



*“The Lord will protect you and keep you safe from all dangers. The Lord will protect you now and always wherever you go.”*

— Psalm 121: 7-8

## Vacation Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. A Milestone Moment brings family and friends together to mark a special time in their lives and to acknowledge and affirm God’s presence in their midst. Milestone Moments provide a model for connecting significant occasions in people’s lives with the ongoing journey of faith.

Any time away from daily routines to travel with a vacation destination in mind is filled with potential faith-shaping memories. In fact, one could consider most any journey away from the shelter and security of one’s home as a kind of pilgrimage where one experiences the presence of God in life more clearly.

A vacation offers time to have an adventure together in new settings. One learns about God’s creation, different cultures, and the challenges to make decisions each day. Journeying together is meant to be fun and needs the added ingredients of kindness, patience, and forgiveness. With this in mind, any vacation can be experienced as a Christian pilgrimage where people grow together through the grace of God.

Even the most active and entertaining trip can be blessed with sabbath moments to give thanks for the generosity and peace of God. Whether the trip is filled with numerous scheduled activities or more of a retreat, the goal will be to return to one’s home with enriched relationships and a sense of renewal. The Vacation Milestone Moment can be used prior to the beginning of the trip, during the journey, and also once it is over.

The very act of changing one’s daily routine while on vacation encourages us to pause, share special moments, and give thanks to God. Milestones Ministry promotes reflection and thanksgiving by using a simple five stage structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing.

**Naming** – Preparing for and experiencing a vacation as part of one’s Christian formation is an important and often overlooked benefit of time away from daily routines.


**Equipping** – This Milestone Moment helps individuals and groups to experience a vacation through the faith formation practices of caring conversations, devotions, service, and rituals and traditions.


**Blessing** – Offering a blessing and prayer for those who go on a vacation make the time away a meaningful adventure that includes faith, hope, and love.


**Gifting** – Giving or receiving a tangible gift that can be part of the trip offers a visible reminder that the vacation is part of a deeper quest. It can be a souvenir, something that is found on the trip itself, or a gift given before the trip begins.


**Reinforcing** – After the vacation has concluded, it is important to reflect with one another how the trip added to one’s relationships and Christian renewal. This also provides an occasion to establish or recommit to faith practices that nurture your daily life in the Christian faith.

Four Keys for Practicing Faith

  
 Caring Conversations

  
 Devotions

  
 Service

  
 Rituals and Traditions





# Vacation Milestone Moment

*For a Small Group or Family Gathering*



## Grow the Church by Growing People in Faith

*Having ongoing conversations and prayer following the vacation can help reinforce the blessing of the trip for people's lives. When you gather together with family and friends consider ways to continue to give thanks for the gift of faith and the promise of salvation that impacts everything you do in the home, congregation, and world.*

*An important step after experiencing the Four Keys for practicing faith in a small group or family gathering 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  
For Everything A Season*

*Additional Milestones and Milestone 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 Keys for practicing faith. These four daily faith practices are simple, doable, and practical: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. Use these faith practices as part of your vacation.

Gather with family and friends and use this Four Keys outline.



### Caring Conversations

Take turns answering these questions:

- What are your hopes and dreams for your time away?
- Each day take time to discuss how you experienced God's grace (a "God moment").
- Each day talk about what you are most thankful for and what you are least thankful for.



### Devotions

Read the story from Luke 2:41-52 - Jesus and his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover when he was 12. Mary pondered the experience in her heart, and it was noted that "*Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.*" (Luke 2:52, CEV)

The following questions can be asked throughout the trip.

- Talk about your expectations for your travels. What do you do when you have different wants or even contradictory hopes and expectations for the trip?
- How is Jesus a typical youth in this story?
- How was this a journey of faith for Mary? for Jesus?
- How can your trip be a journey of faith?

Sing or pray: *Amazing Grace*. Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.



### Service

Vacations can be a time to think primarily of one's own wants. Include the wants of others who are traveling with you to make sure their wants and needs are being satisfied as well. Surprise each other with unexpected acts of kindness.



### Rituals and Traditions

End each day saying, "I am thankful for . . ."

Then conclude with the following prayer: *Dear God, we thank you for being with us as we enjoy the world you love; help us to show kindness to others and protect us as we travel. Amen.*

End each day by using the following blessing with each other: *May God be gracious to you and bless you; may God give you a grateful heart each and everyday.*