



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

— Ecclesiastes 3:1

New Year 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.

Many of us look to the New Year as a time to begin again. We may want to lose weight, stop smoking, commit to gathering with family more often, or envision other changes we feel would improve our lives. Whether we accomplish our goals or not, we have traditions we do to welcome in the New Year. In Spain, 12 grapes are eaten—one at each stroke of the clock. In Japan, rice cakes called *Mochi* are made. The Germans drop molten lead into cold water to see what shape it takes and predict the future. In the United States, a very celebrated event is the ball dropping in New York City. Traditions vary from country to country, state to state, and family to family. Recognizing God’s presence as we gather to celebrate the New Year with family and friends may be the beginning of a new tradition for some. We encourage you to consider establishing a new ritual that can be done in your home.

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 value God’s presence in the past year and seek ways to recognize it in the New Year are special and an important step along our faith journey. This New Year Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

Naming – Taking time to gather with family and friends in the home on New Year’s Eve to recognize traditions and provide time for faith talk make time together memorable.

Equipping – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations and provides time to reflect on the past year and share thoughts, hopes, and dreams about the New Year.

Blessing – Blessing one another at this time when one year is ending and another begins, places an emphasis on God’s presence in our daily lives .

Gifting – Giving a tangible gift like a candle that can be lit during this gathering and inviting each person to remember this time together by lighting the candle throughout the coming year during prayer times serves as a reminder of God’s gifts.

Reinforcing – It is a good idea to follow up after the New Year Milestone Moment by gathering again with family in the New Year, perhaps on Valentine’s Day, February 14th, to touch base with one another and share what changes there have been since the last gathering.

Four Key Faith Practices

- Caring Conversations
- Devotions
- Service
- Rituals and Traditions





New Year 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 New Year Milestone Moment can be done with caring conversations about what traditions your family has and what rituals you will continue to do as you welcome in the New Year. Gather together with family and friends for a follow up time to tell stories and revisit New Year’s resolutions that may have been made and kept or broken.

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



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, 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 do you remember most about this past year?
- Name ways you feel God has blessed you this past year.
- What are your hopes and expectations for the coming year?



Devotions

Read the following: *I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.* Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 (NRSV)

- What part of work or school do you enjoy most? What part gives you the most pleasure?
- Name a time when you recognized what you do at work or in school as a gift from God. Is this easy or difficult to do?
- How can you care for others so that all people may have the basic needs of food and drink?

Provide a candle for each person, light candles and say the following prayer: *Dear God, we praise you for sending your son, Jesus, the light of the world, to be with us. Thank you for family and friends and for food and drink. Help us to see your presence in our lives everyday and to reach out to those in need in the coming year so that we may share your light with others. Amen.*



Service

Take intentional steps to set aside time each day throughout the coming year to recognize God’s presence in your own life and to pray for others who are in need of knowing God’s love. Establishing a daily prayer routine helps us grow in our faith.



Rituals and Traditions

What is a New Year’s tradition or food you remember? Most have one or two that have been passed from generation to generation. Take time to reflect on these and close your time together by saying a prayer that is part of our Christian tradition, the Lord’s Prayer.

Take turns blessing one another using the following words:

May you take pleasure in God’s presence who desires that all should have food and drink.



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New Year Discussion Guide



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