

## Christmas –Candlemas Order – In Person

1. Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *Christmas is much more than a one-day event. Christmas is a season that lasts from Christmas eve to the Baptism of the Lord, which we celebrate during the second week of January. There are a wide variety of special days that we celebrate within the Christmas season. We celebrate the feast of St. Stephen, the solemnity of Epiphany and the feast of the Holy Family to name a few. We're going to try to chronologically order eight of the special days of Christmas in a short while, but first we'll practice getting ourselves in order.*
2. Invite participant to stand and organize their group of into a line chronologically ordered from oldest to youngest.
3. Do the same from tallest to shortest.
4. Do the same from the first birthday of the year to the last birthday of the year.
5. Distribute the signs for the Order of Liturgical Days from Christmas to Candlemas.
6. Challenge the group to organize a line from the first solemnity to the last feast of the season. NOTE: If you do not have the space to line up people, have the people simply line up the signs in the right order on their tables.
7. Walk through the room to see if the group is organized correctly. Here is the correct order:
  - a. Nativity of the Lord – Solemnity and Holy Day of Obligation (Christmas Day/God becomes flesh in the person of Jesus.)
  - b. St. Stephen – Feast (Stephen was the first Christian martyr, stoned to death for his faith in Christ.)
  - c. Holy Innocents - Feast (These are the children who were put to death by King Herod when he ordered all children in the area of Bethlehem who were two years old and under to be killed when he was trying to find and destroy Jesus.)
  - d. Holy Family – Feast (The family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph)
  - e. Mary, Mother of God - Solemnity (Mary's most distinguished title)
    - i. Holy Name of Jesus – Optional Memorial (The name of Jesus means God saves.)
  - f. Epiphany - Solemnity (Jesus is manifested to the world when the magi, the three wise men, visit from distant lands.)
  - g. Baptism of the Lord - Feast (Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River before Jesus begins his public ministry.)
  - h. Candlemas – Feast of the Purification in The Temple
8. Invite the group to reorganize themselves into the correct order and create a semi-circular line so that all members of their group can read the signs that each member is holding.
9. Discuss the order of the Christmas season and the meaning of the particular days using the information above in the chronological list under number 8.

Invite participants to take their seats and proceed with the next learning experience.

## Orderly Christmas Season

The following pages are signs that name eight of the solemnities, feasts and memorials that happen during the Christmas season. They are in chronological order starting with the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day) and ending with the Baptism of the Lord (the last day of the Christmas season).

The category for the day is written below the name of the day. Solemnities are the principal days in the Christmas season followed by feasts, which are followed by optional memorials in order of liturgical hierarchy. Some solemnities, such as the Nativity of the Lord, are also Holy Days of Obligation.

When you print out these signs, you may want to print the solemnities on white paper, the feasts on gold paper and the optional memorial on tan paper. Tan is not liturgically significant; it simply distinguishes the category for teaching purposes.

# **Nativity of the Lord**

**Solemnity (Holy Day of Obligation)**

**St.  
Stephen,  
Martyr**

**Feast**

**Holy  
Innocents,  
Martyrs**

**Feast**

# **Holy Family**

**Feast**

**Mary,  
Mother of  
God**

**Solemnity**

# **Holy Name of Jesus**

**Optional Memorial**

# Epiphany

**Solemnity**

# **Baptism of the Lord**

**Feast**