing with the Little Box of Good News®. Create anticipation and excitement for your families to attend the Little Weekend of Good News!

Online Resources:

On the website, in the dropdown menu, choose "Resources." All supplemental activities for individual boxes are available to you as well as "Parish Resources." You will find digital copies of this document!

Links to the website, Little Podcast of Good News, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, can all be found on our linktree: <https://linktr.ee/LittleBoxofGoodNews>





How are parishes using the Little Box of Good News[®]?

Supplemental Resource for Families

Parishes are offering a coupon code and encouraging families to engage with the boxes as they see fit at home. These parishes are occasionally using one or two of the activities from the curriculum or additional resources in their congregation.

Primary Faith Formation Program

See the “Curriculum” section to learn how to use the boxes to structure your Sunday school and family formation.

Regular Gatherings of Families

Parishes are holding a Little Circle gathering monthly or quarterly. Some use a suggestion from the “Little Circle” section for an intergenerational learning event. Others are gathering more regularly and having the children do one of the lessons from the “Curriculum” section while the parents discuss deeper one of the topics within the box. In between gatherings, all families are completing the same activity in the box.

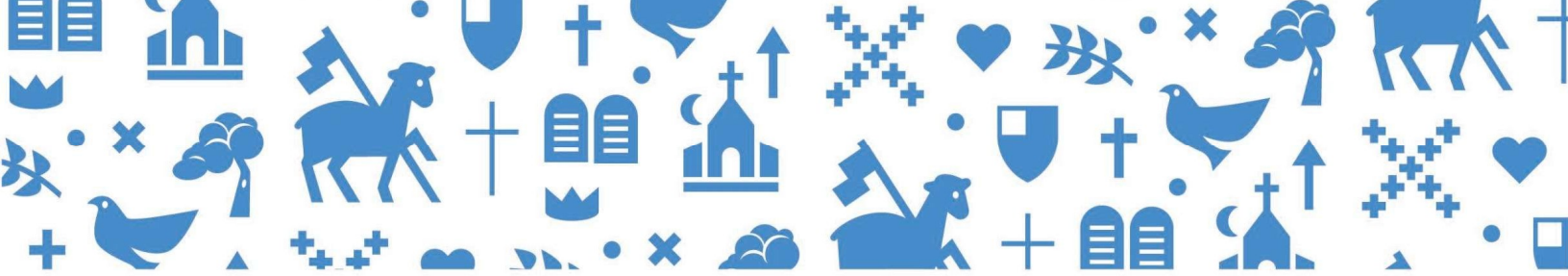
Whole Church Intergenerational Gatherings

Parishes are purchasing several subscriptions for their church to use. At one coffee hour per month, they are setting up the same activity on every table and having everyone work together to complete the activity. This is especially helpful in parishes that have only a few families.

Resource for Family-centered Sundays

Parishes are using the “Resources” in this guide to create a family-centered Sunday Eucharist regularly. There are sermon ideas, some additional Sunday School activities and Community Connection options that parishes can choose from to make a Sunday service special for the whole family, utilizing the themes of the Little Box of Good News[®].





Should your church provide the boxes to families?

There are many ways to support your families with their Little Box of Good News[®].

Some parishes provide a coupon code for boxes.

Other parishes provide the first box to families and then a coupon code.

Still others provide a box to each family on a regular basis.

Reasons some parishes are providing the boxes:

- Families come to church to get their boxes.
- You know which families are receiving the boxes and can follow up.
- It is less pressure on the parents and connects them to the church. *Sometimes it is easier for a family to donate a little more to church than to commit to purchasing something extra.*

How parishes are affording boxes for families:

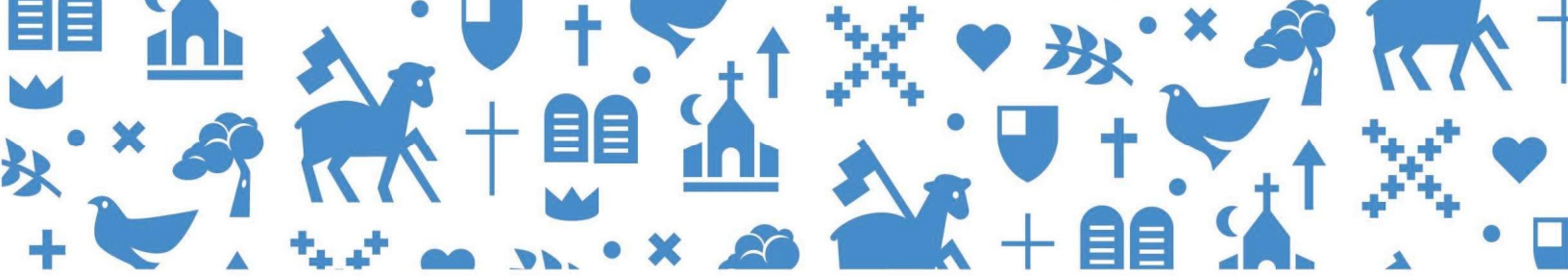
- Including boxes as part of their faith formation budget.
- Having a donation basket for families to donate toward offsetting the cost at their gatherings. *(Monthly meetings – “suggested donation: \$10 per family”)*
- Allowing a way for all parishioners to donate toward this aspect of the faith formation program.
- Applying for a Little Box Grant – we have special funds to help parishes afford the boxes for their families. *Contact us for more information!!*

We can help!

The Little Box of Good News[®] team is available to help you figure out what makes the most sense for your congregation. Contact us today to schedule a meeting!

littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org





Planning Structure:

Once per month:

Youth/Family Centered Liturgy & Sermon

Little Circle of Good News gathering

Remainder of Sundays:

Children's Church/Sunday School

(We have included suggestions for 13 Sundays per box.)

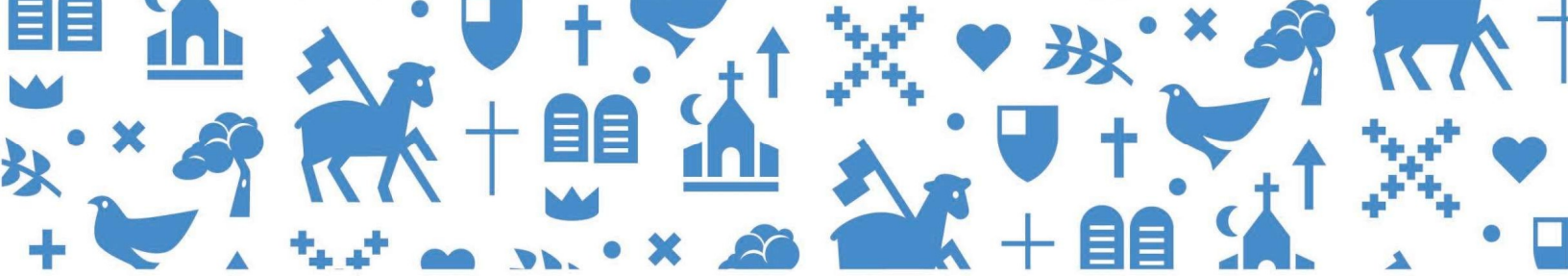
Supplies Needed:

Parish Box Subscription

Additional box subscriptions:

- For the families – we recommend that each family have a box at home.
- If you only have one or two families, we encourage you to get a couple of extra boxes for use at the parish events so that all parishioners can join in the activities together.
- *Please contact us for a personalized plan for your parish!*
- *Grants are available for local parishes who wish to offer this option but do not have the funds. Please contact the Little Box of Good News® team to learn more!*





Week 1 What is it?

Opening Song

Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson

Say: *What is manna. No really, what is manna! Manna means, "what is it?"*
Retell the story of God providing manna to the Israelites in the desert found in Exodus 16. You can use a children's bible, a children's storybook, or any other tools. (You can also use the first paragraph on page 8 of your Manna booklet, but this is a very condensed version of the story!)

Activity

Collect the manna!

Tell the children they will get to be the Israelites and need to go to sleep.

When their eyes are closed, lay out *a large piece of paper or a tablecloth* and then sprinkle *Rice Krispies* on it.

Tell the children to wake up and gather their manna. Give each child a *small bag* to use. Remind them: *Only collect enough for today!*

Give them a time limit and tell them it is time to eat their manna.

Once again, give them a time limit for eating and tell them: *If you have any left, it is rotten now and you need to collect more tomorrow!*

Repeat this game several times, as time allows.

Go Deeper

Ask the children about their experience:

I wonder what it was like to have to collect those tiny pieces to eat?

I wonder what it was like to not collect enough or to get too much?

I wonder how it felt to have to rely on God for food like this for forty years?

You can give the children extra "manna" to take with them as a snack.

Closing Prayer

Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 2 – Manna as a Blessing

Opening Song

Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson

Ask: *Can anyone tell us about the story from last week?*

Allow a child to retell the story or the activity.

Ask: *I wonder what manna looks like today?*

Let the children give their answers. Then read pages 8-9.

Activity

Brainstorm a Blessing Bag

Ask the children: *Who do you think we could give blessings to? Are there people on the streets who need things?*

What if the whole congregation brought supplies? How many blessings could we hand out?

Lead the children to brainstorm a list of items needed. Remind them that if every person brings 48 of something, then you have 48 bags to give out! Allow each student to say what they want to bring.

(Be sure to include bags on the brainstormed list!)

If possible, photocopy your list right then so that the kids can hand them out back in church. If not, plan to type it up and share it via email with your congregation and have printed copies for the following week.

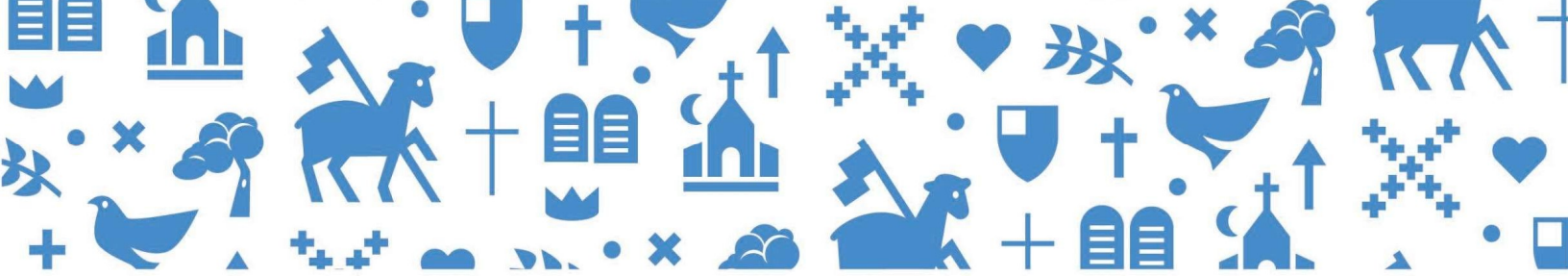
Go Deeper

Encourage the students to complete the What is Manna? activity with their family.

Closing Prayer

Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 3 Prep for Little Circle Sunday

Opening Song Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



****Be sure to remind the congregation about bringing their blessing bag supplies next week for Little Circle Sunday!****

Lesson Explain that next week will be a Little Circle Sunday. This means that the focus will be on families and kids participating in the liturgy. Explain the roles in your church that they can do. Here are some examples, but you will want to specify with your priest what roles the kids can do:

Greeters - hand out the bulletins at the door and welcome people

Readers - read one of the readings or the prayers of the people

Ushers - bring up the gifts of bread and wine

Ushers - collect the offertory and bring it up

Ushers - let people know when it is their turn for communion

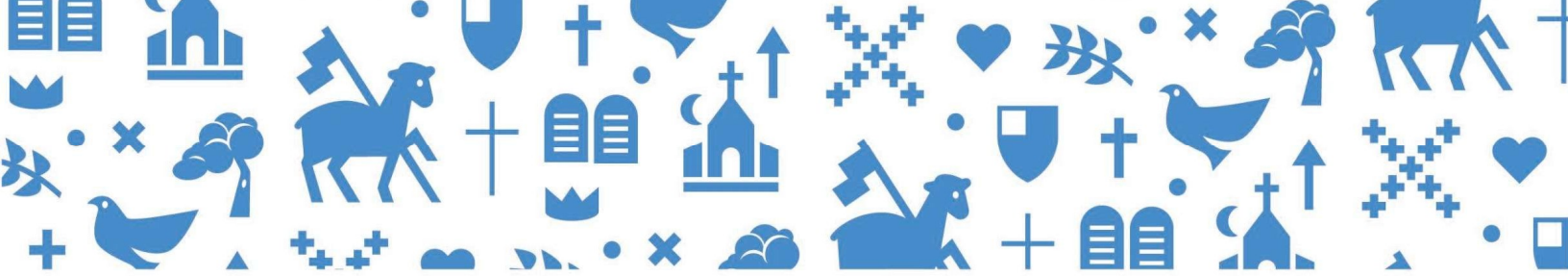
Acolytes - serve at the altar

Activity Have the kids choose and practice for their roles for the following week. *Prepare **readings and responsibilities** needed for the following week.*

Go Deeper If you have older kids/teens, have them read through the set of readings and discuss what they would want to say for a sermon. They can present these ideas to the priest.

Closing Prayer Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 4

Little Circle Sunday

No Children's Church or Sunday School.

Have children participate in liturgy.

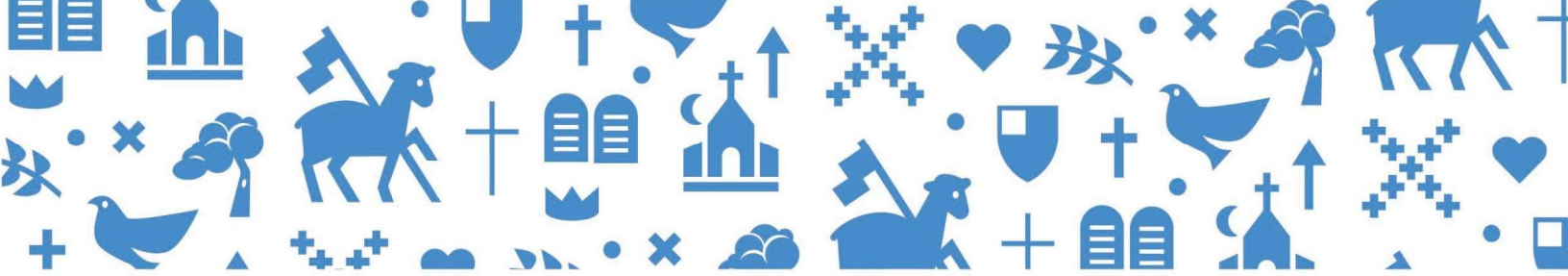
Give a child-friendly sermon.

Use the Little Box of Good News songs by Fr. Ron Clingenpeel.

Plan a Little Circle of Good News gathering after church. See additional pages (under the Little Circle tab) for suggested topics, ideas and planning guides for your Little Circle.

For this Little Circle Sunday, use the Blessing Bag Brunch plan to finish the activity begun in Sunday school.





Week 5 Experiencing the Labyrinth

Opening Song Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson Read pages 14-15 in your Manna booklet.

Activity *Prep needed:* Decide where your labyrinth will be. A labyrinth is simply a maze where you can't get lost. If you have a small chapel with pews, you can use that as the labyrinth, walking in between them. Or you can draw one outside with chalk. Or you can make one with painter's tape on the floor of a room. Be creative with your space and resources!

Say: In your Manna Box, you got a small labyrinth. Today, we are going to use our whole body to pray with a labyrinth!

Explain the labyrinth that you have created. If it is one that has the same entrance and exit, then you need to make sure there is enough room for someone passing each other.

Play some *gentle music* while the children take turns walking through the labyrinth.

Use the Wonder questions on page 17 to reflect with the students.

Go Deeper Encourage students to complete the "Manna in Yourself" activity at home with their family.

Closing Prayer Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 6

Be the Yeast

Opening Song

Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson

Read the scripture on page 19 of your booklet.

Ask: Does anyone know what yeast is? Have you seen it work?

Today we are going to learn more about yeast and why Jesus says the kingdom of God is like yeast!

Activity

Say: Yeast is a very small organism. It is alive but it looks like a little seed.

Show the students some **yeast**. Let them touch and explore it.

Say: Yeast likes to eat sugars and then it makes carbon dioxide. It changes everything around it! We don't have enough time today to make bread and see how yeast changes the bread.

However, we are going to see what yeast can do in other environments.

Bring out additional supplies: **two empty bottles, sugar, yeast, two balloon**

Pour **warm water** about halfway into each bottle.

Add 1 tablespoon of sugar in each bottle and mix.

Add one package of yeast to one of the bottles and mix.

Attach a balloon to the top of each bottle.

Now wait and watch! The yeast will cause the balloon to inflate because those little seeds change everything around them.

Say: God's love works the same way. It may start small, hidden in our hearts. As we spread God's love with others, it grows. God's love changes us and the world around us. Even little acts of kindness and love can grow into something big and wonderful. That's how the kingdom of God is like yeast.

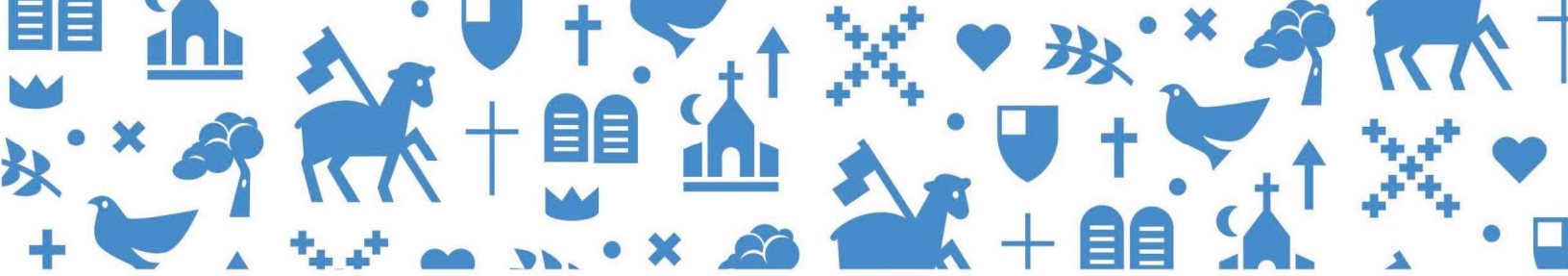
Go Deeper

Encourage the students to do the Manna in Your Home activity with their families. Ask them to share about their experience with yeast next week!

Closing Prayer

Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 8 Prep for Little Circle Sunday

Opening Song Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson Explain that next week will be a Little Circle Sunday. This means that the focus will be on families and kids participating in the liturgy. Explain the roles in your church that they can do. Here are some examples, but you will want to specify with your priest what roles the kids can do:

Greeters - hand out the bulletins at the door and welcome people

Readers - read one of the readings or the prayers of the people

Ushers - bring up the gifts of bread and wine

Ushers - collect the offertory and bring it up

Ushers - let people know when it is their turn for communion

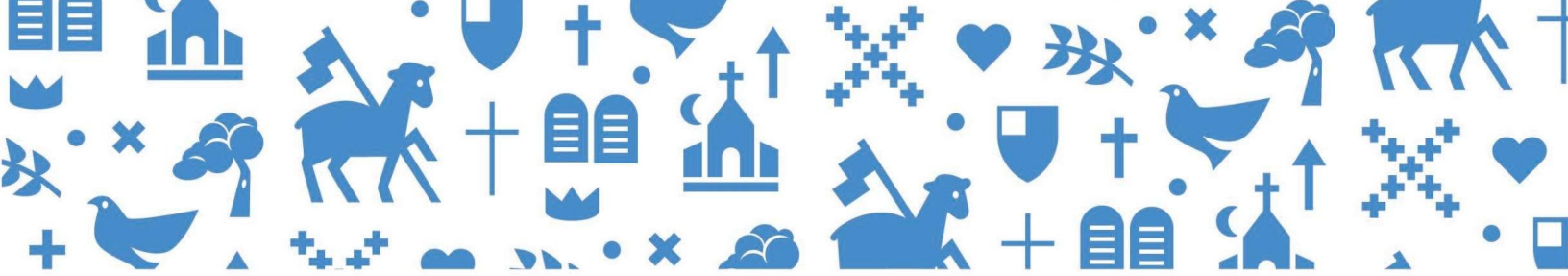
Acolytes - serve at the altar

Activity Have the kids choose and practice for their roles for the following week. *Prepare **readings and responsibilities** needed for the following week.*

Go Deeper If you have older kids/teens, have them read through the set of readings and discuss what they would want to say for a sermon. They can present these ideas to the priest.

Closing Prayer Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 9

Little Circle Sunday

No Children's Church or Sunday School.

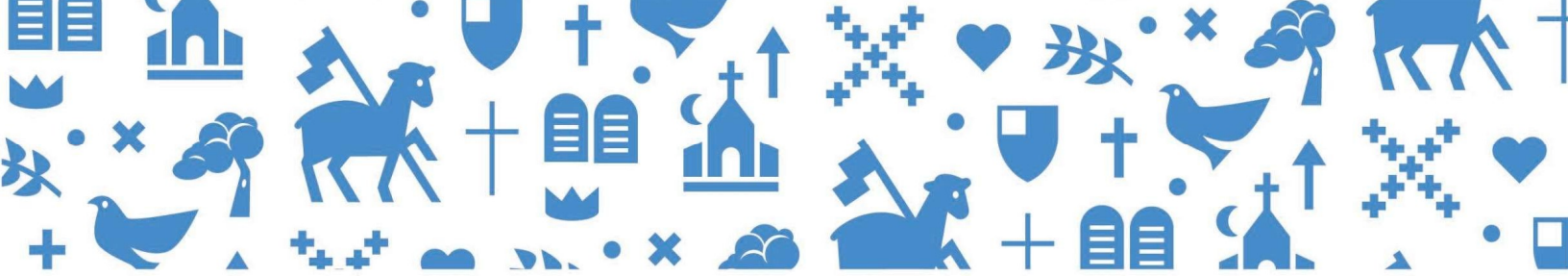
Have children participate in liturgy.

Give a child-friendly sermon. (See "Sermon ideas" for topics related to the Manna Box.)

Use the Little Box of Good News songs by Fr. Ron Clingenpeel.

Plan a Little Circle of Good News gathering after church. See additional pages (under the Little Circle tab) for suggested topics, ideas and planning guides for your Little Circle.





Week 10

Who is Feeding Us?

Opening Song Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson Ask (and provide time for discussion): *What is your favorite food? Where does it come from? Is it a plant or animal? How does it get into the form that you like to eat?*
Continue asking questions until you get back to the ground and the farmers.

Activity Creating a production prayer
Give each child a *blank copy of the following page* (or just *blank paper*) and *drawing supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)*.

Instruct the children to draw a picture of their favorite food on the top half of the page (in the box).
Say: Today, you are going to write a blessing for your favorite food that you just drew.

Lead them through the following directions:

Begin with a greeting to God.

Thank God/Jesus for the food.

Ask God to bless those who made it, especially:

- Who assembles it?
- Where do the ingredients come from?
- Who packaged those?
- Where do they come from?
- Who harvested those?
- Who farmed it?

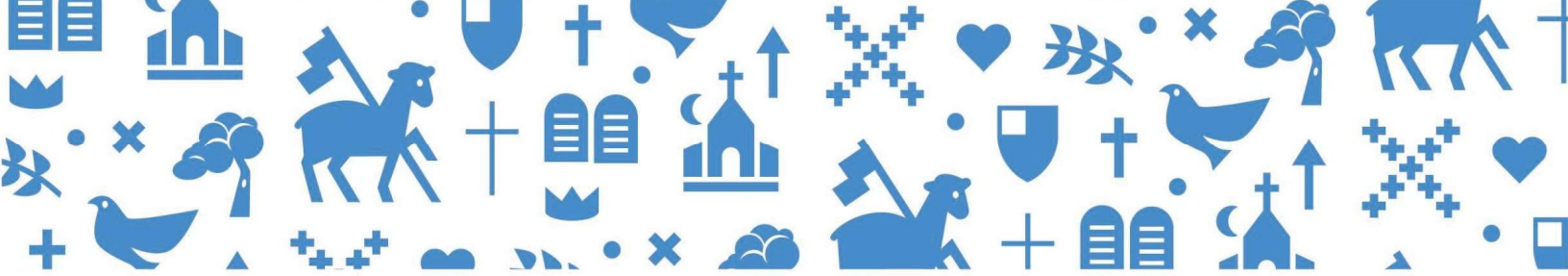
End by remembering others who do not have food.

Close with Amen (or other ending to God).

Go Deeper Encourage students to use the prayer at home with their families.

Closing Prayer Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 11

Feeding the World

Opening Song

Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:



Lesson

There are a lot of people who have food insecurities. We have power to make a difference for them. In the Manna booklet, we are told about planting edible flowers and food that can be shared, but there is more to be understood about those who are hungry.

Activity

Ask: Have you ever felt hungry? Have you ever told your grown ups that you were starving? What did that feel like? What if you felt that all the time?

Empower the students by asking: *What resources do you think people need to not be hungry?*

Share with students the different programs in your area that help fight against hunger. **(You will need to research this for your own community!)**

Create a plan with students to help end hunger in your community. (Examples: Plan a food drive to supply your local food bank. Build and keep a Little Free Pantry stocked outside your church.)

If possible, have the list of food resources and feeding programs available to send home with the children or send it in an email to families.

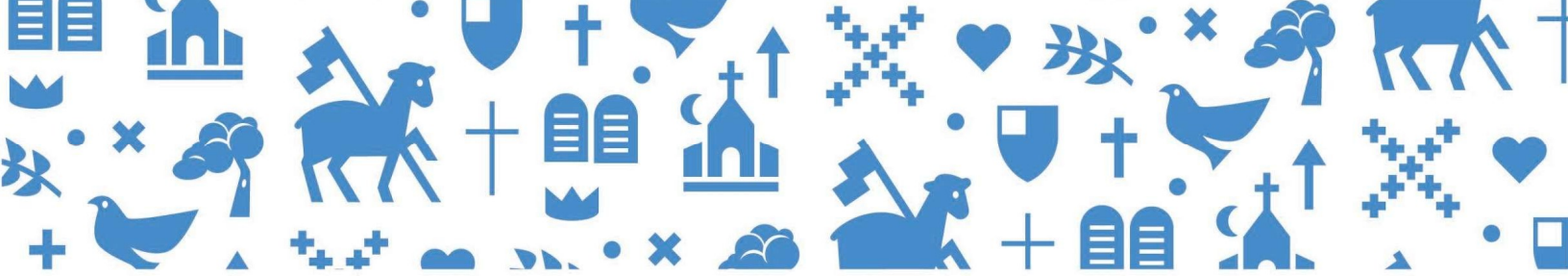
Go Deeper

If appropriate, talk to your church leaders about this activity. Try to include whatever project they chose into your next Little Circle Sunday so that the whole congregation can be involved.

Closing Prayer

Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.



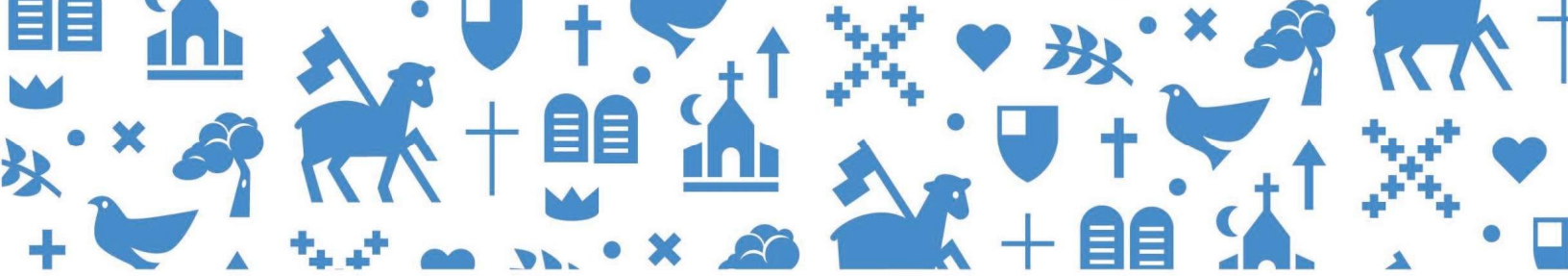


Week 12 Prep for Little Circle Sunday



- Opening Song** Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News YouTube channel:
- Lesson** Explain that next week will be a Little Circle Sunday. This means that the focus will be on families and kids participating in the liturgy. Explain the roles in your church that they can do. Here are some examples, but you will want to specify with your priest what roles the kids can do:
- Greeters - hand out the bulletins at the door and welcome people
 - Readers - read one of the readings or the prayers of the people
 - Ushers - bring up the gifts of bread and wine
 - Ushers - collect the offertory and bring it up
 - Ushers - let people know when it is their turn for communion
 - Acolytes - serve at the altar
- Activity** Have the kids choose and practice for their roles for the following week. *Prepare **readings and responsibilities** needed for the following week.*
- Go Deeper** If you have older kids/teens, have them read through the set of readings and discuss what they would want to say for a sermon. They can present these ideas to the priest.
- Closing Prayer** Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





Week 13

Little Circle Sunday

No Children's Church or Sunday School.

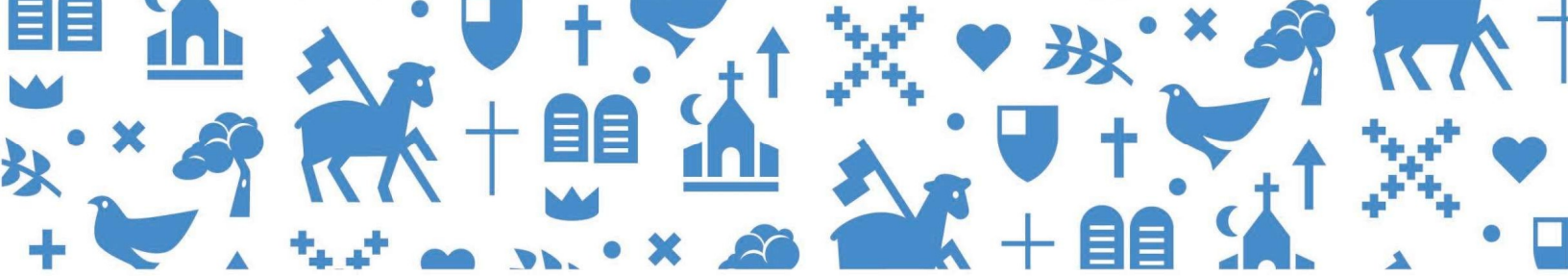
Have children participate in liturgy.

Give a child-friendly sermon.

Use the Little Box of Good News songs by Fr. Ron Clingenpeel.

Plan a Little Circle of Good News gathering after church. See additional pages (under the Little Circle tab) for suggested topics, ideas and planning guides for your Little Circle.





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What is a Little Circle of Good News?

A Little Circle of Good News is a gathering of families who all receive and are using the Little Box of Good News[®]. It helps families connect with each other and their local Episcopal Church.

Are you already registered as a Little Circle of Good News?

Use the included poster to share your upcoming gatherings.

Be sure to let us know if you have any updates to your listing (or if you do not see it on our website!). You can reach us at littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org.

Parishes using Little Box of Good News[®] as your primary faith formation:

Little Circle Sundays are written into the curriculum once a month as an intergenerational experience for your whole congregation. Please let us know if you need any assistance in getting these started.

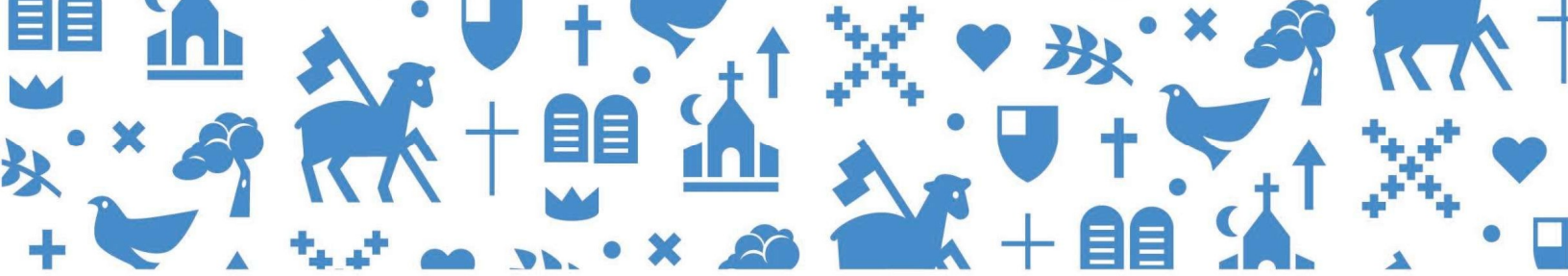
Check the website map to make sure that your parish is listed!

Are you ready to start a Little Circle of Good News?

To host a Little Circle of Good News, a church needs:

- Parish Support
 - Subscribe to get a Little Box of Good News parish version.
This will include the same elements as the family version, but with additional resources for you as a church.
 - Include the Little Circle of Good News as one of your parish ministries.
 - Include in updates and announcements
 - Provide space for gatherings (and food, if possible)

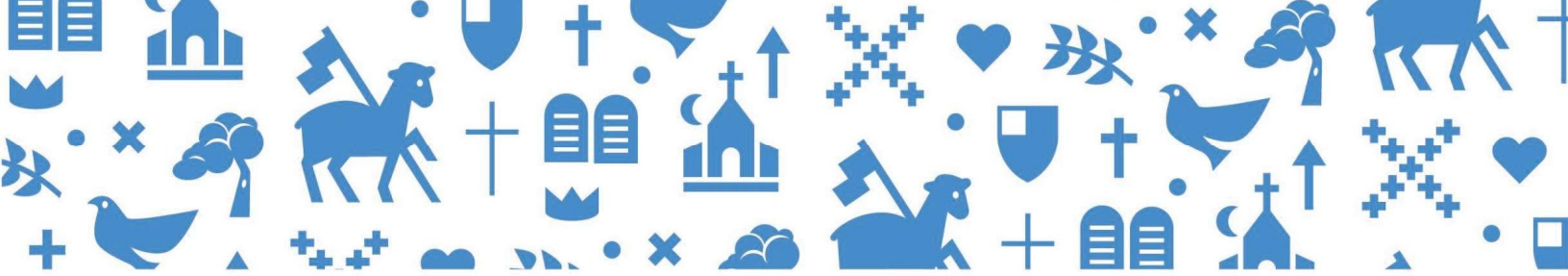




- Priest Support
 - The parish priest encourages families and joins them for gatherings when possible.
 - Be aware of the contents of each box, paying particular attention to the community aspect. This is the piece that families will bring back into the parish.
- Host Family
 - This family, who receives the box themselves, is willing to coordinate monthly get-togethers of families involved.
 - This is the go-to person when a new family wants to join.
 - This role can rotate among families as the Circle develops.
- Gatherings
 - If you are using the Little Box of Good News® as your primary faith formation program, these gatherings are integrated into the curriculum once a month.
 - Monthly or quarterly meetings of families receiving the Little Box of Good News.
 - This time of fellowship and community has no set script or rules. Families may want to discuss an element of the box or share about their experiences. However, gathering for a meal and play is just as important!
 - New families subscribing to the box should be welcomed! (If the circle feels like it is getting too big for one gathering space, then feel free to break into smaller groups.)
 - These can take place at the parish, at a park, at a family's home, or really anywhere the group wants to meet.

Our team is happy to help your church get started! Please reach out to us at littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org.

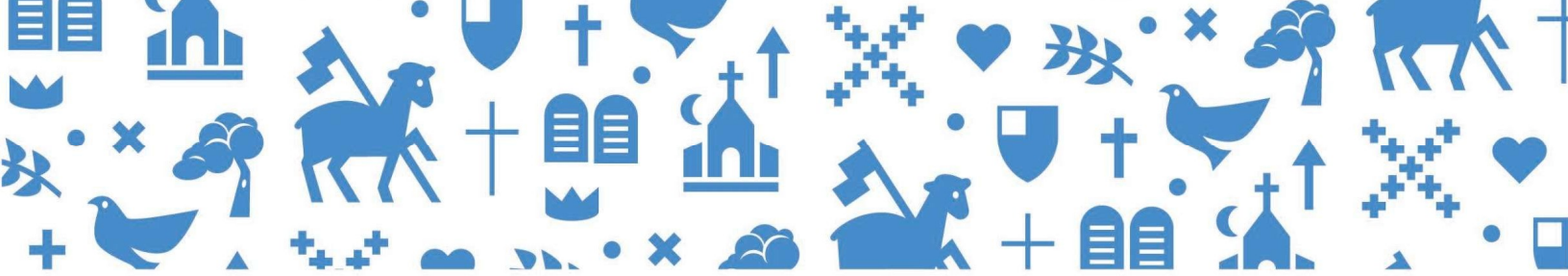




Little Circle of Good News Gathering Ideas

**You can choose one of these formats for your monthly gathering
as a whole community (or create your own idea)!**





Little Circle of Good News Gathering Idea

Blessing Bag Brunch

If everyone supplies one item in bulk, then it is even easier than ever to complete the Blessing Bag activity in the What is Manna? section of the booklet. Introduce this activity a few weeks prior to the event and ask people to sign up to bring at least 48 of an item (include bags on your list!). Gather for brunch (even donuts count!) after church to put the bags together and write notes to share. Every family goes home with a number of bags to give away.

This gathering naturally follows the lesson plan for Week 2 and 3.

Action Plan:

Date for Event:

Supplies Needed:

 bags _____

(Use the week 2 lesson plan
to brainstorm supplies)

Who will organize supplies:

Who will lead:

What refreshments will parish provide?

Who will provide them:

Who will clean up:





Communion Bread



Ingredients (Makes 4 loaves)

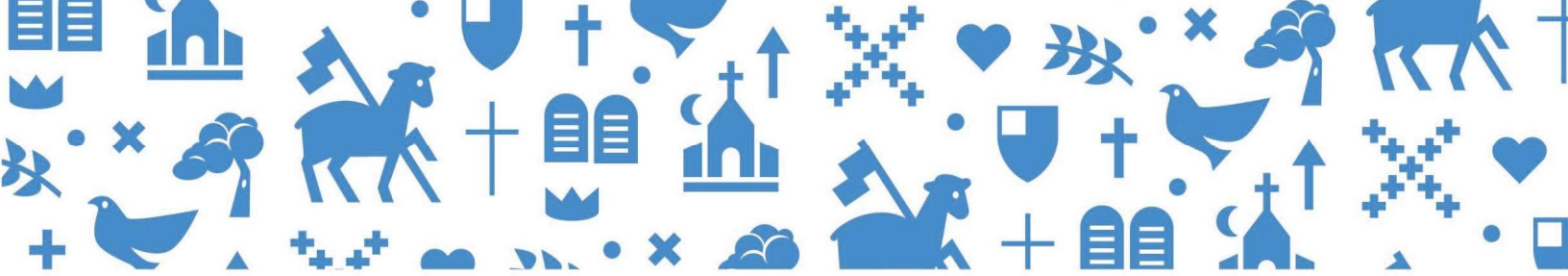
7/8 Cup Warm Water
1 Pkg Dry Yeast
6 Tbsp Honey
1 1/2 Tbsp Oil
1/2 tsp Salt
1 Cup White Bread Flour
12/3 Cups Whole Wheat Flour

Instructions

1. In a measuring cup, Stir water, yeast, and honey together until yeast dissolves
2. Set aside 5-10 minutes until the yeast is activated
3. Stir in oil and salt.
4. Pour liquid into a bowl and stir in the white flour (add 1/3 cup at a time and stir until all mixed in)
5. Add wheat flour (1/3 cup at a time until the dough begins to pull away from the side of the bowl – add more flour if needed)
6. Hand knead dough until slightly tacky (if sticky, add more flour gradually)
7. Cut dough 4 balls. Put the balls into lightly oiled bowls.
8. Cover with a towel and put in a warm place until they double in size (1-2 hours)
9. Preheat the oven to 325 – 335.
10. Dust baking sheet with flour. Put dough balls on baking sheet and press down with palm of hand until it is about 3/4 inch thick.
11. Use oiled butter knife to cut a cross into loaf. Make cut almost all the way through. **(If you forget to cut the loaves before they are baked, DON'T cut them after they are baked!)**
12. Bake for 12-14 minutes. (DO NOT overbake! It is better to under-bake).
13. Cool completely on a wire rack then seal in freezer bags.

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Little Circle of Good News Gathering Idea

Workshopping Wonder Have a time for parents to get together while the children play. Encourage parents to share the wonder questions and responses from their children and assist each other with tricky questions.

Action Plan:

Date for Gathering: _____

Food provided by: _____

Who will organize/order: _____

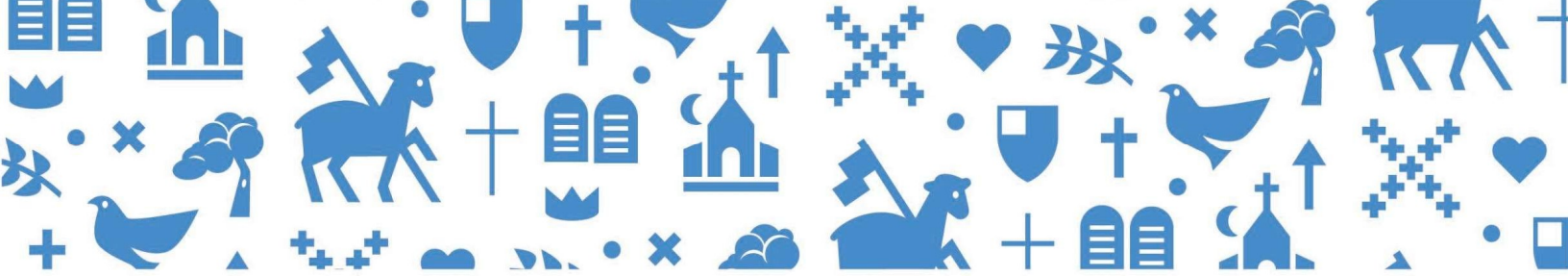
Will you discuss by table or whole group? _____

Who will lead the discussion: _____

How will you engage kids: _____

Who will clean up: _____





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Sermon Ideas:

Manna is an unexpected blessing that feeds your soul.

The kingdom of God is like yeast.

This box explores the Eucharist and how Jesus is the bread of life and gives us life through the sacrament. There are many ways that you can expand on this theme and still be connected with what the families are learning in the Manna Box.

Music:

We encourage churches to use the Little Box of Good News[™] music!

For licensing permissions, contact Bishopmusic, at admin@bishopmusic.net. Copyright ©Ronald Clingenpeel, ASCAP 2025. *Fr. Ron has already assured us that all parishes will be given permission, but please still contact him!*

Bulletin Insert:

Did you know that our diocese has a tool to help you have faith conversations as a family?

All families are invited to receive the Little Box of Good News[®]! To subscribe or purchase a box, go to littleboxofgoodnews.com. Our parish discount code is _____

For all of the Little Box of Good News[®] resources

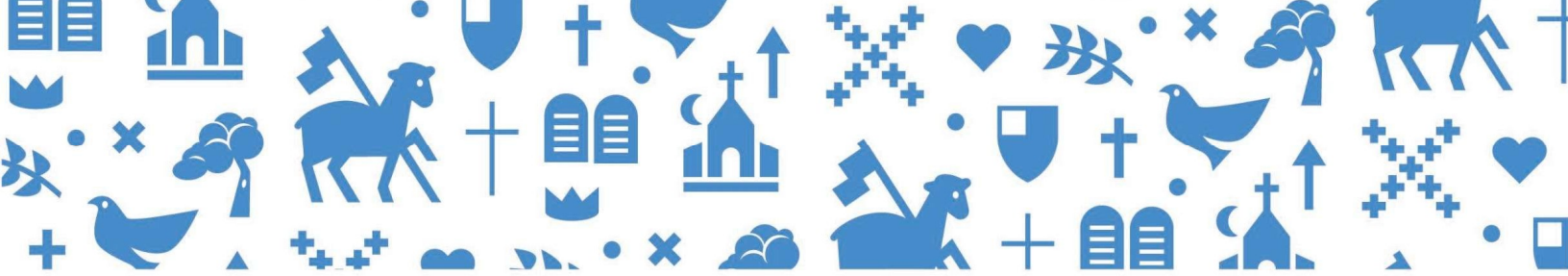
(Website, Podcast, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube) visit:



Please reach out to us at littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org to prepay for a discount code for families!

Weekly bulletin tips for families can be copied from our weekly email newsletter!





Additional Ideas and Resources for your Community

Community Connection:

Eucharist

Families will be learning about the Eucharist and the elements found on the altar. The children will be making their own miniature altar sets. This is a great opportunity to connect with the altar guild to learn more about the altar and taking care of it!

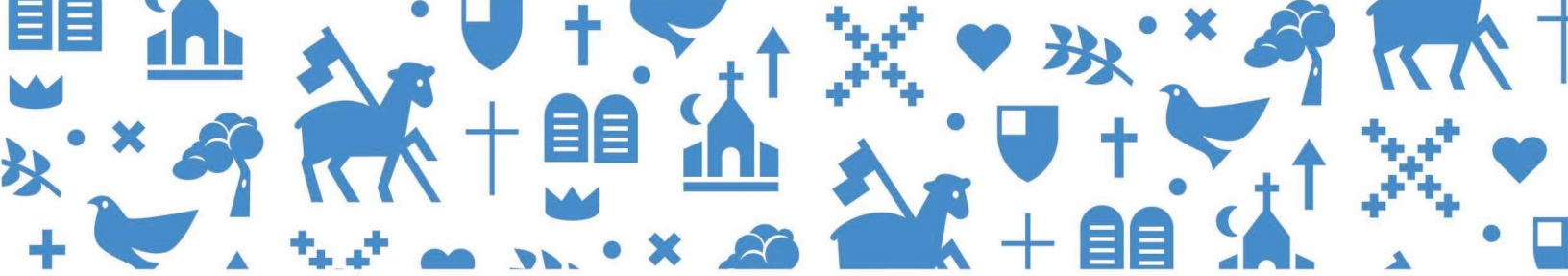
Going Deeper as a Community:

Taking Action

One suggestion for a Little Circle Sunday is to make Blessing Bags as a community. This is something that everyone can be involved in. It is also in the booklet in the What is Manna? activity.

For those following the Sunday School Curriculum, the children will be learning about preventing food insecurity within their communities. This is an opportunity for the whole church to be involved and engage with the Little Box of Good News.





LittleBox^{of} GoodNews[™] | Cajita^{de} Buenas Nuevas[™]

Need help? Contact us!

Grace Rose

grose@edola.org

- Curriculum development
- Designing your program
- Adapting to your space
- Little Circle of Good News
- Family Camp

Lauren Dunn

ldunn@edola.org

- Podcast ideas
- Faith formation for middle and high schoolers
- Youth Ministry & Young Adult Ministry
- Safe Environment

Deanna Lowe

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- Ordering and coupon codes
- Scheduling a visit
- Parish support

Emmy Murray

tech@edola.org

- Social Media

Admin Team (Gabriela, Jessica)

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- Payments and delivery
- Website issues

