

Chalking the Doorway

The practice of writing on doorways has a long history. Back in Deuteronomy 6:9, (just after the Ten Commandments), Moses used it to help the Israelites remember. It also brought to mind the Passover, when the blood of the lamb was splashed on the doorposts as a sign that all inside were under God's protection.

Today, chalking the doorway is a visible symbol of God's presence, peace and blessing. I don't know about you, but I could use the reminder...



You will need:

- Chalk
- A doorway

How to do it:

Gather your household outside the main door of your home (church / school / workplace etc), and take turns reading the short passage from Matthew (below) and writing these letters in chalk either above the door, down the sides, or on the doorstep.

20 + C + M + B + 21

Finish with some optional short prayers or responses, (choose what suits your group), and a final blessing, written out below.

What does it mean?

The **20** and **21** are the current year (so change it to 22 or 23 etc in future years).

The **crosses** remind us of Jesus and of the star that guided the Wise Men to him.

The letters **C**, **M** and **B** are for their traditional names (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar), but can also stand for 'Christus Mansionem Benedicat', which is Latin for 'May Christ bless this house.'

Or if Latin is not your bag, how about thinking 'Christ, My Blessing' each time you pass underneath?

Write the letters first, spaced out, then the numbers, and finally add the crosses.

Reading: Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 -Wise Men Visit the Messiah

Read this short gospel passage about the visit of the Wise Men, and imagine them coming to your home, just as they visited Mary, Joseph and the young Jesus. We hope that they would find Christ living in our homes too.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. ... The star that they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced greatly. Going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Chalking

One person reads out these words slowly, with pauses for different people to write these symbols either above the door, down the sides or on the doorstep:

20 + C + M + B + 21

The Three Wise Men: Caspar [*pause while someone writes C*], Melchior [*write M*], and Balthasar [**B**], followed the star to find the Christ child two thousand [**20**] and twenty-one [**21**] years ago. May Christ [**+**] bless [**+**] our [**+**] home [**+**].

All: Amen.

Praying

- If you like you can take turns saying any of these brief prayers or make up your own.*
- Alternatively, pray **The Lord's Prayer**.*
- There are also some **short verses and responses** that you could use.*
- Or jump straight to the **blessing**.*

Peace be upon this house (*school/church/etc*), and upon all who enter here. **Amen.**

Bless this house and all who live within. **Amen**

May all who enter our home rejoice to find Christ living here. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus, may we be like the star that guided the Wise Men to you, shining the light of your love to others. **Amen.**

God, please bless (*names of people*) who live in this house. May it be for them (*us*) a place of peace and blessing. **Amen.**

Verses and responses

- V: God shall watch over your going out and your coming in.
R: **now and for ever.** (Psalm 121:8)
- V: Blessed shall you be when you come in
R: **and blessed shall you be when you go out** (Deut 28:6)
- V: You discern my going out and my lying down
R: **you are familiar with all my ways.** (Psalm 139:3)

Blessing

Speak the words of Aaron's blessing to each other, then re-enter the house.

**The Lord bless us and keep us;
the Lord make his face shine upon us
and be gracious to us;
the Lord turn his face toward us
and give us peace.**

All: Amen.