



TOPIC: Preparing for Advent & The Spiritual & Corporal Works of Mercy

REFERENCES:

Is 7:14, 9:1-2
Lk 1:26-56, 6:36
Rev 22:17, 20
CCC: nos. 524, 2447

GOALS:

- Make a plan for Advent by considering how Mary experienced the first Advent and how she prepared for the birth of Jesus.
- Reflect on the Second Joyful Mystery of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth.
- Make a plan to practice the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy during Advent.

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Spirit of Knowledge, bless us and grant us the grace of loving the Church and finding in her a sure guide for truth and service to God's will, especially in our relationships at home and in our extended families.

When you think of the term “Advent”, what two words come to mind?

Advent is a time when we prepare our hearts to celebrate our Lord and Savior Jesus' first coming in the mystery of His Incarnation and in His birth at Christmas and to renew our hope in Jesus' second coming. We look to the first Advent to learn from Mary how to prepare ourselves by doing loving works of mercy for one another.

Family Conversation

- (For Parents) When you were growing up, how did your family prepare for Christmas during Advent?
- (For whole family) What are your favorite things to do during Advent?

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- Open your Bibles and read Luke 1:26-56 aloud.

● Who was the first person to know that God's Son was coming to earth to save us and to prepare for His coming?

● How did Mary prepare?

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After Mary learned from the angel Gabriel that she and Elizabeth were both going to give birth, Mary traveled for several days (possibly a whole week) "in haste" to get to her cousin Elizabeth's house. As Luke's Gospel relates, there was great joy in the greeting of Mary and Elizabeth, and Mary's haste in visiting her cousin was surely inspired by the good news shared by the angel Gabriel, who confirmed that "nothing will be impossible for God" (Lk 1:37). We also know that Elizabeth was already six months pregnant, and a lot older than Mary. Physically, her pregnancy would make it more difficult for Elizabeth to be able to take care of her husband Zechariah, herself and her home. So, Mary went to help care for her cousin Elizabeth and "remained with her about three months" before returning home (Lk 1:56). Together the two women rejoiced about how loving God is and meditated on the mysteries they were experiencing. Surely they prayed for their unborn babies, for themselves and for many others in need of prayer. We can imagine that Mary, in a spirit of great joy, did many works of mercy to prepare for the coming of the Savior during that first Advent, when they were waiting for Jesus' birth. We can all learn from what she did and follow her example, because there is no other human being who knows more about how to create a place in one's heart for Jesus than His Mother and our Mother, Mary. Let's make a plan for preparing our own hearts for Jesus this Advent.



The Solemnity of Christ the King...

The Solemnity of Christ the King was originally instituted as a feast day by Pope Pius XI in 1925 in response to growing secularism in nations and individuals. Among other things, the Pope wanted to encourage all the faithful to keep Christ at the center of their minds, hearts, wills, bodies, and souls, so as to allow Christ to reign as He should in our lives, leading us to true freedom. Pope Paul VI elevated the feast to a solemnity (a feast of the highest order) and moved the celebration to the final Sunday in Ordinary Time (the last Sunday of the Church year before Advent begins) under the title of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

How will your family celebrate this Solemnity?

A nativity scene featuring a figurine of Mary in a red and yellow dress, a figurine of Joseph in a brown robe with a staff, and a baby Jesus in a manger, all set against a background of straw.

Write down as many Advent and Christmas traditions as you can within 1 minute.

Topic: Prayerfully Preparing for Christmas
& Grace and Holiness in Family Life

A background image of a nativity scene, showing Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus in a manger.

REFERENCES:

Sacred Scripture


Is 9:5-6

Mt 1:18-25

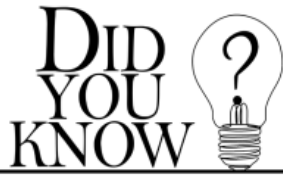
Lk 1:28; 2:1-21

Goals:

- **Lectio Divina and Family Rosary:** Families will be introduced to and guided in an Ignatian meditation on the Third Joyful Mystery of the Birth of Our Lord
- Families will learn about and celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, reflecting on the presence of grace and the call to holiness in family life
- Families will learn about and prepare Advent/Christmas symbols in their homes

A nativity scene featuring a figurine of Mary in a red and yellow dress, a figurine of Joseph in a brown robe with a staff, and a baby Jesus in a manger, all set against a background of straw.

What is the best gift God has ever given to you?



Our Lady of Guadalupe

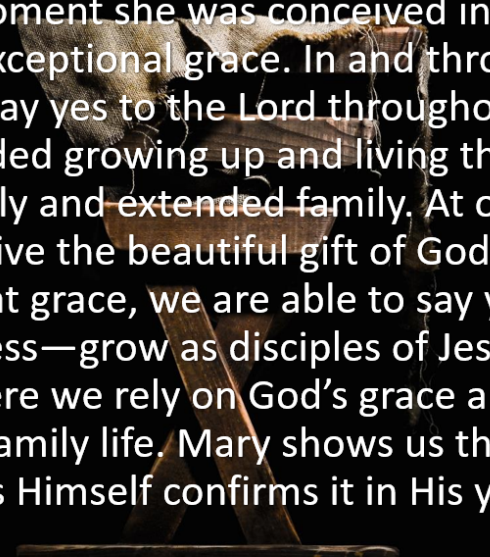
In 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego (now St. Juan Diego) outside of Mexico City on the Hill of Tepeyac, a place in the town of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the Americas. Her feast day is celebrated on December 12. Take a little time together to learn more below.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!



How will your family celebrate this feast day
(on December 12)?

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Mary, from the moment she was conceived in St. Anne's womb, received exceptional grace. In and through that grace, she continued to say yes to the Lord throughout her entire life, and this included growing up and living the call to holiness with her own family and extended family. At our own baptisms, we receive the beautiful gift of God's grace as well. In and through that grace, we are able to say yes to the Lord and grow in holiness—grow as disciples of Jesus. The first and primary place where we rely on God's grace and live the call to holiness is in our family life. Mary shows us this truth in her own life, and Jesus Himself confirms it in His years living in the Holy Family.