

Reflection: Checked Boxes Are Not Enough

By Sarah Dixon Young

I'm a box checker. I love the feeling of checking to-dos off at the end of a busy day. It gives me a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

But, what if, for Valentine's Day, I simplified my relationship with my husband down to a list of checked boxes?

Wash his clothes? Check. Cook his supper. Check. Talk to him for 30 minutes. Check. Make sure there are eggs for his breakfast. Check.

I could write out the list and present it to him for Valentine's Day and then dust my hands off, go about my own agenda, and call



Young

it good. If all the items on the list are checked off, isn't that enough?

No one wants a relationship like that!

A relationship based on checked boxes is wooden, robotic, manufactured, and hollow. It is one which is

doomed to fail.

A real relationship, grounded in self-sacrificing love, forgiveness, humility, and steadfastness, lasts.

Believers often make the mistake of thinking that Jesus only asks us to check all the boxes:

Have a quiet time. Check. Go to church. Check. Give to missions. Check. Visit the sick or elderly. Check. Don't do bad stuff. Check.

Then, we dust off our hands and go about our own agenda and life as if we've finished the list and there's nothing more to it.

But Jesus never asked me to check all the boxes.

He asked me to come, deny myself, take up my cross, follow Him, love Him

with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, abide in Him, and let Him live through me.

Those are things you can't just cross off a list.

They rely on relationship. A friend of mine shared that her daughter had been asking about being a follower of Jesus.

"Do I have to like His posts?" the seven year old wanted to know. Her mother and I chuckled over the confusion, but what does it mean to follow Jesus?

I puzzled about the answer long after my friend and her daughter had gone home.

When Jesus said, "Follow Me," to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, He wasn't

inviting them to check a list of to-do boxes. He was inviting them to walk with Him, eat with Him, live with Him, stay with Him, minister with Him, know Him, and learn from Him. Every aspect of their lives would be changed because of the relationship they would have with Him.

And to Jesus, we are not just lists to be checked either.

He always lives to make intercession for us. He loved us while we were still His enemies. He is always with us, even to the end of the age. He offers us the gifts of His steadfast love, forgiveness, and eternal life.

That's the sort of relationship that lasts, and He's

inviting you to come, get to know Him, grow closer to Him, and be fulfilled by Him- not some empty list of check marks that will just go in the trash at the end of the day.

Won't you be His valentine?

Sarah Dixon Young uses stories everyday to share the love of Jesus with her family, friends, and neighbors. She lives in Fort Totten, ND with her husband, Paul, and their four children. She is the author of five books, many articles and more Sunday School lessons than she can count. You can follow her adventures or get in touch at www.SarahDixonYoung.com.

Reflection: The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

"Jesus, the Light of the World!"

by Deacon Jeffrey Vaagen,
St. Joseph Catholic
Church

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, celebrated each year on February 2, often slips by us.* Also celebrated this day in the secular world is Groundhog's Day! Like so much in our faith, there is more there than we might at first recognize. This feast

recalls Mary and Joseph presenting the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem. As prescribed by Jewish law, what we celebrate on this day, is also the completion of the time of 'purification' of the mother of our Lord, 40 days after giving birth to Jesus at Christmas. Jewish law also called for the consecration of the firstborn male to God, a practice rooted in com-

memorating the Passover, the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt when God spared the firstborn of Israel.

This presentation in the Temple is a moment marked by humility, obedience, and the fulfillment of a divine promise. It is a moment of prophetic mystery as we hear Simeon who recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah and the Light of World, offer his prayer to God in the presence of Mary and Joseph:

"Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel."
Luke 2:29-32

Bringing Jesus to the Temple was a simple act, yet it has profound meaning. Mary and Joseph were

obedient to God's law, even with Mary's unique holiness as the Mother of God and Jesus' divinity. Their willingness to submit to the law of Moses demonstrates how even they lived out their faith in humble, ordinary ways. In a small way this is similar for us. We too follow the Church's teachings by presenting our children for their sacraments, offering them to God, trusting in His grace, and doing our best to raise them in faith. We can rec-

ognize in this Feast of the Presentation a beautiful reminder that our children ultimately belong to God.

Each of us too, through our own vocation, are called to participate in the life of the Church and in the celebration of the holy days. We all have a story to live out as individuals but also as a Church. The Church's liturgical calendar and the feast days offer us a path to order our lives.

See REFLECTION | 5

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

ASSEMBLY OF GOD
River of Life
1903 Hwy 20
Devils Lake
701-662-4582
www.riverlife.us
Sunday: 10 a.m. worship

ASSUMPTION OF MARY
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Starkweather, N.D.
292-4301
Sunday: Mass:
Rotating 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. with
St. Mary's, Munich Call 682-5178
(Munich).

BDECAN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Tokio, N.D.
(2 miles south of Tokio,
near Woodlake)
294-2283
www.bdecanpresbyterian-church.org
Worship: at 11 a.m., Sunday
school kids K - 5 grade during
worship, potluck meal after

BETHEL EVANGELICAL FREE
CHURCH
1312 East Walnut St.
Devils Lake 662-3758
www.bethelfree.com
Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.

CHRIST THE KING
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Tokio
Saturday: 7 p.m. Mass
all year round.

CHURCH OF GOD
(SEVENTH DAY)
607 Fifth St. S.E.
Devils Lake
Saturday: 2 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER DAY SAINTS 20th
St.
& Lincoln Ave. Devils Lake
Sunday: 10 a.m.
Sacrament at 11 a.m.

DAKOTA
BAPTIST CHURCH
West Highway 57
Fort Totten Church -
766-4516
Sunday: 11 a.m. worship.

DAKOTA OYATE
LUTHERAN CHURCH 294-
2361 Tokio, N.D.
11 a.m. worship

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
ADVENT
Sixth Street and
Fifth Avenue Devils Lake
11 a.m. Morning prayer 1st, 2nd,
3rd Sundays Holy
Eucharist- 4th Sunday

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH 601
Fifth St. NE Devils Lake Sunday
9:30 a.m. worship

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
311 5th Ave. NE Devils Lake
701-230-1332
Sunday: 10:30am and 6 p.m.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Lakota Missouri Synod
Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.

HIGH PLAINS MINISTRY
Nekoma, Lawton, Concordia, and
Our Redeemer's

LAKOTA LUTHERAN
CHURCH LAKOTA, ND
247-2777
Sundays: 10 a.m.

LIGHTHOUSE
ASSEMBLY OF GOD
Fort Totten, N.D.
701-766-4826
Sunday 10:30 a.m.

MORNING STAR PARISH
701-262-4714
www.morningstarparish.com
Worship services at 8 a.m., 9:30
a.m. and 11 a.m. rotating: Ameri-
can, Pekin, Warwick, Sigdal and
Sheyenne Lutheran

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP
North Junction of
Hwy. 15 & 20
Rural Hamar
262-4470
Sunday: 10:30 a.m.
worship service

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN
CHURCH, ELCA
612 14th Ave. NE
Devils Lake, N.D.
662-5112
Sunday: 10 a.m. Service
Wednesday: 6 p.m. Service

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
(NALC) 1700 Fifth Ave. NE PO
Box 1041 Devils Lake, N.D.
662-3565 Worship
Sunday 9:30 a.m.

ST. BONIFACE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Esmond, N.D. 249-8360
Tuesday-Saturday: Weekday Mass
at 9 a.m. Saturday: 5 p.m. Mass.
Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Mass.

ST. JEROME'S
CATHOLIC CHURCH Crow
Hill District Hwy. #57,
One mile N.
Saturday: Mass 5 p.m.

ST. JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC CHURCH 515
Fourth St.
Devils Lake 662-7558
Monday -Friday at 12:00pm
Tuesday at 10:00am at
Odd Fellows

Wednesday at 10:00am at
Eventide
Friday at 9:30am at
St. Joseph School
Saturday at 8:30am & 5:00pm
Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am &
11:00am

ST. MICHAEL
CATHOLIC CHURCH
St. Michael, ND 58370
766-4151
Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. and
9:30 a.m.

ST. OLAF LUTHERAN
CHURCH, ELCA
601 6th St. NE
Devils Lake, ND
662-4911
9:30 a.m. Worship
(September - May)
Summer:

8:30 a.m. at Retreat Center
11 a.m. at St. Olaf
(June - August)

ST. PETER'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
7th St. & 7th Ave.
662-2245
Devils Lake Missouri Synod
Worship: 11 a.m.
Dial-a-Devotion: 662-3158.

ST. THOMAS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Fort Totten, N.D.
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist 1st, 2nd,
3rd and 5th Sundays, 4th Sunday
- Morning Prayer

ST. WILLIAMS
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Maddock, N.D.
438-2668
Wednesday: 7 p.m. Mass.
Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass at
5 p.m. on the first
Friday of the month.

SEVEN DOLORS
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Fort Totten 766-4314
Sunday: 11 a.m. Mass.
Daily Mass: 7 a.m.

TRINITY-BERGEN AFLC LU-
THERAN CHURCH
PO Box 46 Starkweather Sunday
- 10:30 a.m. Holy
Communion every Sunday

WEBSTER CHAPEL
Webster, N.D.
Worship is at 9 a.m. the 2nd, 3rd
and 4th Sundays.

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 501
Fifth St. NE
Devils Lake, 662-3584
Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.

ZOAR FREE LUTHERAN
Hampden, North Dakota
Pastor Craig Wentzel
May through August
Worship Sundays 9 a.m.

If you would like to make changes
or corrections to this ad, please
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oleson@cmpapers.com

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516 4th St., 662-2127

-Eventide Senior Living
Communities

-Jerome W Wholesale
1115 2nd Ave. NE, 662-5366

-Levers Foods
323 5th St. NE, 662-4945

-Veterans of Foreign Wars
Post 756
314 3rd Ave NE, 662-4117

-Glibertson Funeral Home
Hwy 2 West

- First United Bank
323 5th St NE, 662-4024

- Altru Health System
1001 7th St NE, 662-2158

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MONDAY -THURSDAY 9-3
FRIDAY CLOSED
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Devils Lake Journal, 155-940
is published Tuesday and Thursday at
516 4th Street NE, Devils Lake, ND 58301

Periodicals postage paid at
Devils Lake, ND 58301

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
Devils Lake Journal, 516 4th Street NE,
Devils Lake, ND 58301

DEVLIS LAKE
JOURNAL

