

Shrove Tuesday Milestone Moment

Shrove Tuesday signals the end of Epiphany on the church calendar. It comes the day before Ash Wednesday. This day is also called Fat Tuesday and Pancake Day. In Germany and German American areas of the United States, it is known as *Fastnacht Day*. In France it is called *Mardi Gras* which means Fat Tuesday.

The word shrove is the past tense of the word shrive, meaning to confess and seek forgiveness. Many Christians observe Shrove Tuesday and often host pancake suppers as a way to recognize the day. Eating pancakes on this day is believed to have come about as a way to use up butter, eggs, milk, and fat in preparation for fasting during Lent.

Gathering for fun to eat pancakes and all things fattening on Shrove Tuesday has been a Christian tradition since the 16th century. It combines repentance and preparing for the Lenten season with a festive spirit.

On Pancake Day in England, pancake races are held in towns across the country. A story is told that the custom of pancake races began when a woman was so busy making pancakes that she forgot all about the church service until she heard the church bells ringing. She ran out of her house with the pan still flipping pancakes! As a result, many towns and villages still signal the beginning of their pancake race by ringing a bell. The town of Olney in Buckinghamshire, England still honors her memory each year. Competitors must be local housewives. They wear aprons and scarves and run with a pancake in a pan.

Shrove Tuesday serves as a reminder we are about to enter the season of Lent and prepares all Christians for a time of reflection and spiritual renewal. It is traditional to reflect on what type of fasting one may do during Lent.

The Shrove Tuesday Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestone Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation. Moments that allow opportunities for family and friends to gather in the home are special and an important step along our faith journey.




Naming – It is important to recognize Christian traditions as we begin the season of Lent. Shrove Tuesday marks the end of Epiphany and a time to reflect on what forgiveness means to us as we feast together.

Equipping – Providing an intentional opportunity to engage in caring conversations and prayer on Shrove Tuesday in your own home by serving a pancake dinner with lots of toppings, whipped cream, and syrup for family and friends is an excellent way to introduce others to this Christian tradition. This Milestone Moment provides an outline to use when you gather.

Blessing – Offering a prayer provides a blessing and reminds all involved of the importance of forgiveness as we honor the beginning of Lent.

Gifting – Providing an appropriate gift such as a pancake whisk, apron, or photo of the dinner and those gathered is a reminder of this time together. Milestones Ministry also suggests a gifting stone designed for Lent that can be carried in pockets and purses during Lent.

Reinforcing – One way to follow up after spending this Milestone Moment together is to gather again during Holy Week for a light meal and talk about something that was done during Lent to observe this season.

 Caring Conversations
  Devotions
  Four Key Faith Practices
  Service
  Rituals and Traditions





Shrove Tuesday 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

Having ongoing conversations during Lent following the Shrove Tuesday Milestone Moment can help reinforce the conversations you had during a pancake dinner and provide a ritual and tradition each time you gather as a reminder of the season of Lent.

An important step after experiencing this Milestone Moment is to continue using the Four Key Faith Practices (caring conversations, devotions, service, and rituals and traditions) on a regular basis. It helps to encourage people in their lifelong faith formation.

Other resources that can help support the continued journey of faith using the Four Key Faith Practices include the following:

[Taking Faith Home](#)
[Taking Faith Home Cards](#)

Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:
www.milestonesministry.org



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Key Faith Practices: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. They provide an opportunity for people to learn, experience, and grow in their faith together. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you gather together for a pancake dinner or other Shrove Tuesday meal, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below:



Caring Conversations

Invite everyone to take turns answering these questions:

- Have you ever been to a pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday? Tell about that time.
- Is there something you will give up or add for Lent? Explain.
- To repent is to have a new and changed mind that trusts God. How does Lent help you to focus on God?



Devotions

Read the following:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Psalm 51:10-12 (NRSV)

- What does it mean to have a clean heart?
- Psalm 51 is described as a prayer for cleansing and forgiveness. Why is forgiveness important?
- Jesus died to forgive our sins. He saved us. What does this mean to you in your life today?



Service

On Pancake Day in England, “pancake races” are held in towns across the country. Plan your own pancake race with family and friends. Organize a neighborhood pancake race. Invite all ages to participate and compete by running a named distance with a pancake on people’s heads. Take pictures and offer prizes for the winners. Serve a meal of pancakes for everyone afterward with lots of toppings, whipped cream, and syrup. Finish your time together with this blessing for each other:

May God bless you with a clean heart and a right spirit.

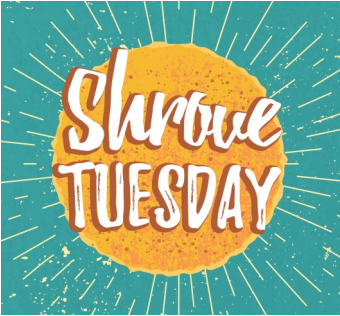


Rituals and Traditions

As we repent of our sins and prepare for the Lenten season, begin a tradition in your home to recognize this day as one of asking for forgiveness by writing a list of things you regret doing or not doing from the past year. When you finish, give thanks to God for the gift of forgiveness. Pray this prayer:

Dear God, please forgive us our sins and create in us clean hearts and right spirits. We rejoice in your salvation through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the prayer, throw the list away to mark the beginning of Lent.



Shrove Tuesday Discussion Guide



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.



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