



Faith-Full Families



Resources and News for the Church of the Home
Archdiocese of Baltimore - Division of Catechetical and Pastoral Formation

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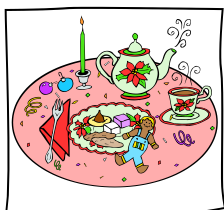


Table Talk Conversation Starters

My favorite
Christmas
memory is...

My hope for the
coming new year
is...

My favorite TV
show is... (and
why).

I wish we could
have _____,
and why.

The best part of
being in our
family is...

The most
interesting new
person I met this
week was...

A person our
family should
pray for is...

Prepare the Way of the Lord!

The New Evangelization should begin at home. Here are some ideas for Advent for families throughout the lifespan:

1. Have a family Advent wreath. Traditionally it has 3 purple candles and one pink candle, but white candles with colored ribbons will do. Light another candle each Sunday of Advent and experience the Light of Christ growing brighter with each week as you approach Christmas.

2. Bring out the Manger scene early in the Advent season. It is a good way for all to focus on the meaning of Christmas. Here are some practices to make into family traditions.

- **Create a soft bed for Baby Jesus.** Begin with an empty manger and supply straw or shredded paper each time you do a kind deed or pray for someone.

- **Practice waiting.** Put only the shepherds and animals in the stable. Put Mary and Joseph and the donkey at the

opposite end of the house. Move them through the house, a different room each day, as they “journey to Bethlehem.” Baby Jesus arrives on Christmas (don’t forget where you hid him!). The Kings can also journey and arrive to adore the Christ Child.

3. Celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas on Dec. 6. This beloved saint can teach us again about generosity and love of those who are needy. Read about him at www.catholic.org/saints

4. Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. The Blessed Virgin, carrying the Child within, appeared to a simple man. Contemplate her patient waiting and resolve to learn from her example. She is the Patron of the Americas.



5. Pray for peace to prepare for the Coming of the Prince of Peace. Informed by the daily news, lift up in prayer a different place or situation around the world each day. Always conclude your prayer with a commitment to become a messenger of peace in your family and community.

See Page 4 for more Advent Activities.

Las Posadas - Invite Your Neighborhood into the Meaning of Christmas

Wish you could recapture the Gospel message of Hope for your family and share the joy of the coming of Christ with others in a gentle way?

For many years, our neighborhood has enjoyed organizing a simple Christmas “walk” or posada, a custom we adopted from our Mexican friends. The Christmas Posadas is a

reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for shelter on the night of Jesus' birth.

During Las Posadas, the community walks around the neighborhood while singing Christmas carols led by "angels." During our walk we visit homes and sing carols. Young and old are invited to dress the part of shepherds, angels, and even animals. A young boy and girl are selected to portray Mary and Joseph.

Mary and Joseph go door to door, and ask if they may enter. Residents have been alerted, by means of a flyer distributed earlier in the week, to tell the weary couple, “No, there is no room here.” (The flyer has also invited every resident to participate in the walk if they wish.) After Mary and Joseph have been turned away, the group moves, singing carols as they go. As the journey gets longer and the wind blows colder, all the participants experience a little of the disappointment that Mary and Joseph must have felt as they searched for a safe and warm place for Jesus to be born.

Las Posadas ends when the travelers arrive at a manger set up. Someone reads the Christmas story from the Gospels, and all pray together for peace, for travelers and for prospective parents. All are invited into a warm house for hot chocolate and real Christmas cheer.



Advent Prayer Service

ALL SING: O Come, O Come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lowly exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.

Antiphon: O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel,
who showed yourself to Moses in the burning
bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai
mountain, come, stretch out your mighty hand
to set us free.

READING: Exodus 3: 1-15

REFLECTION

To what or to whom are we slaves?
In what settings do I hear God call my name?
How would you describe the task the LORD has
given you?

LEADER: O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you
govern all creation with your strong yet tender
care;

R: Come and show your people the way to
salvation.

LEADER: O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who
showed
yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave
him the holy law on Sinai mountain,
R: Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us
free.

LEADER: O Come, Flower of Jesse's stem, you
have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings
stand silent in your presence; the nations bow
down in worship before you;

R: Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our
aid.

LEADER: O Key of David, O royal Power of
Israel controlling at your will
the gate of heaven;

R: Come, break down the prisons walls of death
for
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of
death, and lead your captive people to freedom.

LEADER: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice;

R: Come, shine on those lost in the darkness of death!

LEADER: Holy God, you are constant in your care for those you have chosen. Help us to never give up on ourselves. Keep us free to place you first in our time, our heart, and all our priorities.

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

ALL SING: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel.

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Family Life Resources ON-LINE



Hands-On Ways to Teach Children About Giving.

Catholic Icing is a site by a mom in Virginia who comes up with creative ideas for teaching the faith and celebrating the liturgical year. She developed a pre-school ABC curriculum that takes each letter of the alphabet and have a saint that starts with that letter, a craft, and other Catholic vocabulary and activities for a total of 26 weeks. It's easy to follow and very well done. <http://catholicicing.blogspot.com>



Visit www.foryourmarrige.org

En español, también!:

www.portumatrimonio.org

Family Gratitude Activity



Thanks to Catalina and Darren Shorkey, Holy Trinity, Glen Burnie, who lead a family life group that meets monthly at the parish center for dinner, prayer, and a family program.

This activity celebrates our family tree. And just like trees, God provides our families with all that they need to be strong.

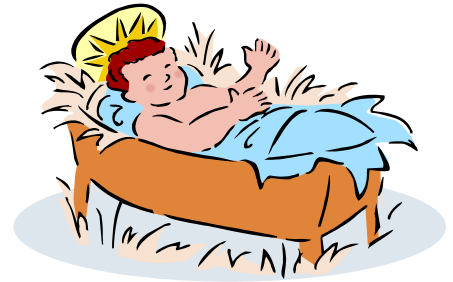
1. Review with your children the parts of a tree: roots, trunk, branches, and leaves.
2. Our roots are those people who have gone before us—the people in our past who started our families, like our grandparents, saints, etc.
3. Our trunk is the people who give us support every day—the people in our present who help our family, like our godparents, family friends, teachers, priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, lay ministers, etc.
4. Our branches symbolize our reaching out to the world, an important part of keeping our family strong—the gifts that we share with the world, like musical gifts and talents or our own family's faith. As we reach out like branches, we are working towards a future with God.

Continued on P. 4



Preparándose para el Nacimiento de Cristo

Jesús está con nosotros cada día y de todos modos. Durante el Adviento, hacemos tiempo para preparar nuestras mentes, corazones y hogares para anticipar (ver, planear y esperar para) Su venida. Buscamos modos específicos de prepararnos a dar bienvenida al regalo de amor del Cristo Niño al interior de nuestros hogares y nuestro mundo. Oraciones, actividades, discusión familiar, tratando de alcanzar a otros – hay varios modos de abrirnos nosotros al amor de Dios y de compartir su amor con otros.



- ❖ Corona de adviento - Una corona de adviento nos ayuda a marcar el pasaje del tiempo en una manera de oración mientras nos preparamos para que el Cristo Niño nazca de nuevo en nuestros corazones y hogares.
- ❖ Discusiones Familiares y Tradiciones Familiares Navideñas – siempre que las familias comparten momentos especiales, nos enfocamos en el verdadero sentido de la Navidad.
- ❖ Tarjetas de Navidad – Si se conservan en una canasta, pueden sacar una tarjeta cada noche y se dice una oración por el “regalo” particular que esa persona trae a nuestra vida.
- ❖ Servicio a Otros – Jesús trae amor y esperanza a nuestra vida. Haciendo algo bueno por otros, compartimos el regalo de amor de Cristo.

Piénsenlo Bien: Si pudieran haber visitado al Cristo niño cuando era joven, qué regalo le hubieran dado? _____.

La Madre Teresa encontraba a Cristo en cada persona. Es alguien que tú conoces como Cristo? Quien es esa persona y como son así? _____

Cuales son las señales de Navidad y como podemos encontrar a Dios en esas señales? (Por ejemplo, Las luces de Navidad son un signo de Cristo que trae luz al mundo, etc.)

ACTUÁ: La bondad es una reflexión del amor de Dios. A quien conoces que necesite alguien que haga algo bueno por ellos? Y de qué modo puedes extender esa bondad? _____

ESCRITURA: “... y le pondrán por nombre Emmanuel que quiere decir “Dios con nosotros...” Mateo I: 22-23

RECURSOS: Libro - *Advent, Christmas and Epiphany in the Domestic Church* by Catherine and Peter Fournier (Ignatius Press)

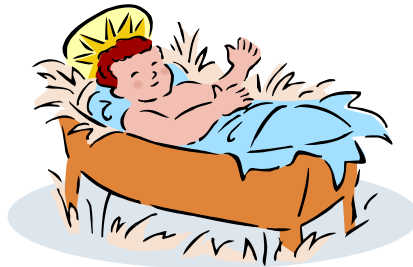


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Preparing for Christ's Birth

Jesus is with us every day and in every way. During Advent, we set time aside to prepare our minds, hearts and homes to anticipate (watch, plan and wait for) his coming. We look for specific ways to get ready to welcome the gift of the Christ Child's love into our homes and world. Prayer, activities, family discussion, reaching out to others – there are numerous ways to open ourselves to Christ's love and to share his love with others.



- Advent wreath – An advent wreath helps us to mark the passage of time in a prayerful way as we prepare for the Christ Child to be born anew in our hearts and homes.
- Family Discussions & Family Christmas traditions – whenever families share special moments, we focus on the true meaning of Christmas.
- Christmas Cards – If kept in a basket, a card can be pulled each night and a prayer said for the particular “gift” that person brings to your life.
- Service to Others – Jesus brings love and hope into our life. By doing something good for others, we share Christ's gift of love.

Think It Through If you had been able to visit the Christ child when he was young, what gift would you have given him? _____

Mother Teresa found Christ in every person. Is someone you know Christ-like? Who is that person and how are they Christ-like? _____

What are some of the signs of Christmas and how can we find God in those signs? (For example, Christmas lights are a sign of Christ who brings light to the world, etc.) _____

Act Kindness is a reflection of Christ's love. Who do you know that needs someone to be kind to them? And in what way can you extend that kindness? _____

Scripture “. . . they shall call him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us . . .” Matt 1:22-23

Resources Book: *Advent, Christmas and Epiphany in the Domestic Church* by Catherine and Peter Fournier (Ignatius Press)

Magazine: *Take Out – Family Faith on the Go* (December 2006) by Our Sunday Visitor

Website: <http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv.html>



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