



Faith Formation News

A newsletter for families of Blessed Sacrament
November 2017

Seven Ways to Celebrate Advent (Without Entering a Store)

Christmas in the media has become so much about buying things - how do we teach our children that it's really about the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, into our humble and broken world? How do we teach our children gratefulness for this greatest gift, when the world is telling them that it is the latest gadget that will fill up that God-sized hole in their heart? Here are a few ideas that can help to orient your children to the true meaning of Advent and Christmas:

1. Make some cocoa, and sit down to watch a classic Christmas movie with your family. My personal favorite is *It's A Wonderful Life*, but there are a whole lot of wonderful movies out there. Check out *The Nativity Story*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *VeggieTales: Saint Nicholas*, *Christmas Oranges*, and *The Ultimate Gift*.
2. A classic to help children learn about the joy of waiting that's part of Advent: cut out 25 strips of red and green construction paper, staple them into loops in a chain, and hang in a prominent place. Every day your child can remove a loop, bringing them one day closer to Christmas. If you really want to help your child prepare their heart for the coming of Christ, make it a rule that they have to do a kind deed before they can remove that day's loop.



3. Ask your child to act out the story of Christmas with your family's nativity set. Younger children may need a little help, while older children simply want you to be their audience. If they improvise a little on the story, that's OK - it's so wonderful to see how they interpret the story of our Lord's birth.

4. On a clear night, go for a short walk and debate which star most resembles the Star of Bethlehem. Talk about how shocked the shepherds must have been to look up into the night sky and see angels announcing the birth of Christ!

Coming Up:

Friday, Nov. 17: Ignite Event for Middle Schoolers, St.

Peter's in North St. Paul 6—9:30 pm

Sunday, Nov. 19: First Mission Trip meeting for parents and youth 5:00—6:45 pm at Blessed Sacrament

Wednesday, Nov. 22: No Faith Formation class (Thanksgiving)

Saturday, Dec. 2: 9th and 10th graders set up for St. Nicholas Brunch 10 am - Noon

Sunday, Dec. 3: Our annual St. Nicholas Brunch (details on page 8)

Wednesday, Dec. 6: Faith Formation Class, Feast of St. Nicholas, and Faith Formation Reconciliation.

Wednesday, Dec. 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a holy day of obligation. Masses at 9 am and 6:30 pm.

Wednesday, Dec. 13: Faith Formation Class

Wednesday, Dec. 20: Faith Formation Christmas Celebration 6 - 8 pm. Join us as we sing carols and put on "A Christmas Play in a Night"!

Friday, Dec. 22: Parents Night Out 6:00—9:30 pm

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Advent Wreaths

A Family Tradition

Are you looking for a way to make Advent and Christmas less about presents and more about preparing for Jesus? How about an Advent wreath? Children love to see the light from the candles increase through the four weeks of Advent as an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. The circular wreath represents God's eternity as it has no beginning or end. Evergreen wreaths (evergreens are a symbol of everlasting life) are the most traditional, but there are many different kinds of Advent wreaths, from simple to elaborate. (You can find Advent wreaths locally at St. Patrick's Guild, Leaflet Missal, and online.) The Advent wreath that fits your family is the perfect one!

Then you'll need candles. Traditionally, three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles symbolize prayer, penance and good works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. Some wreaths have a larger, central fifth candle (generally white), which is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to signify Christ's birth.

In our family we've always placed our Advent wreath on the dinner table, lit the candles , and prayed before we eat, but other families

gather around the Advent wreath at bedtime to light their candles and take a few moments out of their busy days to center themselves on Christ. You can sing a song **such as "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" "** or pray a special prayer such as the following:

A Family Advent Prayer

May the light of these candles be a sign that Christ is the center of our family and the warmth of our love. We pray that the fire of our love for Christ and for each other will grow, burning brightly in the winter darkness. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Seven Ways to Celebrate Advent *(continued from Page 1)*

5. As a family, participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to prepare your hearts for Christ's coming. Talk with your children about how God always forgives us when we go to confession, and in his mercy even sent his Son to redeem us. We have Reconciliation in our parish every Saturday from 3 - 3:45 pm, as well special Advent times of Dec. 13 from 6:30 - 8 pm, Dec. 21 from 6:30 - 8 pm, and Dec. 22 from 1—2:30 pm.
6. When you wrap presents, ask your child to help you (yes, they may not be as perfectly wrapped, but your child will feel that they're a part of the giving, not just the receiving). As you wrap each present, say a prayer for the person who will receive the gift.
7. Sing. Sing Christmas songs, both secular and sacred. Children nowadays listen to music 24/7 on their iPods, but they so seldom experience the joy of making the music themselves! Let them experience that joy that comes with singing not to impress other people, but because God created



us to raise our voices joyfully in song. When that favorite song comes on the radio while you're getting ready for dinner, dance around the kitchen and belt out the lyrics together, no matter how off-key you are. Maybe even go caroling around your block - your older neighbors will be delighted!



Instant Christmas Play

nativity

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

Celebrate Christ's Birth With Us!

Join our cast of stars as we celebrate Jesus' birth with family, fun, and faith!

Wednesday, December 20th

6:00 - 8:00 pm

(our last night of Faith Formation in December)

Students should come with parents (grandparents and siblings welcome, too) for this special celebration of Christmas. Christmas cookies and punch afterwards!

ALL SAINTS DAY 2017

We had an awesome celebration of the Feast of All Saints at Faith Formation on November 1st, with Holy Mass followed by a "Meet and Mingle with the Saints." Thank you to all the catechists and students who dressed as some of our favorite saints!



Some saintly catechists:
St. John Bosco, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Elizabeth (with baby St. Johnny B.),
St. Stephen, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and St. Joan of Arc.



St. Bernadette & St. Cecilia



St. Constantine



St. Francis of Assisi



St. Teresa of Calcutta



St. Elizabeth & St. Catherine



St. Margaret of Antioch



Amazing 10th Grade Saints: St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine, St. Felicity, St. Michael,
St. Peter, and St. Maximilian Kolbe



St. Rose of Lima, Our Mother Mary,
and St. Teresa of Avila



St. Teresa of Avila, St. Nicholas, St. Cecilia,
and St. John Paul II



St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. Michael
(in disguise)

Rosary of Light on October 25th



In honor of the Month of the Rosary and our mother Mary, one Wednesday evening we set up a rosary made up of candles in the church, and classes took turns coming in to pray a decade of the rosary. At the end of our class session, all the students came in to pray the final prayer, Hail Holy Queen, as well as sing the Magnificat.

Trip to Our Lady of Fatima Shrine



The Joyce sisters, Parker, Hayden, and Morgan, along with their mom, Jamie, joined Julie and Sarah on a trip to St. Paul's Monastery to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. We visited the shrine to Our Lady on monastery grounds, prayed the rosary, and enjoyed a tour of the monastery from Sr. Mary Lou.

Classroom Update

CGS Level I (Preschool/Kindergarten)

Lead Catechist: Sally Strasser

Asst. Catechists: Deb Tillges & Rachel Villneuve

In the Level 1 atrium for CGS we have been very busy. We participated in the rosary and after reciting those prayers, we went back to our class and talked more about the different types of prayer. We are working on the Hail Mary and the Sign of the Cross. We have been working on pouring water from one vessel to the next, and on gestures that are done during mass. We have started talking about the maps and the geography of Israel and the City that Jesus was born to prepare them for the start of Advent and the Infancy narratives. We will start this with changing the color on our prayer table and setting up an Advent wreath. We continue to get to know one another more each week.

CGS Level II (Grades 1 - 3)

Lead Catechist: Jill Kleidon

Asst. Catechists: Kathy Donovan, Kim Roush, and Joan Reese-Urban

In the last few weeks in CGS the children have learned about the articles of the Mass and the vestments of the priest. We practiced matching the picture of the item to the word. They also learned what the item is for, like the lavabo, the bowl Father washes his hands in, and the ciborium, the vessel we keep the consecrated host: Jesus, who is kept in the tabernacle. Joanie and Kathy worked with the children on the significance of the Our Father. Your children had some great insights to add to the discussion. Last week the children worked on learning about Israel. They learned about the waterways, mountains and cities that were significant as Jesus traveled through them during his ministry.

Grade 4

Catechist: Nicole Villneuve

In our last three sessions we've been learning about how the Holy Spirit guides the Church, how our pope and bishops are in line from St. Peter and the apostles, how God has made us to be with Him in **heaven, and about God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.**

Grade 5

Catechist: Joe Wappes

These last few weeks, we have been learning about Creation. Through the two Creation accounts in the Bible, that God created us because he loves us and wants us to live in heaven with him. Also, we know that all humans are good because they are created in the image and likeness of God, and can think and choose as God does.

Grade 6

Catechists Cathy Shannon and Carrie Stout

The 6th grade students are continuing their exploration of the nature of God. They learned about the Holy Trinity, with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all a part of one God. The students learned an equation for the Holy Trinity to explain how they are related : $1+1+1=1$. The class learned some verses from the Hebrew prayer, the Shema, which states that there is only one God. Last week the students learned about Creation and read the first chapter of Genesis. They learned that we were created by God, in His image, and that He loves us. God wants us to be with Him but has given us the gift of Free Will so that we have the choice to take actions which bring us closer to **Him or away from Him. This week's class will be our Safety Lesson.** The students will learn about cyber

safety and on line gaming etiquette. Our class saint will be St. Cecilia.

Grade 7 & 8

Catechist: Peter Vande Hey

As we learn about morality based on the Ten **Commandments, we've examined how we honor God, how we honor our family, and how we respect life at all ages. Tonight we'll begin preparing a Ten Commandments play to put on for the 4th grade class in two weeks!**

Grade 9

Catechists: Tom Regan and Jennifer Tuckner

Class 3: History of salvation: creation, fall and rescue. Mary is the new Eve.

Class 4: Proofs for the existence of God from science and reason. Nothing comes from nothing. The leap of faith.

Class 5: Who was Jesus, a Liar, Lunatic or the Lord? Why did He come?

Grade 10

Catechists: Sarah Kalonick and Sydney March

Recently, the Confirmation class looked at the beauty and importance of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Highlighting that there are 168 hours in a week, it seemed much less difficult to make one of those hours – attending Sunday Mass – a priority in our lives! We also learned about the Sacrament of Holy Orders and vocational discernment. God has a beautiful plan for all of our lives and as we start seeking God, Our Father in prayer, we can discover our own particular vocation. Connor McGinnis, a young Seminarian, joined our **class and shared his own story of seeking God's plan for his life.**

Sunday Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Lead Catechist: Julie Taylor

Asst. Catechist: Renae Kuettel

Our class on Sunday mornings has grown to seven **students, and they're really adapting well to the quiet rhythm of the atrium, becoming more independent in choosing their work. We start each class with prayer and end with prayer, and in between we've learned about the map of Israel, the Sign of the Cross, the vestments of the priest, Psalm 23, and a second presentation on the altar. Our favorite song is "Jesus Loves Me" which we sing and do in sign language! In the coming weeks we'll learn about Advent and the Nativity narratives.**

PRAYER

MORALS

SACRAMENTS

CREED

Sharing the riches of the Catholic Faith

eVANGELIUM

Wednesdays
6:30—7:45 pm
Beginning October 11th
Blessed Sacrament
Robertson Room
Cost: Free

Join Fr. John Paul Erickson as he leads an exploration of the four pillars of the Catholic faith through art in this amazing course:

- Explore the full panorama of the Catholic faith using the Evangelium series.
- Survey the enduring realities of our faith through its most beautiful art and music.
- This course is for all adults, from those new to the faith to those with a lifetime's experience.
- Sessions take place on evenings when Faith Formation is in session.

No registration necessary.
Come for one session or come for them all!

*For more info, contact Julie Taylor
at 651-738-0677, ext. 14.*

Pancake Breakfast with St. Nicholas
Sunday, December 3
Blessed Sacrament Church
Breakfast served 9:30 - 12:30 pm
Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Sausage and Beverages



\$8.00 Adults (Age 13 and up) \$5.00 Children (Ages 6 to 12, under 6 free)
Have your picture taken with St. Nicholas! Shoes off so St. Nicholas will leave you a treat!

Sponsored by the Father Finley Knights of Columbus #4374
Proceeds benefit our Parish Faith Formation program!

Parents Night Out

Friday, December 22, 6—9:30 pm



Parish teens (with adult supervision) will lead a night of Advent fun for students in Preschool — Grade 5, so parents can have some relaxing time or go out to finish their Christmas shopping! This free night includes Christmas crafts, cookie decorating, music, and a Christmas movie!

High School students will be activity leaders. Grades 6 - 8: come join in the fun as assistant leaders!

*To sign your child(ren) up for Parents Night Out,
please contact Sarah Kalonick at (651) 738-0677, ext. 17
or skalonick@blessedsacramentsp.org.*