

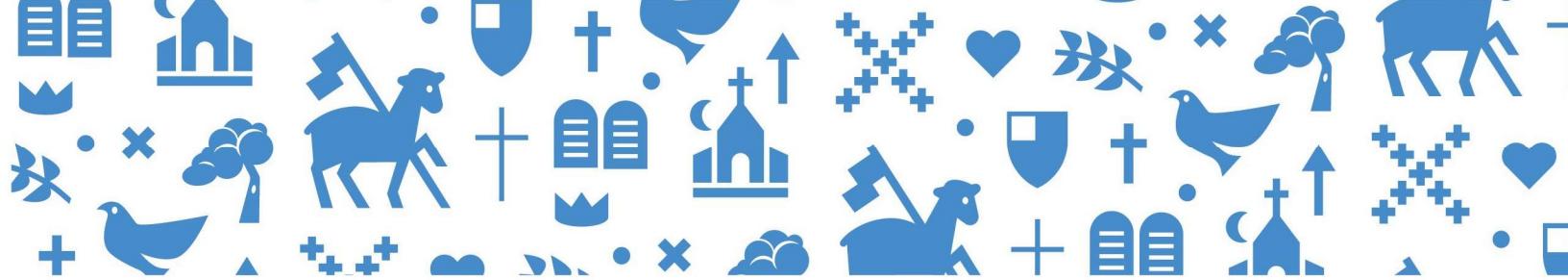
Little Box of Good NewsTM

Faith Formation for *Families*

Parish Box:

Prayer

(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 Prayer Box that families receive so that you can understand the contents and better support them. It will be shipped separately from this envelope.

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

- What is prayer
- How to pray within themselves
- How to pray in their homes
- How to pray as a family
- How to pray as a community
- How to pray in the world

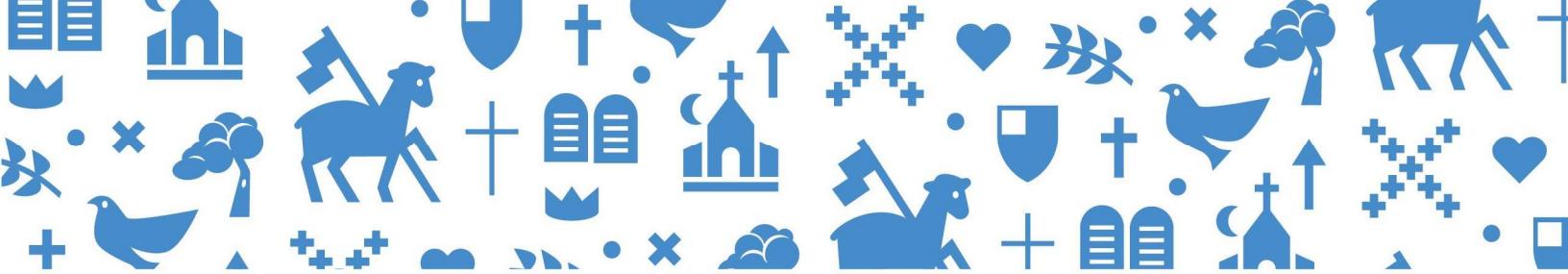
The Little Box of Good News® is a family-centered faith formation program created by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. One goal is to assist parishes with bringing the Good News into homes and equipping parents and caregivers, who are the primary faith-builders in the family. Together, we are helping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



Grace Rose
Grant Manager

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edola.org

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

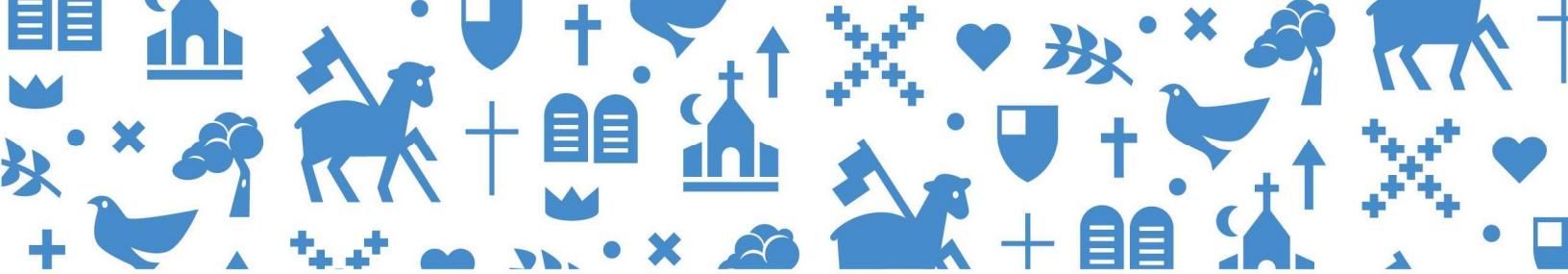
These will be regional gatherings of fun faith formation for the whole family, specifically building on what they are learning and doing with the Little Box of Good News™. Create anticipation and excitement for your families to attend the Little Weekend of Good News!

Online Resources:

Under “My Account,” all of the supplemental activities for individual boxes are available to you as well as an “Activity Box” called “Parish Resources.” You will find digital copies of all of these documents!

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





Sunday School Ideas:

These are ideas for those using another Sunday school curriculum who want to supplement with tie-in ideas to the Little Box of Good News®. For those parishes wishing to use the Little Box of Good News® as their primary faith formation program, please see the additional resource.

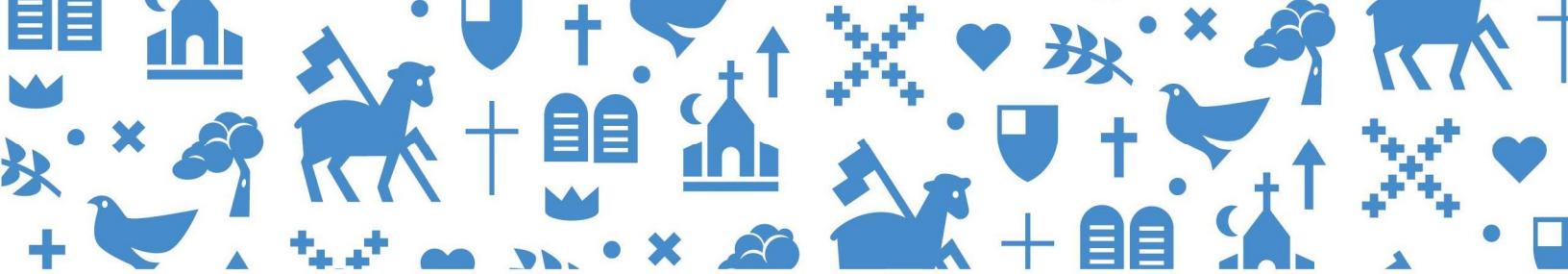
What Is Prayer?

You can use this deck of cards and do this activity in the Sunday School classroom. Then, encourage children to go home and continue the activity with their families (see booklet pages 6-12).

Prayer in the World

The families will have planted seeds of prayer. You can go deeper with the children by talking about how we care for creation in the Episcopal Church (see booklet pages 38-43).





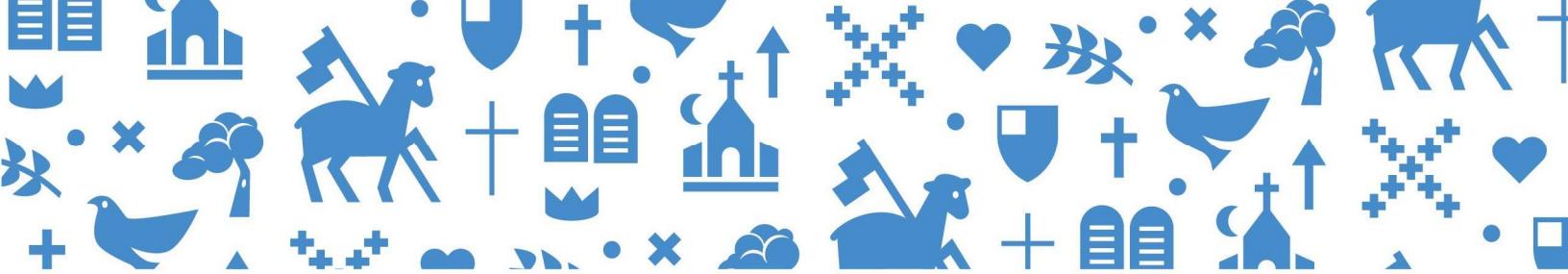
LittleBox of GoodNews | Cajita de Buenas Nuevas™

Using the Little Box of Good News® as your primary parish faith formation program:

Since this is an intergenerational program, we recommend that you plan to have an intergenerational activity once a month following a liturgy that is focused on youth and families. This would be your Little Circle of Good News gathering. At this liturgy, if you typically have children's church, you would forgo that option and keep everyone in church together for the liturgy. We encourage you to create a sermon that appeals to all ages. (See sermon topics if you want to tie it into the Prayer Box.)

You would then offer children's church on the other Sundays as is customary in your parish. We understand that many churches share similar challenges around children's church or Sunday school. Therefore, we have formulated a very simple children's church plan that *any volunteer can lead*, using the Prayer Box, regardless of whether you have 2 or 12 children present and whether they are 2 or 12 years old. The lessons are designed to take only 20 minutes since that is often how long we have!





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.)

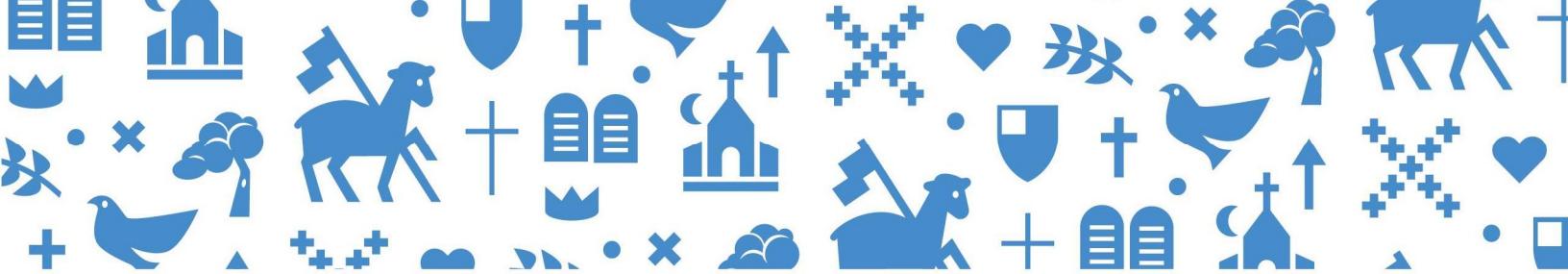
Supplies Needed:

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.





Weekly suggested plan for Prayer Box

Please adapt this and use it as it works best for your parish!

You can stretch/shrink any piece to fit your time frame. As written, it should take about 20 minutes.

Suggested supplies are italicized in red.

Structure of Lessons:

Opening Song



All songs can be found:

on the activity page of the LittleBoxofGoodNews.com website,
on our youtube channel (@LittleBoxofGoodNews)
and in your booklet (page 44).

Follow this QR code for quick access to the YouTube playlist.

Lesson

Follow the instructions on the following pages.

Activity

Follow the instructions on the following pages.

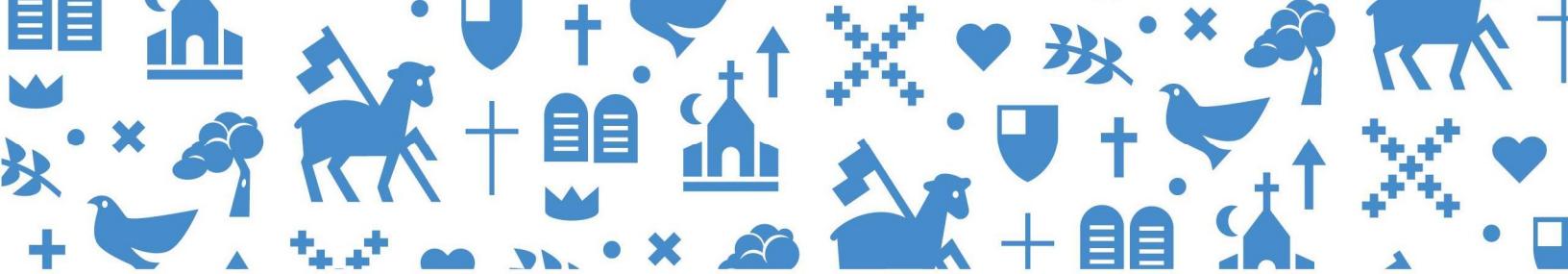
Go Deeper

These directions allow for further exploration or lengthening of the lesson.

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.
(If you run out of pages, you can print more from the Prayer Box Activity Page on the website.)





Week 1 **Creating a Community Prayer Space**

Opening Song

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



Lesson

Explain: *When we gather together on Sundays, we have a prayer space that we use. It is the sanctuary of the church. However, when we gather together in this space for children's church, we want it to be a special place for us to pray, too.*

Activity

Make a community prayer space:

Use the scavenger hunt on page 23 to help you design your space. Some of these items, you might need to supply and others the children might be able to draw or create. (*Watch the video online for more ideas of how to make this space. Items that are helpful: liturgical colored cloth, cross, candle, Bible, BCP, flowers*)

Note: There will be an activity about liturgical colors and the calendar coming up – so you can focus on just creating the space now.

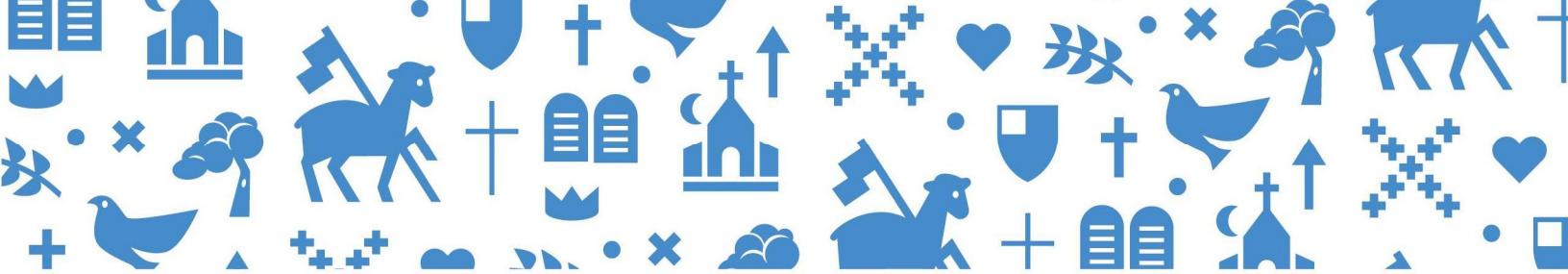
Go Deeper

Tell the children that the activity "Prayer in Your Home" on pages 21-25 in the booklet can walk them through making a sacred space at home with their family. Encourage them to bring pictures of their family prayer spaces 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.

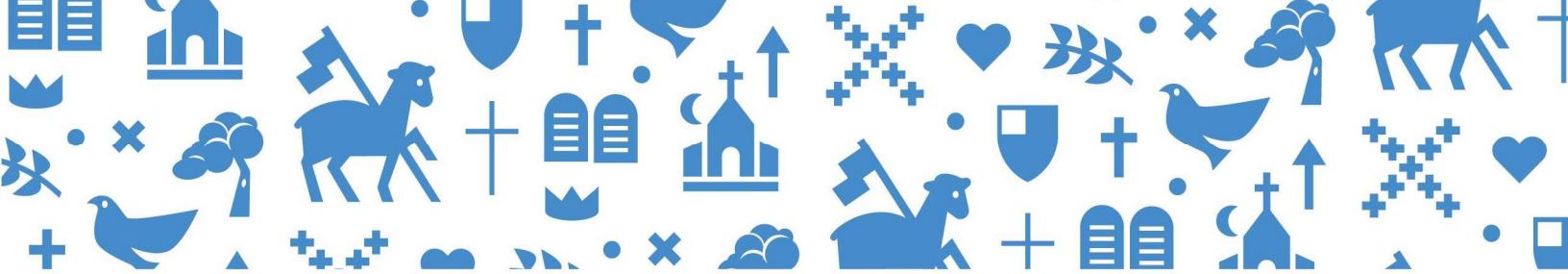




Week 2 - Prayer is anything that helps us get close to God

Opening Song	Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News Youtube channel: 
Lesson	Read page 7 in your booklet: What is Prayer?
Activity	Look through the cards from the Prayer Box together. Ask the children which way of praying they want to try. Provide supplies for them to draw, write or create (<i>paper, markers, crayons, paint, glitter, etc.</i>). Some may want to do a dance or sing. Reserve a few minutes to have everyone share how they prayed.
Go Deeper	Ask the children what other ways they like to pray. Have them design cards to add to the deck. If time allows, play a matching game with the cards.
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.

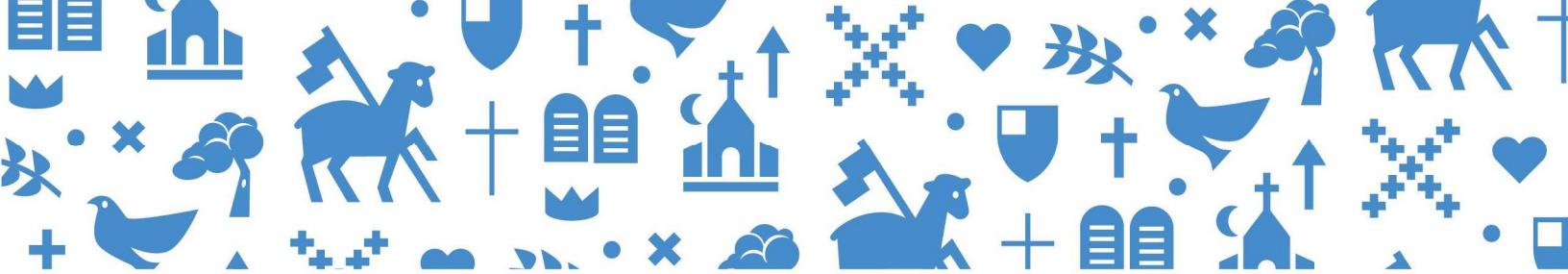




Week 3 Prep for Little Circle Sunday

Opening Song	Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News Youtube channel: 
Lesson	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Greeters - hand out the bulletins at the door and welcome peopleReaders - read one of the readings or the prayers of the peopleUshers - bring up the gifts of bread and wineUshers - collect the offertory and bring it upUshers - let people know when it is their turn for communionAcolytes - serve at the altar
Activity	Have the kids choose and practice for their roles for the following week. <i>Prepare readings and responsibilities needed for the following week.</i>
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.

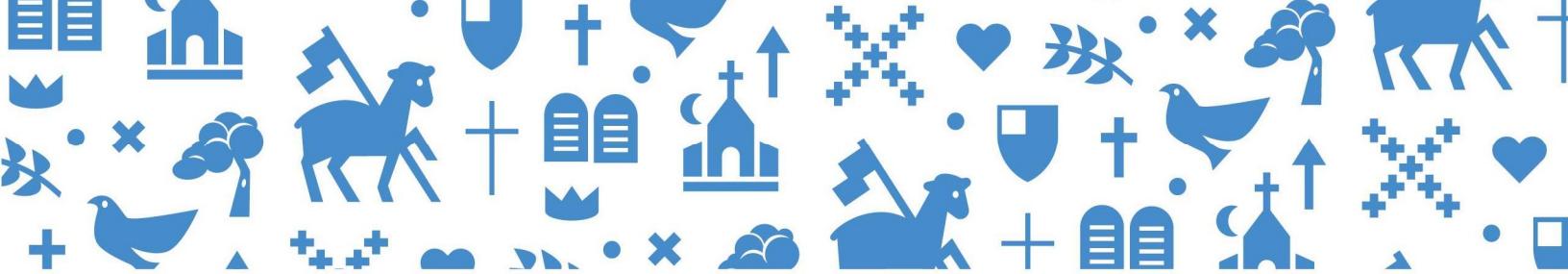
Have children participate in liturgy.

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.





Week 5 Introducing Liturgical Colors

Opening Song

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



Lesson

The liturgical calendar is a resource that offers a visual for all of us, especially children, through the use of color.

Activity

Ask: *What color is the priest wearing today in church? What color cloths do you see around the altar? What do you think these colors mean?*

Teach: *Our church year is divided into seasons where we can focus on different parts of God's story in our lives. Right now, it is the season of _____ (depending on when you do this activity) and so the color is _____.*

Ask: *What are other seasons in the church? What do you think those colors are?*

Provide **blank copies of the liturgical calendar** and **crayons** for children to color.

Go Deeper

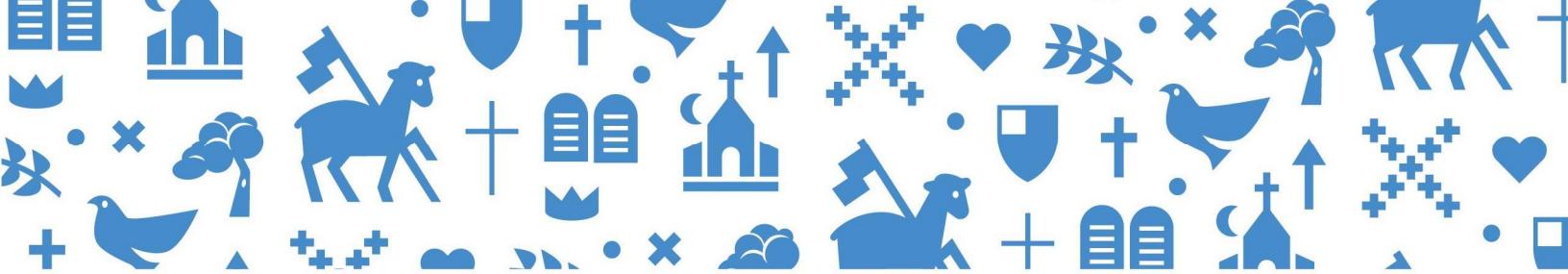
Create or obtain a large interactive liturgical calendar that you can move each week with the seasons of the year.

Change out the cloth in your prayer space for each liturgical season.

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.





Advent – Blue/Purple

Christmas – White

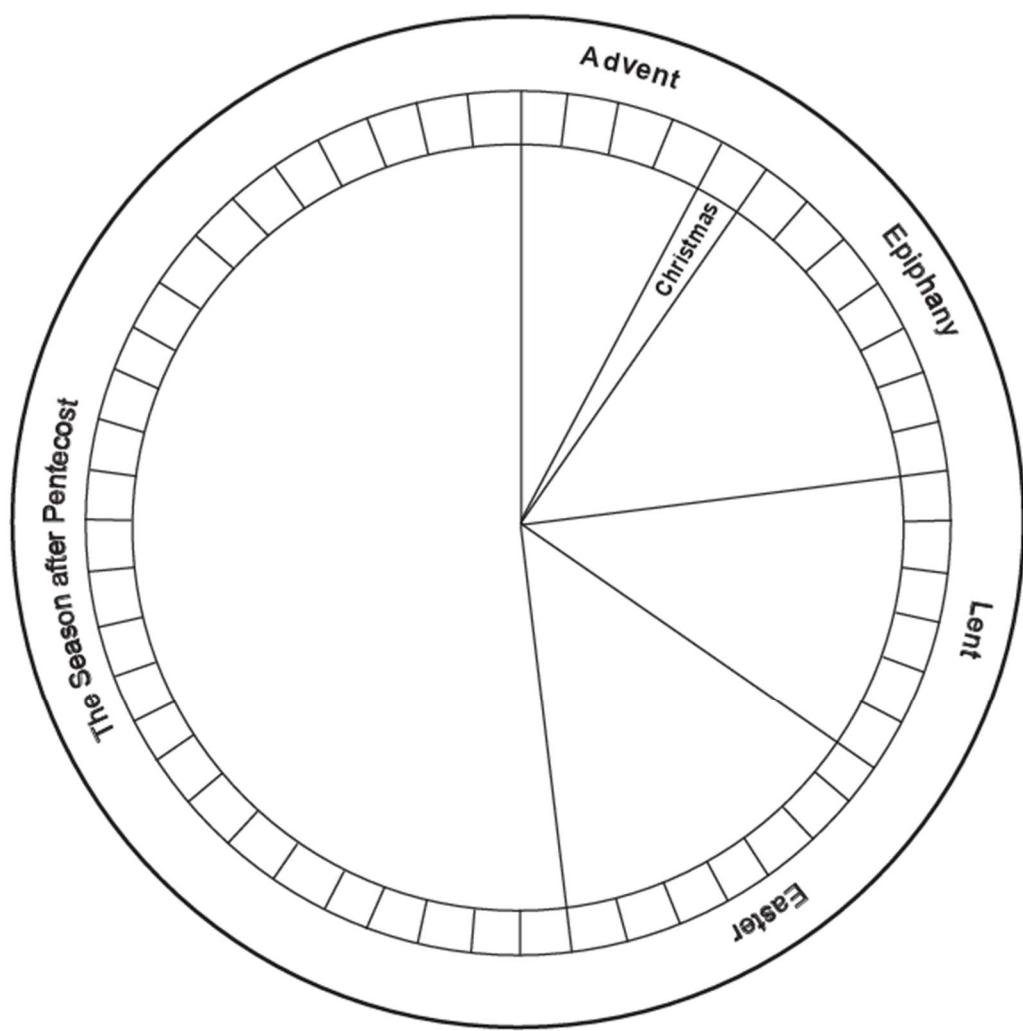
Epiphany – Green

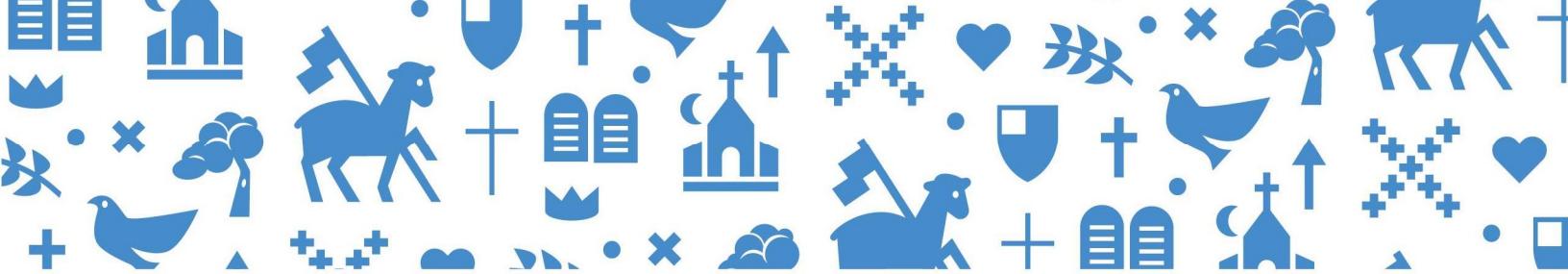
Lent – Purple

Easter – White

Pentecost – Red

Season after Pentecost – Green





Week 6

Praying like Jesus

Opening Song

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



Lesson

Read page 18 in your booklet.

Ask: *When have you heard this prayer before?*

Explain: *In the gospels, the disciples asked Jesus to pray and he gave them the prayer that we now call the “The Lord’s Prayer.” Since it is how Jesus prayed, we like to say it often, at each service.*

You can also pray it on your own once you know it!

Activity

Say: *Today, we are going to learn this prayer together.*

Provide students with a *copy of The Lord’s Prayer* (on next page) and allow them to color or decorate while doing this activity (*crayons, colored pencils, etc.*)

Follow this method:

Have a child read one line of the prayer.

Ask: What does this mean? Discuss.

Have everyone say the line together.

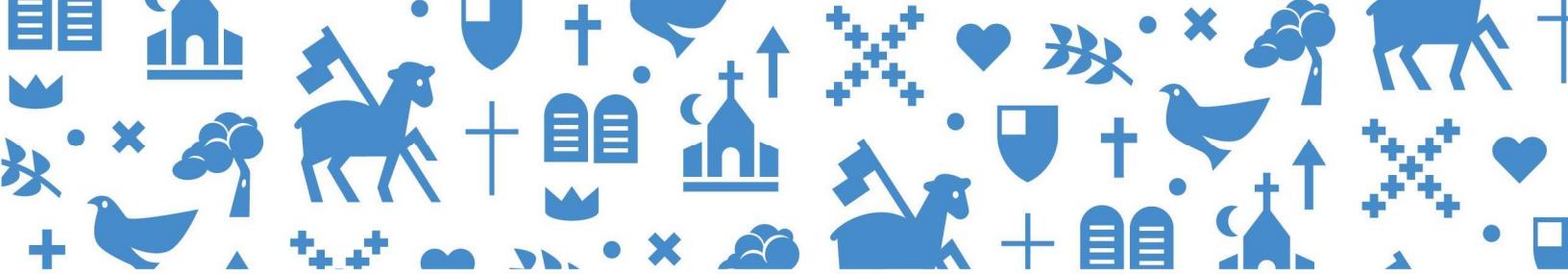
Go Deeper

Challenge the children to go home and practice this prayer and say it with their families. Offer a prize for whoever can recite it next week without reading it.

Closing Prayer

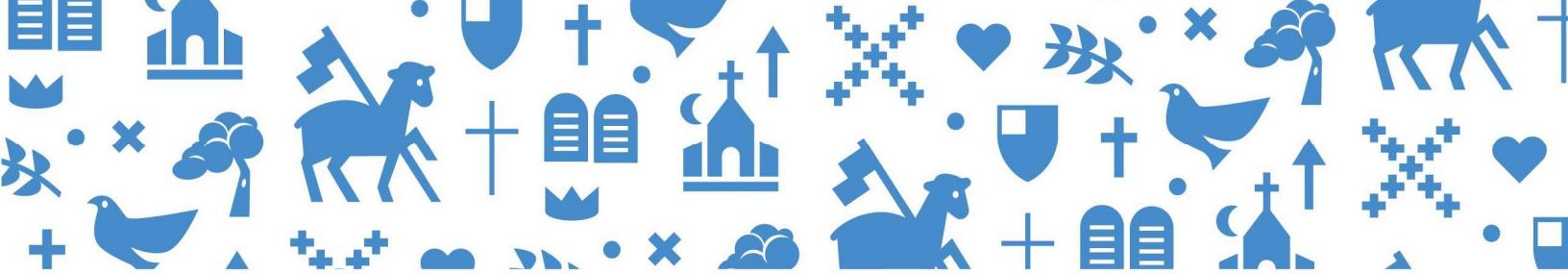
Use the Family Prayer tear pad from the Prayer Box to create a prayer together. Have a child read it as the closing prayer.





*Our Father in heaven
hallowed by your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours forever and ever.
Amen.*

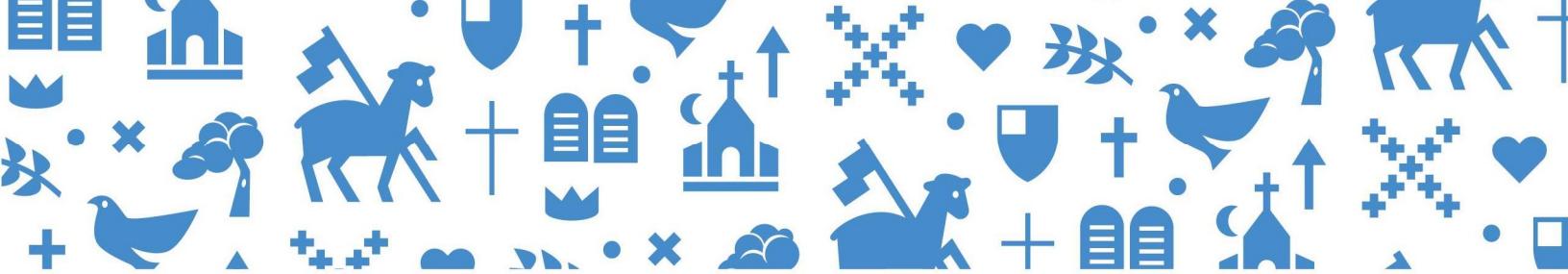




Week 7 **Praying Together**

Opening Song	Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News Youtube channel:
Lesson	<p>Review: <i>Who remembers how Jesus taught us to pray?</i></p> <p>Review: <i>Who remembers what else can be prayer?</i></p> <p>Read pages 32 – 33 in your booklet. Jesus says that when we gather together in his name, he is here with us.</p>
Activity	<p>Explain: <i>This week, we will choose a way to pray and do that together.</i></p> <p>Have the students revisit the prayer cards from the Prayer Box.</p> <p>Explore the options and talk about how you could do them together as a team. Discuss the different roles on a team (team captain, cheerleader, designer, etc. – it varies depending on the type of team).</p> <p>Have the children choose one way to pray and a team captain to lead.</p> <p>Repeat with different children leading different ways of praying together as time allows.</p> <p>Provide materials as needed (paper, crayons, markers, glitter, etc.).</p>
Go Deeper	<p>Wonder with the children:</p> <p><i>I wonder what was easier about praying together?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder what was harder?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder if you liked to be the team captain?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder what makes a good team captain?</i></p> <p>Encourage the students to pray with their families at home as a team.</p>
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.

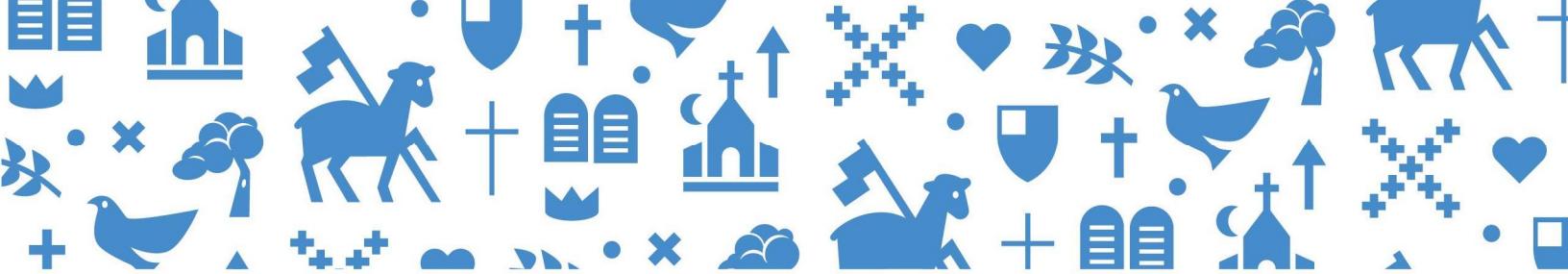




Week 8 Prep for Little Circle Sunday

Opening Song	Choose a song from the Little Box of Good News Youtube channel: 
Lesson	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Greeters - hand out the bulletins at the door and welcome peopleReaders - read one of the readings or the prayers of the peopleUshers - bring up the gifts of bread and wineUshers - collect the offertory and bring it upUshers - let people know when it is their turn for communionAcolytes - serve at the altar
Activity	Have the kids choose and practice for their roles for the following week. <i>Prepare readings and responsibilities needed for the following week.</i>
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.

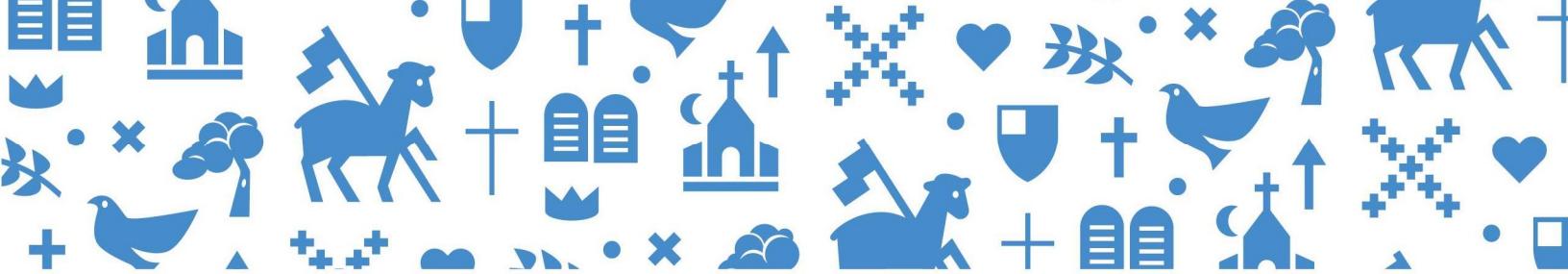
Have children participate in liturgy.

Give a child-friendly sermon. (See “Sermon ideas” for topics related to the Scripture 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

Praying in Other Languages

Opening Song

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



Lesson

Using a children's Bible, storybook, or your own memory, tell the story of Pentecost to the students.

Ask: *What did you notice in the story?*

Highlight how all the people heard the disciples speaking in their own language!

Ask: *What languages do you know?*

Activity

Explore the *Prayer Box* together as a class. Notice that all activities are in both English and Spanish.

Tell: *We are going to try some of the prayer activities in Spanish today!*

With the *Prayer Cards*, play a matching or memory game, but only using the Spanish words.

Listen and sing along to the songs in Spanish on the youtube channel. (The Spanish lyrics are on page 43 in your booklet.)

Go Deeper

Repeat as time allows.

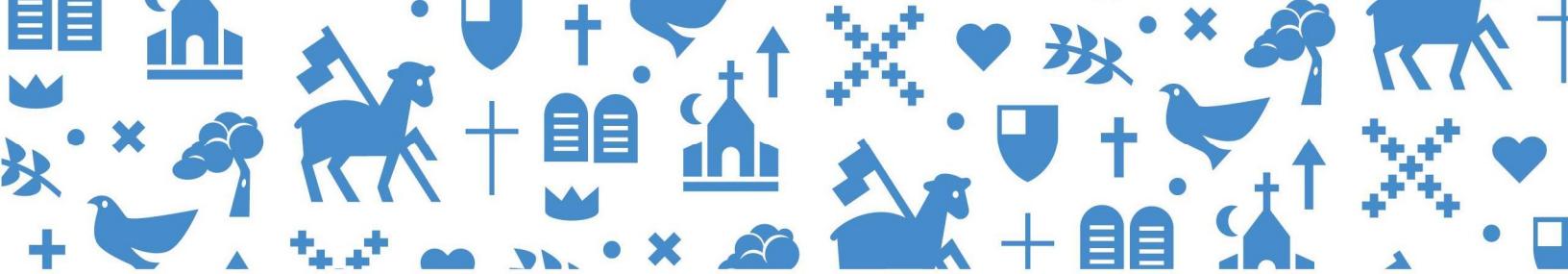
Encourage the children to repeat this activity at home.

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.

Added challenge: Complete the Spanish side of the prayer!





Week 11

Praying in Creation

Opening Song

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



Lesson

Read page 38 and the first paragraph of page 39 in your booklet.

Ask: *What does it mean for the hills to burst into songs or the trees clap their hands?*

Explain: *Today, we will go outside and notice how the world around us prays.*

Activity

Before going outside, review the appropriate senses to use for this activity (sight, hearing, smell, touch). Ask children to be silent and observe.

Take the class outside and allow 5 to 10 minutes to explore and observe.

Gather back as a class to discuss.

What did you notice outside?

How might that be a way of praying?

Go Deeper

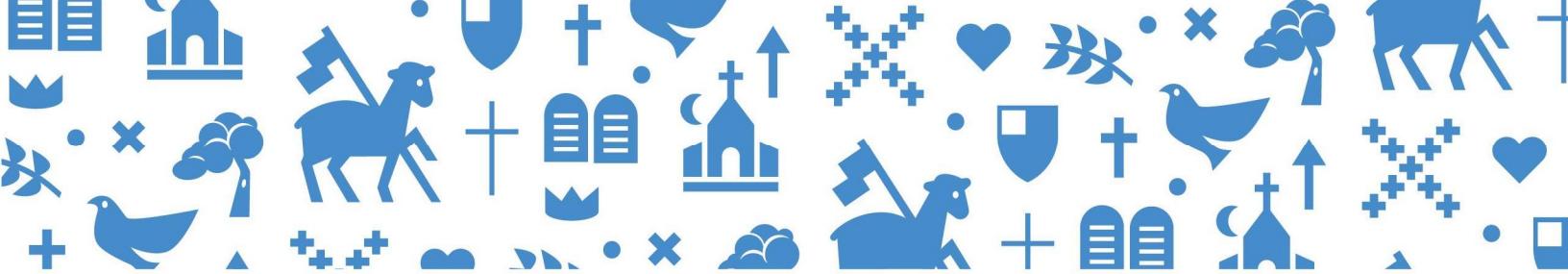
Provide students with materials to remember their observations and respond to God (paper, crayons, markers, glitter, glue, etc.). Encourage students to draw or write about what they experienced.

Remind students that they can continue this way of praying with creation wherever they are.

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

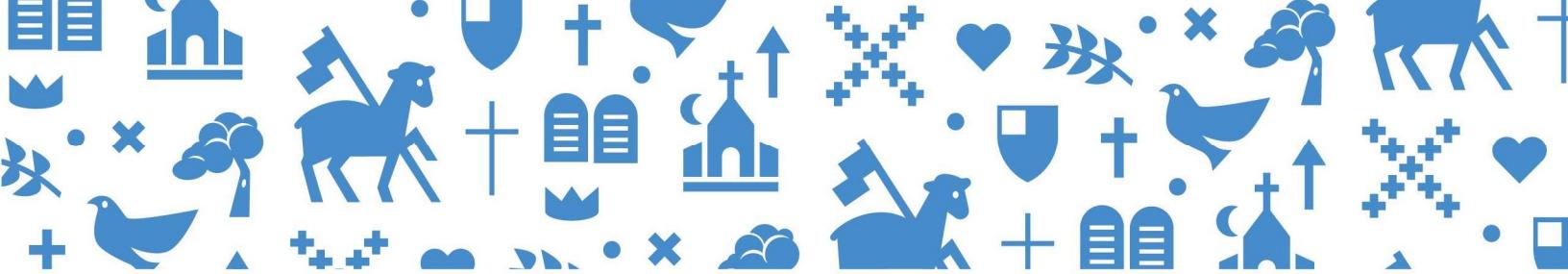
Acolytes - serve at the altar

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.

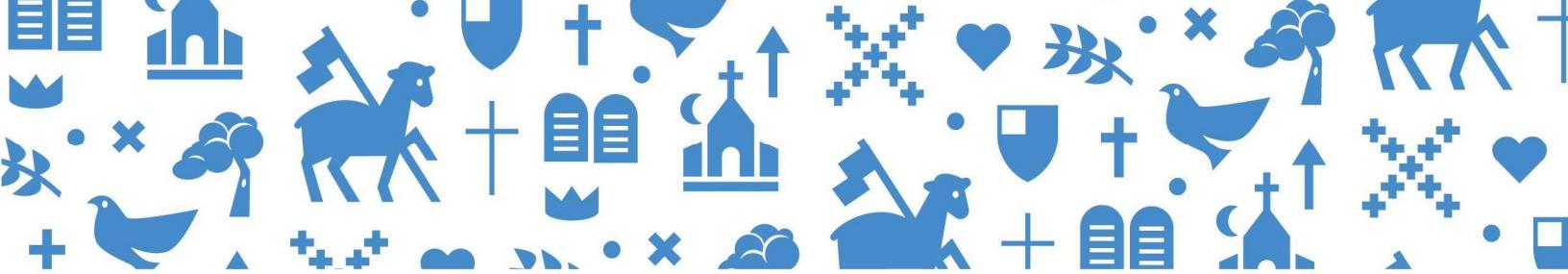
Have children participate in liturgy.

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.





LittleBox of Good News™ | Cajita de Buenas Nuevas™

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.

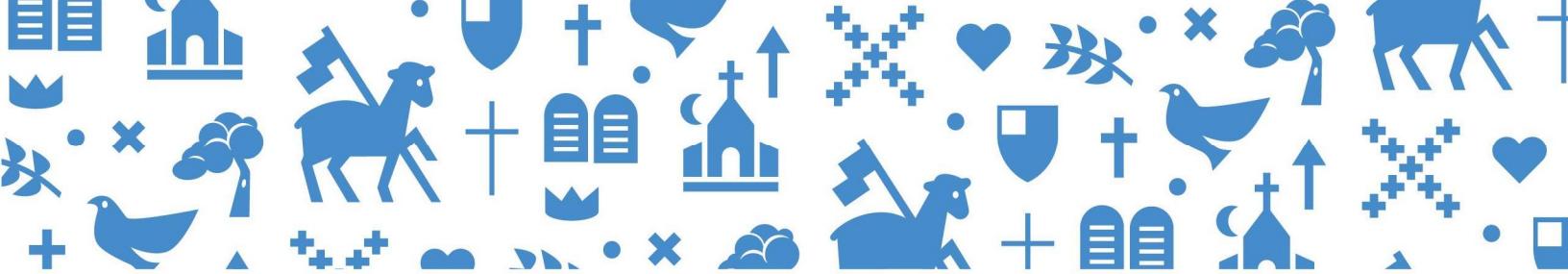
Check the website map to make sure that your parish is listed!

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)

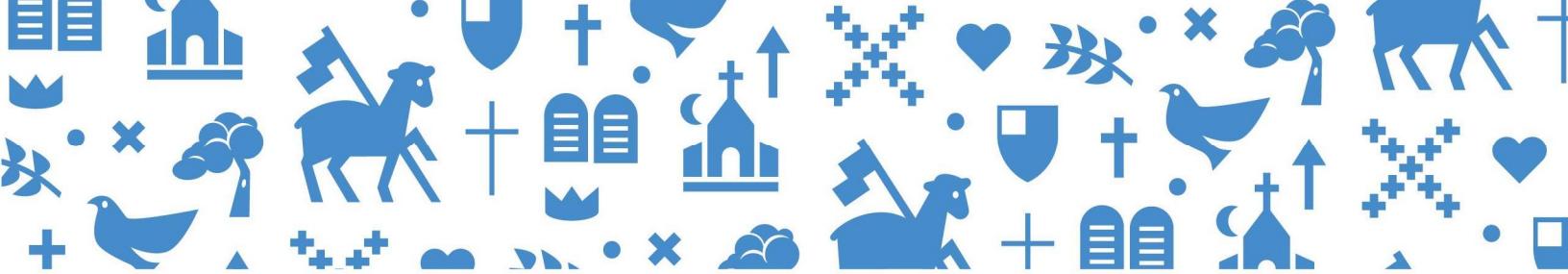




- Priest Support
 - The parish priest encourages families and joins them for gatherings when possible.
 - Be aware of the contents of each box, paying particular attention to the community aspect. This is the piece that families will bring back into the parish.
 - Host Family
 - This family, who receives 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.

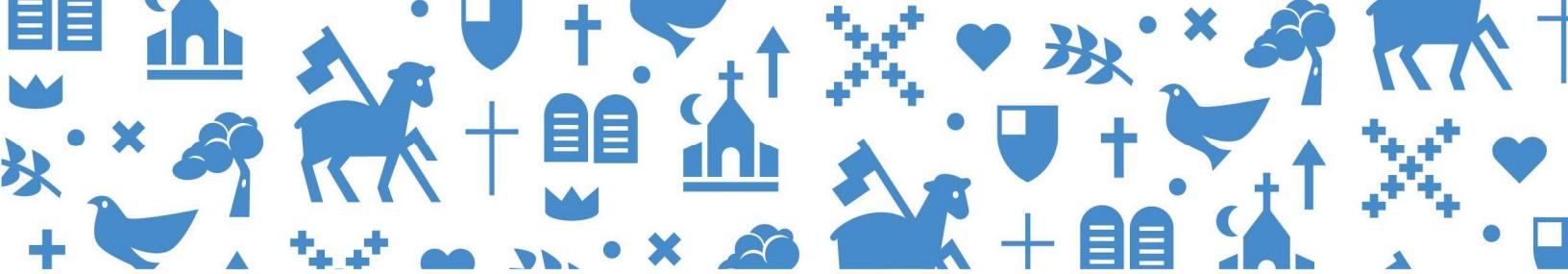




Little Circle of Good News Gathering Ideas

**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 Ideas

(individual planning guides follow this summary)

Plant and Play Picnic

Gather as a community outside to do the Prayer in the World activity. If you have a garden at your church, perhaps you want the families to help create a garden together or families can bring their basil planting kits from their box. Families can bring picnics to share and share time in play.

Food, Faith and Fun

Gather for a pizza lunch or dinner in your parish hall (or other substantial food). Share images and stories about what your family sacred spaces look like and what elements were important to your family.

Going Deeper Dinner

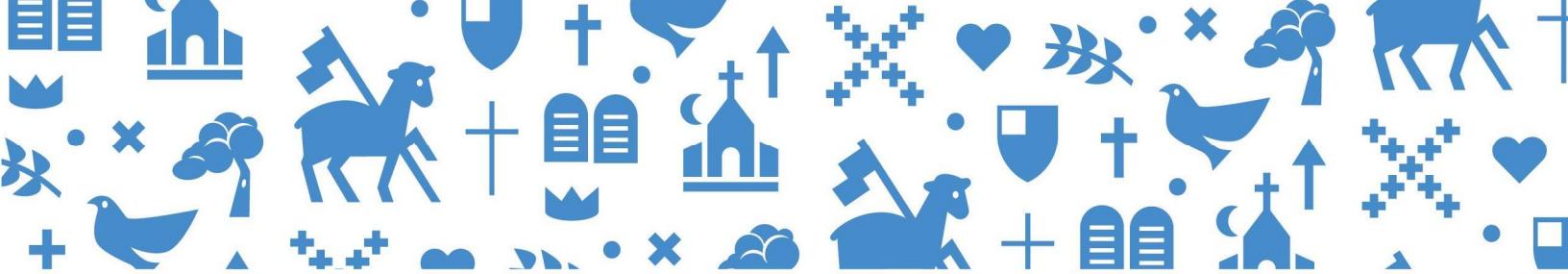
Host a dinner, potluck, or coffee hour where families can share about what they discovered when they did the “Going Deeper” sections of the booklet.

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.

Remember, this is YOUR parish's little circle. There is no right or wrong way to gather!





Little Circle of Good News Gathering Idea

Plant and Play Picnic

Gather as a community outside to do the Prayer in the World activity. If you have a garden at your church, perhaps you want the families to help create a garden together or families can bring their basil planting kits from their box. Families can bring picnics to share and share time in play.

Action Plan:

Date for Event: _____

Activity Chosen: (circle one)

Individual basil planting kits from box

Planting/tending to parish garden

Supplies Needed: _____

Who will get supplies: _____

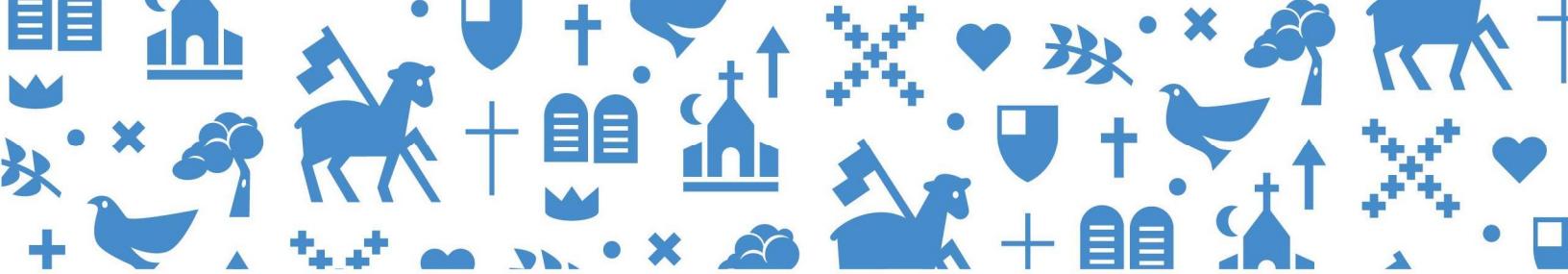
Who will lead activity: _____

What refreshments will parish provide? _____

Who will provide them: _____

Who will clean up: _____





Little Circle of Good News Gathering Idea

Food, Faith and Fun

Gather for a pizza lunch or dinner in your parish hall (or other substantial food). Share images and stories about what your family sacred spaces look like and what elements were important to your family.

Action Plan:

Date for Gathering: _____

Food provided by: _____

Who will organize/order: _____

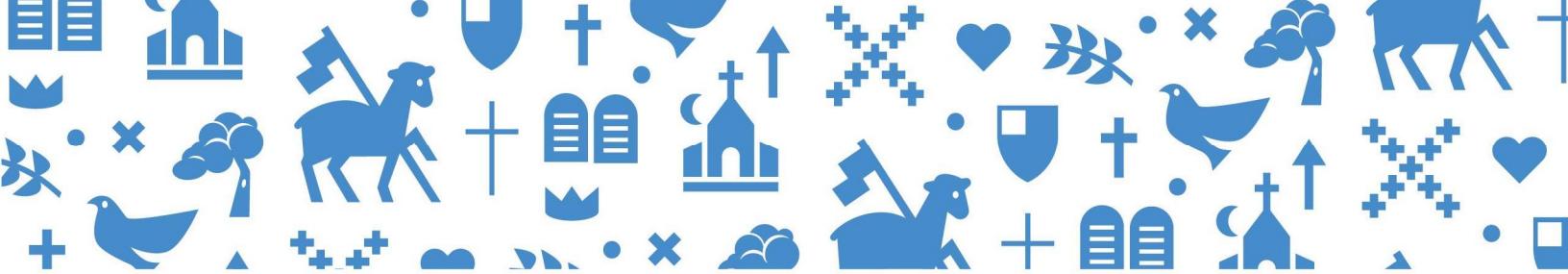
Will you discuss by table or whole group? _____

Who will lead the discussion: _____

How will you engage kids: _____

Who will clean up: _____





Little Circle of Good News Gathering Idea

Going Deeper Dinner

Host a dinner, potluck or coffee hour where families can share about what they discovered when they did the “Going Deeper” sections of the booklet.

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: _____

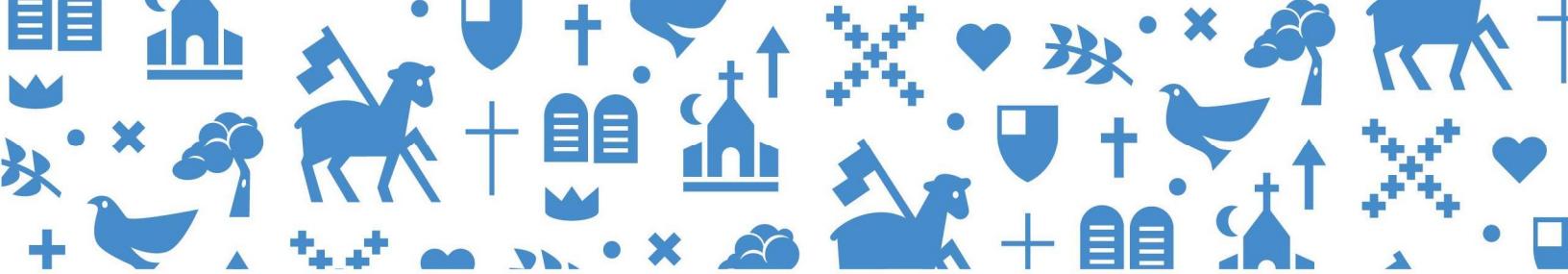
How will you engage kids: _____

There are several great videos and resources in the online activity page for Scripture.

Which resources will you share? _____

Who will clean up: _____





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: _____

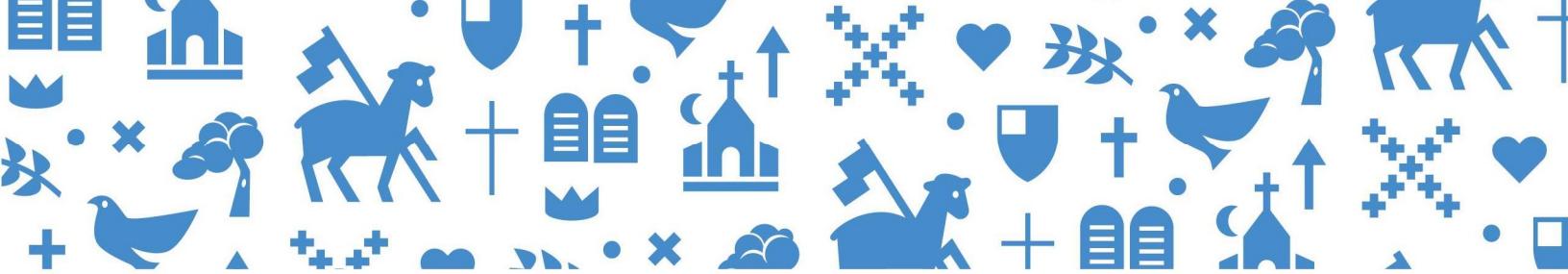
Will you discuss by table or whole group? _____

Who will lead the discussion: _____

How will you engage kids: _____

Who will clean up: _____





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Sermon Ideas:

Praying as Jesus prayed.

Prayer as anything that helps us get close to God.

Praying as a family helps cultivate a sense of shared values and beliefs and teaches the importance of faith, gratitude and compassion.

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 2024. *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

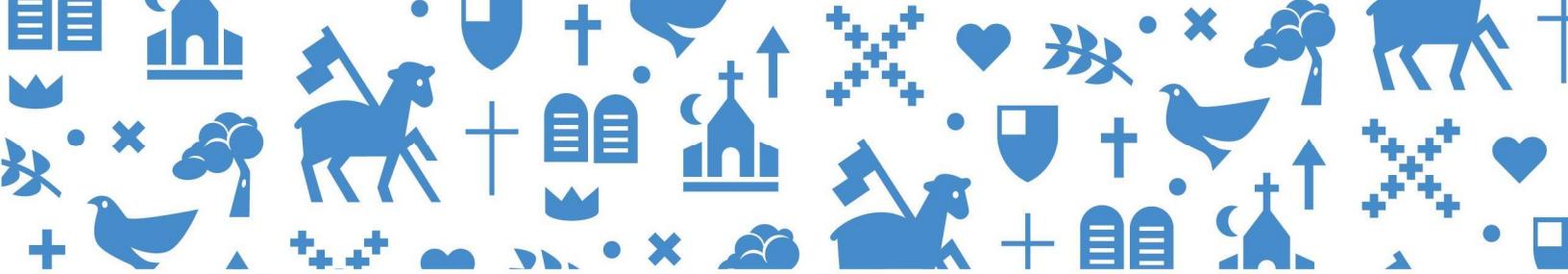
(Website, Podcast, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube) visit:



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:

Prayer in your Community

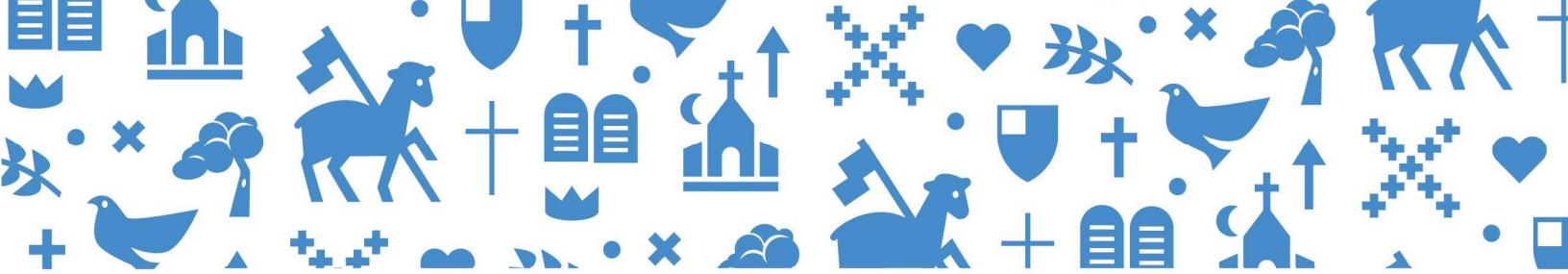
Families will be writing and decorating notecards telling others that they are praying for them. Maybe they will give them out to others at church! Look for them and ask about them.

Going Deeper as a Community:

Prayer Board

Start a bulletin board or table with notecards where anyone in church can write prayer needs and others can write a prayer card in response.





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Need help? Contact us!

Grace Rose

grose@edola.org

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

Jessica Lee

littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org

- Ordering, Payments & Coupon Codes
- Scheduling a visit
- Website issues

Lauren Dunn

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

Emmy Murray

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- Social Media

