

Epiphany Activities

1. Blessing Your Home or Another Building Using Chalk

You will need:

- A piece of chalk (any colour) with which to write
- Permission to do this!

What Is Chalking The Door?

This is an old Catholic tradition, which is very quick and easy to do. It reminds us of Jesus coming to earth to live as a human, and is a way of inviting God into our lives and into our homes. It also asks God to bless our homes and the people who live there (or come to visit). With Covid-19 around at the moment, now feels like an especially great time to ask for God's blessing!

You might want to offer this to neighbours or to other people in church (especially those who can't access the internet) as it is a way of showing them that they aren't forgotten by the Church or by God. When we see the mark, we are reminded that we are loved.

It's also a great conversation starter with people who don't know what the marks mean.

The marks you will chalk are:

20 + C + M + B + 21

- The numbers (20 and 21) stand for the year, so, 2021 this year.
- The + signs represent the cross on which Jesus died (because even during Christmas season, we are still looking forward to Easter).
- C, M and B stand for Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar – the traditional names of the three wise men (which may or may not be their actual names. But it reminds us that at Epiphany, they searched for and found, Jesus).
- OR, C, M and B also stand for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which is Latin, and means 'May Christ Bless This House'.

What Do I Do?

On, above, or next to your front door, you need to chalk the formula (20+C+M+B+21).

Then, with any family and friends (as is Covid safe) who want to be involved, you can say the following prayer:

Loving God, we ask you to bless this home, everybody who lives in it, and all our visitors.
May we have good health, good hearts, happiness, and may we live as you want us to.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

2. Constellation Prayers

Find a Constellation You Can Recognise at Night-time. Here are some suggestions:

- Little Dipper
- Big Dipper
- Pegasus
- Orion
- Taurus

These are all easy to look up, in books or on the internet.

Spend some time each night before bed, looking out of the window at your chosen constellation. For each star in the pattern, say a different prayer. For example, *Gemini* has two stars, so you would say two prayers. *Pegasus* has Fifteen stars, so would have fifteen prayers!

You could use this time to say "Thank You" to God. 'Sorry' to God, or 'Please' to God. You might want use each star to pray for a different person. Your prayers could change every night, or stay the same – it's up to you.

This is a fun way to talk to God, and also to learn more about our solar system!

3. Epiphany Cake

Any excuse for baking! This is a traditional 'Twelfth Night' cake for anyone who hasn't eaten enough over Christmas!

Ingredients:

5 large eggs
250g self-raising flour
250g caster sugar
250g butter (softened)
74g ground almonds
350g glace cherries (washed, dried and quartered)
200g tin pineapple pieces (roughly chopped and dried well)
350g dried apricots (snipped into small pieces)
350g sultanas
100g chopped almonds
2 unwaxed lemons (finely grated zest only)

To Decorate:

4 tbsp apricot jam (warmed)
500g golden marzipan
1kg fondant icing
Icing sugar
Any other decorations you fancy!

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas 3. Grease and line a 23cm/9in deep, round cake tin with a single layer of baking paper.
2. Measure the eggs, butter, flour, sugar and ground almonds into a bowl and whisk together. Add the chopped almonds, lemon zest and dried fruit. Mix well, spoon into the tin and level off the top.
3. Bake for 2¼–2½ hours until golden-brown. You may need to cover with foil if it's getting too brown.
4. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 30 minutes, before removing onto a wire rack and leaving to cool completely .
5. To decorate, remove the baking paper and place the cake on a gold cake board. Brush with the apricot jam.
6. Lightly dust a work surface with a little icing sugar and roll out the marzipan to a circle slightly bigger than the cake. Cover and smooth over the surface and sides. Brush with a light sprinkling of water.
7. Lightly dust a work surface with a little icing sugar. Roll out the gold icing to a circle slightly bigger than the cake. Cover the marzipan and smooth the surface. Trim the excess icing, (reserve this for later) then tuck under the cake.
8. Add any other decorations you might have.

Recipe by Mary Berry, found on
https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/twelfth_night_cake_53367

4. Epiphany Cake #2

If, like me, you don't like fruit cake, why not try the traditional French Epiphany cake instead?!

Apparently, it was usual to put a coin into the mixture, and whoever found it was King or Queen for the evening. It's probably not worth risking your teeth for, though...

Ingredients:

1kg shop bought puff pastry (or you could make your own)
125g unsalted butter
100g caster sugar
2 eggs
1 egg yolk
125g ground almonds
25g flour
4 tbsps amaretto or brandy (if you wish!)

Method:

1. Put the butter and sugar into a mixing bowl and beat them together until they are thoroughly combined and light in colour and texture. Then add the eggs.
2. Mix in the eggs until they are thoroughly combined, then put in the flour and almonds.
3. Mix the mixture until it is combined, then pour in the Amaretto or brandy and stir that in. This is the frangipane.
4. Put the frangipane between two sheets of cling-film/plastic-wrap and press it into a disk shape, about 2cm thick. Then put it into the freezer for 30 min.
5. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
6. Roll out half of the puff to a thickness of about 5mm, put a plate on to it and cut out a disk.
7. Put the disk of pastry onto the plate, then remove the frangipane from the freezer, take off the cling-film/plastic-wrap and place the frangipane in the middle of the disk of pastry on the plate. Brush the band of exposed pastry with some cold water.
8. Roll out the other half of the puff pastry to about 5mm, then put this over the frangipane on the plate, smooth it down, press the two disks of pastry together at the edge and then cut off the excess pastry around the edge of the plate.
9. Transfer the whole thing to a lined baking tray and seal the pastry together by crimping it using a butter knife and your fingers.
10. Brush the top with milk and, very lightly, cut a pattern into the surface of the pastry (don't go all the way through). Then put the cake into the oven for 1 hour.
11. Remove the epiphany cake from the oven and allow it to rest for 1 hour before serving.

Recipe from https://www.reallynicerecipes.com/recipe/cakes_biscuits/epiphany

5. Star Mindfulness

This is a great activity to use if you are feeling a bit anxious at any point. It's also a lovely way to pray, and the best bit is, it fits into your pocket so nobody needs to know when you are using it.

Cut out the star below:



When you need to use it, simply run your finger along the edge of the star. On each edge going from the middle to a point, breathe in. On each edge going back from a point into the middle, breathe out again.

A star with five points should take five complete breaths to go all the way around.

Once you have focussed on your breathing, you could use the points to pray.