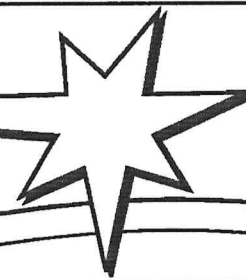


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

December 2024

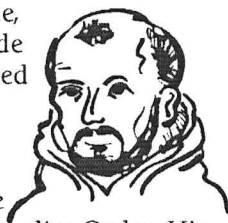
Our Lady of Perpetual Help



Thoughtful Moments

St. John of the Cross

Born in Castile, Spain, St. Juan de Yepes experienced poverty and suffering throughout his life. In 1563, he entered the Carmelite Order. His friend, St. Teresa of Ávila, encouraged and supported him in reforming the Order, even when he experienced intense persecution for them. He was even imprisoned by his religious brothers for nine months. From this experience came the mystical poetry and inspired writings on the interior life that made him a Doctor of the Church.



True joy is found in Jesus

"Christ came to bring joy: joy to children, joy to parents, joy to families and to friends... In a true sense, joy is the keynote of the Christian message and the recurring motif of the Gospels." Pope St. John Paul II

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).



Embrace the promise of Advent and the wonder of Christmas

In the flurry of holiday preparations, adults can overlook the promise of Advent and the wonder of Christmas. Children never do. This year, try to experience Advent and Christmas through the eyes of a child.

Tie gifts with heartstrings. Give gifts that are simple and heartfelt. Craft personalized bookmarks for book lovers, homemade bread or cookies, or combine Epsom salts, essential oils, and natural ingredients in a small bag for a spa gift.

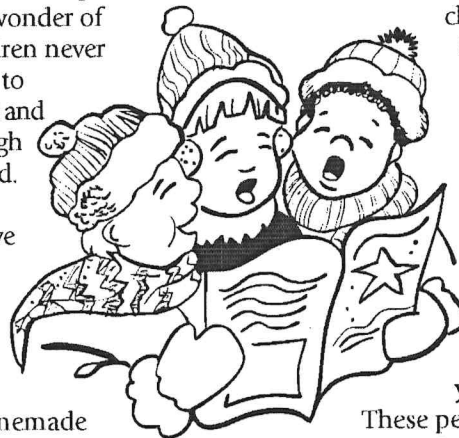
Offer your hearth. Young children know that everyone needs a friend. Yet, the holidays can be lonely for those separated from their loved ones. Invite anyone who needs a place to go to share the warmth of the season with you.

Listen for peace. Watch your favorite family Advent and Christmas classics and skip the ads. Or rent movies that inspire you spiritually. Better yet, turn off the TV, computer, and phone, and revel in the gift of silence.

Await the Babe. As a family, spend quiet moments in prayer or before the Eucharist as often as you can during Advent.

These peaceful pauses can convey to children the true meaning of Christmas.

Sing like the angels. Check local community events for concerts, Messiah sing-alongs, or other musical celebrations that lift the spirit. Or organize a caroling party and sing with all the joy of the season.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why does the priest wear purple in Advent?

Purple – or violet – is traditionally associated with penance and penitential seasons such as Advent, a season marked by hope, simplicity, reflection, and preparation. This season calls us to



repent of our sins and strive to become the individuals God intends us to be. It is a time to ready our hearts for Jesus' arrival, both at Christmas and at the end of time. Purple is also a royal color, reminding us that the King is coming to rule our hearts!

Lessons from the Child in the manger

The image of Jesus lying in a manger is more than a beloved Christmas scene. Its lessons resonate all year long:

Generosity: In Jesus, God gave us everything. When children are tempted to keep the best for themselves, remind them of Jesus in the manger. God's gifts are meant to be shared, not just during the holidays, but in every season.

Humility: Jesus, the King of Kings, chose to be born in a humble stable. This was a profound



choice to be accessible to all of us. When children are hesitant to serve others, the Infant in the manger stands as a gentle reminder. God humbled Himself to serve us (Mark 10:45). How can we serve Him?

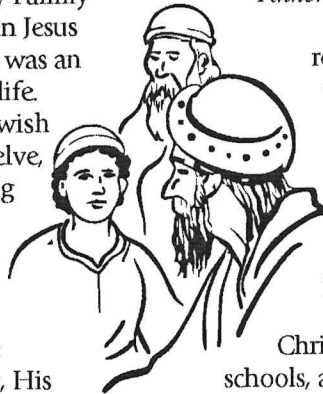
Love: True love seeks closeness. God, our divine Lover, came to us as a baby so that He could draw near to us, and we could draw near to Him. God has come close to us (James 4:8) and remains with us always in the Eucharist (Matthew 28:20), a testament of His boundless love.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 2:41-52, Going about the Father's business

In this reading, the Holy Family traveled to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. This was an important event in Jesus' life. Then and now, when a Jewish boy reaches the age of twelve, he is celebrated as entering manhood in a ceremony known as a Bar Mitzvah.

Afterwards, the family started home but Jesus stayed behind. After three days of anxious searching, His parents discovered Him in the Temple, talking with the teachers, who were amazed by Him. Mary and Joseph were shocked: How could He just wander off? Jesus explained He was "about his



Father's business."

This was the first time Jesus referred to His identity as God's only Son. He realized His duties to His heavenly Father. Meanwhile, He returned obediently to Nazareth and fulfilled His duties to His earthly parents.

What can a parent do?

Christians live in neighborhoods, schools, and communities. We are subject to legitimate earthly authority but we can grow in holiness wherever God places us. Find ways to teach children to be holy while still living in the world.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 1 - First Sunday in Advent. We anticipate Christ's birth and His coming on the last day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of the light of Christ.

December 7 - St. Ambrose of Milan (397). St. Ambrose was an effective pastor, bishop, and teacher, and was devoted to care of the poor in Milan. He guarded the Church against the Arians, who denied Jesus' divinity.

December 9 - Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

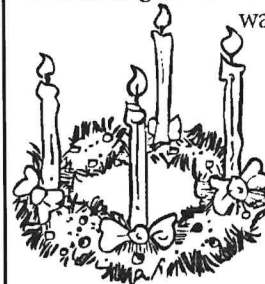
We commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without original sin, preparing Mary to be the Mother of God. Pope Pius IX declared this doctrine in 1854. This year, it will be observed on December 9 and is a holy day of obligation.

December 21 - St. Peter Canisius (1597). Born in Holland, he became a priest in the Jesuit Order and worked through his writings and teachings to safeguard the Catholic faith after the Reformation. His work, *The Catechism*, is still used today.



Parent TALK

Our holidays were so hectic, I stopped enjoying them. Instead of celebrating on Christmas morning I



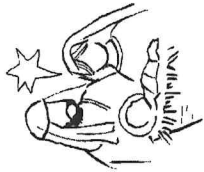
wanted to stay in bed. Two years ago, I was so cranky and tired, I almost ruined everyone else's day.

So last year I asked the guests we expected for Christmas dinner to each bring a side dish. That way I wouldn't have to spend the whole day cooking. Next, I drew up a list of our closest friends and family and bought small gifts for them, and the children and I spent a weekend baking cookies and wrapping gift baskets. People loved the homemade touch. Finally, I put the children's bedtime off each night by 15 minutes. We spent that time lighting the Advent wreath and praying the Rosary.




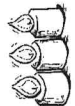
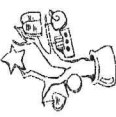
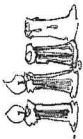





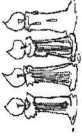


On Christmas morning, I cooked a special breakfast, sang joyfully at Mass, and celebrated Christmas Day. I finally had my blessed family Christmas.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
Success Publishing & Media, LLC
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
<http://www.partnersinfaith.com>
(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)



Family Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 December Buy or make an Advent wreath and bless it. Light the violet candle every night this week.</p> 	<p>2  Display the empty Nativity scene. Gradually add figures during Advent but leave out the Holy Family.</p>	<p>3 St. Francis Xavier St. Francis was a Jesuit priest who spread the Good News to distant lands. At dinner, pray especially for Christian missionaries overseas.</p>	<p>4 Assign "Advent Angels." Draw names at random and encourage good works in secret.</p> 	<p>5  At dinner, ask God to bring your family closer together and closer to Him this Advent.</p>	<p>6 Attend First Friday Mass together or make time to visit the Blessed Sacrament in honor of Jesus' Sacred Heart.</p>	<p>7  Decorate a Jesse Tree and discuss its meaning. Learn more at www.usccb.org.</p>
<p>8 Light two violet candles nightly this week. Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."</p> 	<p>9 The Immaculate Conception Attend Mass together and offer a family Rosary for our country.</p>	<p>10 Pick a person or situation in the news and pray for them.</p> 	<p>11 Call or email your parish office and ask how your family can help with upcoming preparations for Christmas.</p>	<p>12 Our Lady of Guadalupe Put a vase of flowers before a statue of Mary and pray, "Hail, Holy Queen" to celebrate.</p>	<p>13 Family Game Night! Take a break from the holiday preparations tonight. Relax, eat pizza, and play games.</p>	<p>14  Get your souls ready for Christmas. Attend Confession as a family and celebrate God's mercy.</p>
<p>15 Gaudete Sunday Light two violet candles and the rose one for joy. Have an after-dinner treat to celebrate.</p> 	<p>16 Before bed, gather around a Crucifix and pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be for any family intentions.</p>	<p>17 Christmas is in nine days! Place a candle or light in the window for the Christ Child. Light it every night until Christmas.</p>	<p>18  "Love is patient, love is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Encourage everyone to practice patience today.</p>	<p>19 Offer a Chaplet of Divine Mercy for those who have lost loved ones this year. Find the prayers here: https://www.usccb.org/prayers/chaplet-divine-mercy.</p>	<p>20  Share favorite Christmas family memories over hot chocolate and cookies.</p>	<p>21 The King is almost here! Declutter the house so it's nice for Christmas.</p>
<p>22 Light all the candles in the wreath. Thank God for all the graces you've received this Advent.</p> 	<p>23  Reveal Advent Angels! Read the Good News the Angel shared in <i>Luke 1:26-38</i>.</p>	<p>24 Place Mary and Joseph in the Nativity scene. Add grass or straw to the manger to get it ready for the Baby.</p>	<p>25  First thing in the morning, place Jesus in the manger and sing, "Joy to the World!"</p>	<p>26 "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (<i>Luke 2:1-7</i>).</p>		