

Nurturing Faith Ideas January-December 2026

Here you will find weekly suggestions and activities to connect Sunday worship with faith formation at home for all ages. Add one to your bulletin each week or put them in your monthly newsletter. They could also be sent out via email or added to a Facebook page. These are based on the Revised Common Lectionary, and the liturgical year descriptions are based on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar. Even if your pastor doesn't follow the lectionary, it is hoped that these will still nurture your faith. Unless otherwise noted, they are based on the New Revised Standard Version Bible.

January 4: Second Sunday of Christmas - Read John 1:1-18

John's gospel does not have a story of Jesus' birth. Instead, it identifies Jesus as the Word who has been active since the beginning and who began human and lived among humans showing them God's grace. Some didn't recognize him or accept him. How does your life show that you recognize Jesus? How do you reflect Jesus' gift of grace to the world?

January 6: Epiphany - Read Matthew 2:1-12

Following a star three Magi journey to Bethlehem bearing gifts fit for a king. Finding the child, they knelt and proclaimed God's praise. What gifts might you bring for the young Jesus? What might you praise God for this week?

January 11: Baptism of the Lord - Read Matthew 3:13-17

As we celebrate Jesus' baptism, we also remember our own baptism. We are baptized into the body of Christ, and we are also empowered by the same Spirit of God that descended upon Jesus. What do you remember, or have you been told about your baptism? What does your baptism mean to you? Share with someone and ask them about their baptism.

January 18: Second Sunday after Epiphany - Read John 1:29-42

This is a story about introducing others to Jesus. John pointed out Jesus to two of his disciples, and they followed Jesus to where he was staying. One of them, Andrew found his brother, Simon Peter," and brought him to Jesus, the Messiah. Who have you told Jesus about? What did you tell them?

January 25: Third Sunday after Epiphany - Read Matthew 4:12-23

This is Matthew's story of Jesus calling his first disciples, somewhat different from John's story last week. Here, Jesus invites Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him and do something different – fish for people. They left behind their boats and their work, the way of life they were used to, and followed him. What makes your life different as you follow Jesus?

February 1: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany - Read Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus was a teacher. Throughout his life, he taught his disciples, and those in the crowds that gathered around them, about God and God's ways. Here he speaks a word of hope to those in

difficult circumstances as he teaches about how God's ways and will are different from how we as human beings think. Who is a teacher who has helped you understand more about God?

February 8: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany - Read Matthew 5:13-20

Jesus tells his disciples they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt changes things, particularly how they taste and are preserved, and light brightens things around us up, taking away some of the scariness. How, as a follower of Jesus, are you changing things around you for the good and making things less scary?

February 15: Transfiguration of the Lord - Read Matthew 17:1-9

Here we find the story of Jesus' transfiguration while he was on the mountaintop with the disciples Peter, James, and John. There they heard a voice from heaven say, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." How do you think the disciples felt when they heard the voice? How would you have felt? How do you listen to Jesus today?

February 22: First Sunday in Lent - Read Matthew 4:1-11

After he was baptized, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. It was a time for reflection and preparation as Jesus got ready to go about his work as God's Son on earth. The devil encouraged him to take care of his own needs, test God's faithfulness, and rule the world, if he would only follow the devil. Instead, Jesus chooses to follow God and do what God wanted. How have you been tempted to not follow God and God's way? What happened?

March 1: Second Sunday in Lent - Genesis 12:1-4a

Seemingly unexpectedly, God called a man named Abram to leave his home, his family, his country and go to an unnamed place that God would show him. God promised to bless him and make him a blessing to others. What about you? If you heard God calling you to leave your home, family, and country behind to go where God was leading you, would you go? Why or why not?

March 8: Third Sunday in Lent - Read John 4:5-42

This passage tells the story of Jesus' conversation with a woman of Samaria, which was surprising because men didn't start conversations with unknown women in that day, and Samaritans and Jews despised and avoided each other. Jesus showed her respect and kindness even though she was an outsider. After they spoke, she went back to the city and told others what Jesus had done, and many of them believed in him. What might you tell others about what Jesus has done for you?

March 15: Fourth Sunday in Lent - Read John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been born blind. When his neighbors passed the same man, they saw only a beggar. When the Pharisees found out, they didn't believe he'd been born blind. When you walk someone in need, maybe they can't see, or hear, or walk, or maybe they lack food or money, do you see them as a person or label them and dismiss them? How might Jesus' open your eyes to see them as a child of God?

March 22: Fifth Sunday in Lent - Read John 11:1-45

Jesus' disciples were afraid for him to go to Bethany because some of the people wanted to kill him because he challenged their beliefs and authority. But Jesus knew that his friend Lazarus was dying/dead and that Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, would be sad and grieving. Jesus comforted them with his words and then his actions as he brought Lazarus back to life. Who helps you feel better when you are sad or grieving a loss? How is God with you at such times?

March 29: Palm/Passion Sunday - Read Matthew 21:1-11, and Matthew 26:14- 27:66 during the week, a little each day

These passages tell the story of Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and the last events in his life before his crucifixion. If we just jump from Palm Sunday to Easter, we miss a lot of the story. Attend a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service this week if you are able to prepare for Easter.

April 5: Resurrection of the Lord/Easter Day - Read Matthew 28:1-10

On Sunday, you may have heard and/or said, "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed." The good news of Christ being raised from the dead is that he is alive, even today. Share with someone what Easter means to you.

April 12: Second Sunday of Easter - John 20:19-31

When the disciples told Thomas that Jesus had appeared to them, Thomas struggled to believe until he saw Jesus himself. What causes you to question or doubt? Do you think you would have responded like Thomas? Why or why not?

April 19: Third Sunday of Easter - Read Luke 24:13-25

It's easy to remember Jesus' words, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me," when we celebrate the Lord's Supper in worship. This week, each time you eat bread, remember those words again. With whom might you share a meal this week and experience the presence of Jesus, who loves us forever?

April 26: Fourth Sunday of Easter - Read Psalm 23

The fourth Sunday of Easter is often called "Good Shepherd Sunday." Psalm 23 reminds us that God takes care of us as a shepherd takes care of their sheep, providing food and water, giving them time to rest, leading them in right paths, protecting them. God is our Good Shepherd; we are God's sheep. What does it mean to think of yourself as a sheep of God?

May 3: Fifth Sunday of Easter - Read John 14:1-14

In verse 7, Jesus says, "if you know me, you will know my Father" What adjectives or descriptive words describe Jesus? Make a list of these; what do they say about God?

May 10: Sixth Sunday of Easter - Read Psalm 66:8-20

Psalm 66 reminds us that through tough times God is with us. The psalmist praises God when times are bad and when they go well. Think of times when you have struggled through tough

times, then think how you know God was with you. Give a prayer thanking God for God's steadfast love.

May 17: Seventh Sunday of Easter - Read 1 Peter 4:14:12-14, 5:6-11

Here we are told to humble ourselves under God and to cast our anxiety on God who cares for us. What anxieties are you hanging on to? Make a list of the things on which you have been worrying. Pray asking God to take care of each thing you've included on your list.

May 24: Day of Pentecost - Read Acts 2

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon waiting disciples. Suddenly, they were speaking in languages that they didn't know, but everyone who walked by could understand them, no matter what language they spoke. Peter then stood up and explained what was happening and shared his faith in Jesus. As Christians, it is important for us to share our faith as well as the Spirit guides us. How could you, will you share your faith today?

May 31: Trinity Sunday - Read Genesis 1:1-2:4a

We hear the story of how God created the world in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. Be creative today! Make a drawing of the creation story using paint, markers, crayons, or another favorite tool. Or take a walk and discover all of the wonders of God's creation in your part of the world.

June 7: Second Sunday after Pentecost – Read Genesis 12:1-9

In Genesis 12:1-9, God calls Abram to leave everything he knows behind and go to the land God would give to him, and God would bless him. What unexpected places has God called you to go? How has God blessed you?

June 14: Third Sunday after Pentecost - Read Genesis 18:1-15

When Sarah overheard their visitors say that she was going to have a son, she laughed; she knew Abraham and she were too old to have children, it just wasn't possible. But they did have a son, Isaac. When has God surprised you so that you laughed? Share with someone else and ask them when God surprised them.

June 21: Fourth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17

Trusting in the goodness and love of God, the psalmist prays to God for help, asking for God to save his/her life and to answer him/her in the midst of trouble. What is troubling you that you might ask for God's help, trusting God is listening and will answer?

June 28: Fifth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Psalm 13

Psalm 13 is a psalm of lament in which the psalmist feels forgotten by God and calls upon God to answer his/her cry. As is common in psalms of lament, the psalmist also affirms God's presence and love. In the psalmist's cry, we are reminded we can bring our whole selves and all of our emotions to God, who knows what we're thinking and feeling before we even speak. Thank God for God's love that surrounds your every moment.

July 5: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Psalm 145

In this acrostic poem, each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet and praises God for what God has done. By yourself or with a friend, write the letters of our alphabet down a piece of paper. For each letter, write something that begins with that letter for which you would praise God.

July 12: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – Read Psalm 119:105-112

Read Psalm 145. In this acrostic poem, each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet and praises God for what God has done. By yourself or with a friend, write the letters of our alphabet down a piece of paper. For each letter, write something that begins with that letter for which you would praise God.

July 19: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Psalm 139:1-12

Have you ever felt alone, or like no one cared about you? The psalmist reminds us that our God knows us and loves us; there is nowhere we can hide from God, nothing God doesn't know about us, and God loves us. We are always surrounded by the God who made us. Each day this week, tell someone else that God loves them.

July 26: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Psalm 105:1-11

In the opening verses, the psalmist calls readers to give thanks to God for what God has done for God's people and then lifts up some of the specific things God did in the past. God continues to do amazing and wonderful things. Identify five things that God has done for you and/or your church. Write them down and share the list with someone else.

August 2: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Matthew 14:13-21

When the disciples told him the crowds before him needed food, Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat. From the five loaves and two fish, Jesus fed over five thousand people, all because he saw the need of many and felt compassion. There are still hungry people in our midst. This week, when you or your family go to the grocery, what might you contribute to the local food pantry as a way to show compassion to those who are hungry?

August 9: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost - Read Matthew 14:2-32

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water, they were afraid, because they didn't know who/what it was. Peter got out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus, until he became frightened by the strong wind around him, and he started to sink; Jesus caught him. When have you been scared? Give thanks to God that Jesus is with us in scary times and situations.

August 16: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Genesis 45:1-15

Many years after Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they came to Joseph seeking food in a time of famine. Joseph recognized them, thought they did not recognize Joseph. When Joseph told them who he was, he also told them that not to be distressed for God had been working in all that had happened. When/how, as you think back over your life, no matter how long it's been, has God worked in a surprising way? Give thanks to God for God's never-ending care.

August 23: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Matthew 16:13-20

At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked the disciples who other people were saying that Jesus was. Then Jesus asked the disciples the same question – “Who do you say that I am?” Peter declared Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus asks that same question of his disciples today – “Who do you say that I am?” What is your response?

August 30: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Exodus 1:1-15

When God called to Moses through a bush that was on fire but not burning us, God told Moses to take off his sandals for he was standing on “holy ground.” While we may not literally take off our shoes, what “ground” for you is “holy,” that is set apart as a place where God meets you? It could be a special place or with special people or engaging in a special activity or something else.

September 6: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 18:15-20

Here Jesus instructs his disciples, including us, on what to do is someone in the church hurts us, and he gives us steps to follow. He also reminds us at the end that, when we do so, he is with us. What difference does, might, it make in a conversation about being hurt, if we remember Jesus is part of the conversation?

September 13: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 18:21-35

Peter wanted to put a limit on how many times he had to forgive someone; he suggested seven times. Jesus responded not seven times but seventy times (some translations say seventy times seven times). That’s a lot to remember. Do you think Jesus wants us to keep track of how many times we forgive someone, or to always be forgiving, as our God is forgiving?

September 20: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 20:1-16

Those who had been working all day complained that those who started late in the day got paid the same. We want God to act like we would, and we aren’t happy when God shows grace and love to those who are different from us, who don’t work as hard as we do. We focus on what we don’t have, instead of what we do have. Think about what you have and give thanks to God for it.

September 27: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

The psalmist reminds us we have learned the stories of faith from our ancestors, including parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and others. The psalmist also reminds us to tell our stories to those in younger generations. Who are some of the people in your life who have shared their stories with you and with whom you have shared your story? Give thanks to God for them in prayer.

October 4: Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost– Read Exodus 20:1-20

In the Ten Commandments, God set before God’s people the way to live in relationship with God and with one another in the community of faith. They continue to guide us as we love God and love our neighbors as Jesus commanded. Which of these do you find most challenging? Which are easier to follow?

October 11: Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost - Read Exodus 32:1-14

The people thought Moses, who had been gone for quite a while, wasn't coming back, and, it seems, that God wasn't coming back either. Feeling they had been abandoned, they asked Aaron, Moses' brother and back-up, to make other gods for them, and Aaron built the gold calf for them to worship. What do your idols, those things that you put your loyalty and trust in other than God, look like? How might you put them aside and worship only God?

October 18: Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 22:15-22

When Jesus is questioned about paying taxes to the emperor (the ruler, the government), he says to give to the emperor the things that belong to the emperor, and to give to God what belongs to God. As we consider what this means in our lives as citizens of God's kingdom and citizens of the world, it's worth remembering that most, if not all, of what we have is a gift from God.

October 25: Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 22:34-46

In response to the lawyer's question as to which commandment was the greatest, Jesus responded with two: Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself. How do you show your love for God? How do you show your love for your neighbor? Share these with someone or write or draw about them.

November 1: Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost/All Saints' Day – Read Revelation 7:9-17

In the Reformed tradition, saints are believers of all times, past, present and future, through whom the light of God shines. As the author of Revelation reminds us, saints come from every nation, tribes, peoples, and languages of all ages and sizes. Give thanks to God for the saints in your lives who have shared their faith and hope with you.

November 8: Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Joshua gathered the people to renew their covenant with God. The people reaffirmed that they would serve and obey the Lord their God as people of the covenant. We, too, are called to choose to serve God rather than turn away from God and to reaffirm our commitment to God and God's ways. How does your life show that you have chosen to serve God?

November 15: Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – Read Matthew 25:14-30

The Parable of the talents encourages us to use the gifts that God has given us, be they large or small, in service to God. List some of the gifts and abilities God has given you, and how you use them, or could use them, in your church and to help others.

November 22: Christ the King/Reign of Christ – Read Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus tells the story of some who fed others, gave others something to drink, gave them clothes, took care of them when they were sick, visited them in prison, welcomed them when they were a stranger, and some who didn't. They were all surprised to find that in doing so, or

failing to do so, they did these things to/for Christ. The story reminds us to see Christ in all whom we encounter.

November 29: First Sunday of Advent – Read Mark 13:24-37

This week we enter Advent as we begin a new church year. In Advent, we gather around the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare to celebrate Christ's first coming as the baby of Bethlehem and we wait for Christ's return. Jesus reminds us in this passage that only God knows when Christ will return, and, in the meantime, we are to be alert and awake as we wait.

December 6: Second Sunday of Advent – Read Mark 1:1-8

Mark's gospel begins, not with a story of Jesus' birth, but with the appearance of John the baptizer crying out in the wilderness, calling the people to repent and prepare for One who is coming. What do you need to repent, that is, turn from, to be fully prepared for Christ's coming?

December 13: Third Sunday of Advent – Read Luke 1:46b-55

When an older, pregnant Elizabeth welcomed her younger, pregnant kinswoman to her home, Mary spoke, or perhaps sang, her words of joy for all that God had done for her and God's people and was doing. We, like Mary, are called to be God-bearers in our time and place. What would you sing about regarding what God has done for you and God's people today? Could you write a song, putting your words to a familiar tune?

December 20: Fourth Sunday of Advent – Read Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-25

Here we find the announcements of Jesus' birth to both Mary and Joseph. In them, we hear that Jesus is the Son of God, who will save God's people from their sins, and Emmanuel, God with us. In this final week of Advent, with all its last-minute preparations for Christmas, take time to reflect on what it means to you that Jesus saves us from our sins and is God with us.

December 27: First Sunday after Christmas – Read Luke 2:22-40

Here we are we meet two old people named Anna and Simeon. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple for the first time, these two knew immediately that Jesus was the one they had been waiting for all of these years. They knew Jesus was the one who would bring hope and salvation to the people. What hopes does Jesus give to you as we prepare to enter a new year?