Marking the Passage of Time

Color Your Year

Department stores tell us what season it is: tinsel and Santa Clause at Christmas (though sometimes beginning as early as September now), teddy bears and roses at Valentine’s day, eggs and bunnies at Easter. Store displays are constantly trying to get ahead of the season and push the culture forward. Though I have always been resistant to the commercialization of holidays, I do appreciate being able to mark the passage of time by seeing a change in scenery. This year-round activity helps your family keep track of the seasons in the Christian year (Lent, Easter, Advent, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time). A table in the home is selected to have a tablecloth that changes colors based on the liturgical season. Though the change is subtle, the effect, over time, is noticed.

Designed for All Ages

Materials
Side or end table dedicated to this purpose and simple tablecloths in the following colors: green, red, white, purple

Time Investment: Varies

How To
1. Choose an end or side table in your home that will serve to mark the passage of time through colors. The table will usually have a green cloth, representing “Ordinary Time.” Green represents life.

2. Change the cloth from green at the following times:

   • Four weeks prior to Christmas: Purple. During Advent purple represents the coming of the King into the world.
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- Christmas Day until Epiphany (January 6): White. White during this time represents the joy of Christ coming into the world.

- Four weeks before Easter (Lent): Purple. Purple during this time represents repentance and solemnity.

- Easter and six Sundays afterward: White. White at Easter and after Easter represents the newness of our life with Christ.

- Pentecost (late May–early June [varies], check calendar): Red. Represents the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Notes
- If your congregation follows the liturgical calendar, you will find that the colors on your chosen table will usually match the colors chosen in worship. However, this “home version” of liturgical colors is simplified to make it easy to manage. Because of this, the colors on the table will probably not always match the colors at church. One example of this would be a change to white for Christ the King Sunday and Trinity Sunday.

- Some congregations choose blue instead of purple during the Advent season to distinguish Christmas and Easter. If this is the practice of your congregation, consider using a blue cloth during these weeks.

- Babies and toddlers won’t be able to grasp much significance in the color change, but can still learn to notice the change as they are learning about color.
Variations

- Allow older children to take the responsibility for remembering when to change the tablecloth.

- If someone in your family is crafty, have that person make table runners in the liturgical colors for your dinner table as well.

- Do this activity with colored banners, flags, or vases.

- Use this same table in other ways. Many of the activities in this book make use of symbols or created objects. Use this table as a place to store these spiritual memories.
Faith is learned when it is woven seamlessly into the fabric of everyday life.

Filled with easy-to-organize traditions, ceremonies, and spiritual practices for many of life’s stressful and faith-filled moments, this is a resource parents will rely on for years to come.

“Seamless Faith is a gift of the spirit.”
— Rabbi Sandy Sasso, award-winning children’s book author

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