



*Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything.*  
— Ecclesiastes 11:5

## First Christmas Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. Milestones Ministry provides a clear and usable model for congregations, homes, and community to connect faith formation resources with daily life experiences. The rich variety of life experiences represented in Milestones Ministry does the essential ministry of the church: promoting Christian faith formation with family, friends, and others with whom we can reach.

A child's first Christmas provides an opportunity for family to gather and recognize the very first time a child will experience the joys of Christmas and hear the stories told of the birth of Jesus. It is a good time to revisit family rituals and involve the entire family, from parents to grandparents to great-grandparents to neighbors and friends to celebrate this wonderful occasion. Whether this is the first child in the family or one with siblings, doing something special to involve the newest member of the family in traditions celebrated each year is a significant milestone for all ages.

We often overlook important times like these when we get so busy during the season of Christmas but the birth of a child and that child's first experience of Christmas can be memorable and create an essential time for all to recognize God in the moment.

Milestones incorporate a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestones Ministry Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation.

Moments that provide opportunities for family to gather and appreciate the meaning of a child's first Christmas and share traditions happen only a few times in our lives. Embracing the Christmas story of Jesus' birth and finding God's presence in these moments is important. This First Christmas Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

**Naming** – Taking time to gather with family and friends and declare a special time to welcome a child to a first Christmas provides an occasion to recognize old traditions and establish new ones.

**Equipping** – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations and provides prayers for the child and family experiencing this as a significant time in the faith life of the child.

**Blessing** – Blessing the child and one another at this moment in the life of a family points to the importance of Jesus' birth and is a beginning step on a child's faith journey.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like an ornament for the Christmas tree or a special candle to be lit each year serves as a reminder of this first Christmas and is a good way to establish traditions for the family.

**Reinforcing** – It is a good idea to follow up after the First Christmas Milestone Moment by gathering again with family in the New Year, perhaps on January 6th, the Epiphany, to share the highs and lows and memories of this first Christmas.

 Caring Conversations
  Devotions
  Four Key Faith Practices
  Service
  Rituals and Traditions





# First Christmas Milestone Moment

*For a Small Group or Family Gathering*



## Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away

*“and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise.”*

– Deuteronomy 6:7b

*A follow up for the First Christmas Milestone Moment can be done with caring conversations about what traditions your family has and what rituals you will continue to do each year as a reminder of Jesus’ birth. Gather together with family and friends for a follow up time to celebrate and tell stories and show pictures of how this first Christmas was celebrated.*

*An important step after experiencing the Four Key Faith Practices in the small group or home setting is to bless and equip friends and families to continue practicing faith by using the Four Keys daily as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.*

*A suggested resource for continued caring conversations:*

*Taking Faith Home*  
*Taking Faith Home Cards*

*Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:*  
[www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Key Faith Practices. They are central to every milestone and integrated into people’s daily lives as well as the life of the local congregation. These four daily faith practices are simple, doable, and practical: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you gather together with your child, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God’s presence in this moment.



### Caring Conversations

Discuss these thoughts and questions:

- What are some Christmas traditions you want to pass on to the child celebrating his/her first Christmas?
- Tell a memory from a past Christmas about a gift received or role in a Christmas pageant that brings back fond memories.
- Name a gift you think would be appropriate for the child this Christmas.



### Devotions

Read the following: *When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.* Luke 2:15-16 (NRSV)

- How do you think Mary and Joseph felt on that first Christmas?
- What are ways can you build a tradition and retell the story of Jesus’ birth each year to your child as a reminder of this very first Christmas?

Dim the lights, light a candle, and sing the first verse of Silent Night:

*Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
‘round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*



### Service

Gather around a nativity set and talk about ways the angels, wise men, and shepherds served baby Jesus, and then reflect on ways we can serve Jesus in today’s world.



### Rituals and Traditions

Gather around the child and pray together: *God of all Creation, we thank you for (name of child). Bless us as a family today and everyday. Help us to share your love, joy and peace with others.*

Take turns blessing the child and one another by saying: *May you show the light of God’s love to others through Jesus.*



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## First Christmas Discussion Guide



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