

2020



the
ULTIMATE
guide to
advent

by the catholic telegraph



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01

*a quick glance
at advent*



what is advent?

Advent is a liturgical season during which we prepare for and anticipate Christ's birth.

first day of advent

NOVEMBER 29

first sunday

four sundays of advent

26 days of advent

gaudete sunday

DECEMBER 13

third sunday of advent

last day of advent

DECEMBER 24

christmas eve!



4 candles of the advent wreath

- WEEK 1: **VIOLET FOR HOPE**
- WEEK 2: **VIOLET FOR FAITH**
- WEEK 3: **ROSE FOR JOY**
- WEEK 4: **VIOLET FOR PEACE**

Other important feast days during advent!



DECEMBER 6
FEAST OF ST. NICK



DECEMBER 8
**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION**



DECEMBER 12
**FEAST OF
OUR LADY OF
GUADALUPE**



DECEMBER 13
**FEAST OF
ST. LUCY**



02

*advent music for
every occasion*





Enjoy these four hand-picked and curated playlists for your Advent activities. Click the playlist title below for quick and free access.

1 *music for baking cookies*



A well-rounded Advent playlist filled with Christmas classics and some holiday favorites the whole family will love.

2 *music for studying for final exams*



Perhaps you're a studying student or just need some music to help you focus on your work. This music is instrumental, allowing you to concentrate while still enjoying the seasonal sounds of Advent.

3 *music for prayer*



This reflective music will help calm your mind and soul for prayer-time.

4 *music for a cozy night in*



This playlist, a mixture of folk and singer/songwriter, will make you feel warm and cozy in the midst of the darker, colder days of December.



03

*diy advent
calendar*



MAKING CATHOLIC MEMORIES

BY WAYNE & MARIANNE TOPP

One movie that always seems to find its way onto our TV many times throughout the Advent season is **The Star**. It's a cute, animated version of the strenuous journey Mary and Joseph take to Bethlehem. The story is told primarily by the donkey, whose heart is changed as he travels with Joseph and Mary and witnesses their love, peace and trust along the way.



As we watch Mary's joyful willingness to do whatever God asks of her, no matter how difficult, and the way Joseph, too, is willing to do all he can to provide for and protect Mary, it makes us reflect on what it means to do the will of God in our own lives.



This year, in preparation for Christmas, we are saying, "yes" to our Lord, just as the Holy Family did, and joining them on their journey. While it was long and certainly full of struggles and discomfort, Mary and Joseph never lost sight of what it meant to serve God by loving one another through simple everyday acts and prayer. That is what each one of us is called to do as well. By consciously performing simple acts of selfless love and service with the same joy and hope that Mary and Joseph had, we can prepare a dwelling place for the Newborn King in our homes and hearts.





Make the Journey to Bethlehem Advent Calendar



supplies

- Empty wall space
- Scissors
- Masking tape
- Large sheet of paper/poster board/box
- Making Catholic Memories Advent Craft Printable Glue



directions

1. From the **Advent Craft Printable** cut out the 25 stones, Mary, Joseph, the donkey and the Star of Bethlehem.
2. Create a path with the stones on an empty wall space, ending at Bethlehem. Place Mary, Joseph and the donkey in front of the first stone, and the Star of Bethlehem after the last stone.
3. Each stone has one small act of love written on it that you and your family can do together each day of Advent.
4. At the end of each day, remove the stone and move the Holy Family forward. **TIP: Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus need you to shower them with love to strengthen them on their journey, so don't move them until you have completed the task for the day!**
5. Place the removed stones in a baggy or envelope during the 25 days of the journey.
6. On day 26, take the stones you have collected and glue them to a large paper, poster board or box to form a shelter for Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus.
7. Cut out the remaining nativity scene pieces.
8. On Christmas morning, glue baby Jesus in the manger and sing "Silent Night" and "Happy Birthday" to our precious King.



RECIPES

white christmas pie

(a favorite passed from godmother, to mother, to daughter, to you!)

Ingredients

- 1 baked pie shell
- ½ c sugar
- ¼ c flour (I sub gluten free flour)
- ¼ t salt
- 1 t white vanilla
- 1 ¾ c milk (I use coconut milk)
- 1 pk (1 T) unflavored gelatin
- ½ c whipping cream (I sub So Delicious dairy free frozen whip)
- 3 egg whites
- 1 c coconut

Directions

1. Combine gelatin, sugar, flour, and salt in a sauce pan.
2. Stir the milk into the mixture.
3. Cook over low heat, stirring until the mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and cool.
4. When slightly thick, beat with a mixer until smooth.
5. In a separate, chilled bowl, whip cream and add vanilla (or use already-prepared frozen non-dairy frozen whipped cream).
6. Fold in coconut.
7. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until foamy; beat until stiff peaks form.
8. Fold in the egg white meringue and coconut mixture into the gelatin mixture.
9. Fold into pie shell.
10. Chill until set, at least 2 hours.





04

*tct top 12:
kids advent
movies*



advent movies | for kids



1. The Star (2017)

A brave donkey and his animal friends become the unsung heroes of the first Christmas. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"Baby shower? What's a baby going to do with frankincense, silly camel? It's a birthday party!"

2. Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)

Based on C.S. Lewis' popular children's book, four children venture into the magical land of Narnia and face down the White Witch. [TRAILER](#)



Our favorite quote:

"Always winter and never Christmas!"

3. The Very First Noel (2006)

The story of the birth of Jesus Christ from the views of the three kings. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"Just beneath your Christmas tree, with all the blinking lights aglow, sits a small reminder, of a birthday, long ago. So find yourself a comfy spot, and listen as I tell, the merry Christmas story, of the very first, Noel."

advent movies | for youth



4. The Best Christmas Pageant Ever (1983)

A teacher puts on a Christmas pageant and casts the worst-behaved children in school as the stars. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"I know a name. I'd call it 'Revenge at Bethlehem.'"

5. Chasing the Star (2017)

Three Magi journey through the unforgiving desert in search of the Newborn King. [TRAILER](#)



Our favorite quote:

"All I'm saying is that if it becomes a choice between living and dying, at least we will have a say."

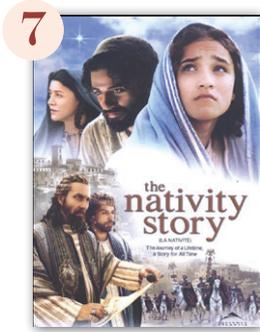
6. No Ordinary Shepherd (2014)

A lonely, young, deformed shepherd boy thoughtfully considers the significance of the day. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"Haven't you heard that Jesus goes about this land healing the lame and opening the eyes of the blind?"

advent movies | for family

**7. A The Nativity Story (2006)**

A drama that focuses on the period in Mary and Joseph's life where they journeyed to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"There is a will for this child greater than my fear of what they may do."

8. Joyeux Noel (2005)

In December 1914, an unofficial Christmas truce on the Western Front allowed soldiers from opposing sides of WWI to gain insight into each other's way of life. [TRAILER](#)

**Our favorite quote:**

"Tonight, these men were drawn to that altar like it was a fire in the middle of winter. Even those who aren't devout came to warm themselves."

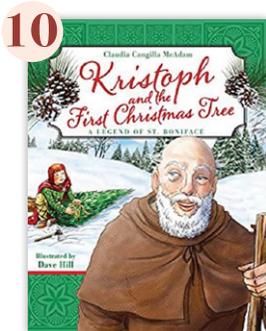
**9. Disney's A Christmas Carol (2009)**

An animated retelling of Charles Dickens' classic novel about a Victorian-era miser on a journey of self-redemption and finding joy through his past, present and future. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round - apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that - as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time."

advent movies | on formed.org

**10. Kristoph & The First Christmas Tree**

On Christmas Eve in the year 722, a young orphan accompanies the missionary priest Boniface through the German countryside on their way to the first Christmas the boy will celebrate outside the orphanage. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"The brave action of Boniface changed the men's hearts, and began the tradition of bringing evergreen trees into the home at Christmastime."

11. Brother Francis: The Days of Advent

Children teach us about Saint Lucy. [TRAILER](#)

**Our favorite quote:**

"St. Lucy showed us how we should love God, more than our own life."

**12. The True Story of Saint Nicholas**

Learn the story of the man known for his kindness, generosity and gift-giving. [TRAILER](#)

Our favorite quote:

"Nicholas's parents died during the plague, they left Nicholas a substantial inheritance. He used his inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering."



05

*advent prayers
with the
infant Jesus*



What do you think Jesus' laugh sounded like? Do you think he snorted or giggled? Was it a hearty guffaw or a milder chuckle?

What would it be like to hear Jesus when he was only three- or four-years-old, laughing as St. Joseph played a game with him?

These kinds of reflections are exactly what you'll find when you pray through the Stations of the Infant Jesus. You may have prayed through the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Well, the Stations of the Infant Jesus, originally promulgated by St. Alphonsus Liguori, are kind of like that, except they focus on the incarnation, birth and infancy of Jesus.

Here are the 12 Stations of the Infant Jesus, adapted from St. Alphonsus Liguori's original list:

1. **Jesus is incarnate**
2. **Jesus is born**
3. **Mary feeds Jesus**
4. **Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes**
5. **Jesus is adored by the Magi**
6. **Jesus is presented in the Temple**
7. **Jesus flees into Egypt**
8. **Jesus cries**
9. **Jesus is carried by his Mother**
10. **Jesus plays with St. Joseph**
11. **Jesus learns to walk**
12. **Jesus sleeps**

These stations are an incredible way to step back, slow down and pray through the simple and intimate moments of the child Jesus. There is beauty in that simplicity worth praying through.

We don't learn much about Jesus' early life from scripture. We know about the presentation in the temple, fleeing to Egypt, Jesus being found in His father's house when he was around 12-years-old – but scripture doesn't talk much about His daily life. These moments are like the treasured things that Mary, "kept in the silence of her heart" (Luke 2:19). With the Stations of the Infant Jesus, we are invited to step into this unknown time in the life of Christ.



God came to us as an infant – tiny, vulnerable and needy. He came in the least threatening way possible. He became small and came close.

Advent is a time to embrace that closeness. You and your family can use these Stations to do just that. Take an hour, spending five minutes on each Station. Speak together about each moment, imagining what happened. Or, try one station per night for 12 nights. Perhaps pick your favorites and talk to God about that moment in His life, and share with Him the special moments in your own life.

To help you in your prayer, we have created printable Stations of the Infant Jesus. You can access them by [clicking here](#). These Stations are beautiful as-is, but they are also a great activity for the family. Let the kids color the Stations, then hang them up around your house.

Advent is an incredible time to step back and be simple. Cuddle with your children and read a Bible story. Make a warm meal on a cold night and share everything you are thankful for. Talk with your spouse about your best memories from the past year. We hope these Stations will be an opportunity for you to get close, slow down and get to know Jesus this Advent.

RECIPES

meat and cheese loaf

(for party crackers!)



Ingredients

- 1 log of braunschweiger
- ketchup
- cream cheese
- mayonnaise

Optional: garnishes such as olive slices, or carrots

Directions

1. Mix by hand braunschweiger with ketchup to pate, spreadable consistency. (Kroger carries authentic braunschweiger). **Mixing by hand works best because hand warmth helps the mix.**
2. Form into a log shape on the dish on which it will be served.
3. Mix by hand cream cheese with mayonnaise to thick but spreadable consistency.
4. Using a small spatula or spreading knife “ice” the log with the white mixture. Use plenty of the cheese so the log is white and the red color does not show through.
5. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
6. Decorate the log as you wish with garnish such as olive slices, carrots, etc. **Serve with favorite crackers**





06

*the plants
of advent*

(and the deeper meaning too!)



When we think about Advent, we rarely spend much time thinking about the greenery used to decorate for the season, but each plant is packed with symbolism and can help you dive deeper into the meaning of Advent.

rosemary

During Jesus' time rosemary was a common, utilitarian herb of the Middle East. It was used for cooking, enjoyed for its fragrance - and even used to repel insects! Rosemary symbolizes remembrance and is a beautiful reminder of the Holy Family's life and journey when displayed in your home around Christmastime.



paperwhites

Fill a mason jar with water, submerge the paper-white bulb and watch it grow and bloom small, white flowers. Paper-whites are symbols of patience - something we all need as we await the birth of Jesus. Start growing your flowers on the First Sunday of Advent and watch them grow! They should bloom around Christmas day - perfect timing for celebrating the birth of Jesus.

holly

In the Christmas carol "The Holly and the Ivy," the lyrics use holly as a metaphor for the birth and death of Christ: "The holly bears a berry as red as any blood. And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good... The holly bears a prickle as sharp as any thorn, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas Day in the morn." Decorate with holly in your home to symbolize the true meaning of Christmas.





christmas tree

Did you know the Christmas tree has a place in Advent? The tree is evergreen, pointing to the eternal life that Jesus won for us. Whether you prefer artificial trees for practical reasons or love the smell of real pine, set up your tree and crown your it with a Christmas star as a reminder of everlasting life with Jesus.

christmas cactus

Native to Brazil, these plants bloom around Christmastime. Legend has it that a Jesuit, Father Jose, was on mission to teach the Bolivian natives about Christianity. He struggled to gain their trust, so on Christmas Eve he prayed and asked for God's aid and direction. Suddenly, he heard the voices of the villagers singing a hymn he taught them. Father Jose sprang to his feet and was overjoyed to see the villagers carrying beautiful red and pink blooms to the church for Baby Jesus. Sit a Christmas cactus in your window, turn on a Christmas song, and be reminded of the joy that comes with celebrating Jesus' birthday.



pear tree

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me...a partridge in a pear tree. While the symbolism behind the gifts in the song "The 12 Days of Christmas" has been debated, one theory suggests that the tree and bird symbolize the Virgin and Child. Like Jesus, partridges will protect their young, even if it means their own death. Next time you sing the famous Christmas tune, let it be a reminder to pray!



lily

Christmas lilies are white, symbolizing peace. In Christian art, the lily is often used to symbolize the purity, virginity, and the bright and radiant soul of the Virgin Mary. While lilies are often hard to come by in the winter months, consider hanging a painting of a lily in your home. When you encounter it, pray a “Hail Mary.”



poinsettia

One of the most popular altar decorations, poinsettias come in many colors: white (symbolizing purity, innocence and peace), red (representing the blood of Christ), green (symbolizing everlasting life) and gold or silver (representing the Star of Bethlehem). When you attend Mass this Christmas (in person or streaming), take a moment to look at the poinsettias and call to mind their important meanings.



christmas rose

The legend of the Christmas rose says that a shepherd girl saw the wise men and shepherds on their way to see Jesus. She wanted to join them, but didn't have a gift to bring. An angel appeared to her and told her to look into the snow where a single long-stemmed red rose was shooting up from the ground. She picked the rose and gave it to Baby Jesus. Consider adorning your Christmas dinner table with red roses. As you pray before your meal, remember God's gift to us in the form of the infant Jesus.





07

*6 events you
don't have to skip
this advent*



Let's not mention the five-letter, all-caps "C" word, and just agree that this Advent might look different from years past. While some activities might change formats or be canceled altogether, here are six sure-fire activities you and your family can participate in this Advent.

1



Christmas Nights of Lights at Coney Island (Cincinnati)

This is one of the most amazing displays of Christmas lights you'll ever see – and you get to drive through it! Turn off the headlights, tune into the synced up Christmas carols on the radio station, and drive through two-and-a-half miles of Christmas lights. | [Website](#)

2



LM&M Railroad's Holiday Express (Lebanon)

Get your family together and enjoy a train car all to yourself - or nearly all to yourself! - for a 45 minute festive ride through Lebanon. You'll be visited by an elf who is ready to share stories about the North Pole, and after the ride is over, you'll have a socially-distant visit with Santa. They may not be serving hot chocolate this year, but they'll still have cookies - individually wrapped of course! Advanced tickets required. | [Website](#)



3



PNC Festival of Lights

See 4 million holiday lights as you walk around the jolly and festive Cincinnati Zoo. You can also enjoy a North Polar Express train ride that will take you throughout the park, and the Wild Lights Show on Swan Lake. Santa is also available for socially-distanced visits. Reservations required, and so are masks! | [Website](#)

4



Live From Music Hall: Holiday Pops

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Pops can't hold in-person events right now, so they teamed up and began a series of digital events live from the stage at Music Hall. At 8 p.m. ET on Sat., Dec. 12, John Morris Russell and the Pops will perform the last digital event of the year, bringing the sweet sounds of the most wonderful time of the year right into your home. Can't make it that night? The performance is recorded and will be made available for three weeks after the show date. | [Website](#)

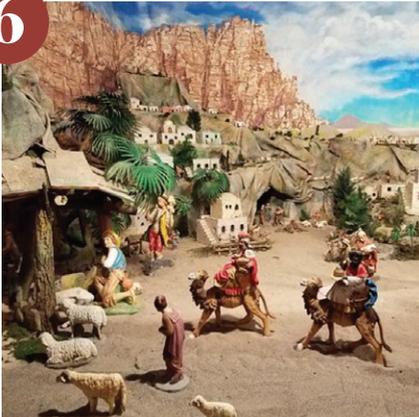
5



University of Dayton's Creche Collection (Dayton)

While UD has suspended the annual display of creches for this year, they are adding a special digital exhibit entitled, "On Paper: Nativity Imagery from the Marian Library." This digital exhibit will feature rare books, holy cards, stamps, paper creches, and more from all over the world. Get cozy with the family, make some hot chocolate, pull up the link, and tour imagery from Jesus' birth in the comfort of your own home! | [Website](#)

6



The Nativity Experience brought to you by the Comboni Missionaries (Cincinnati)

Still open, though without the cookies or live music past participants are accustomed to, the annual Nativity Experience features an animated nativity, tours of the Mission Museum and Nativity displays from around the world. Only one group at a time and pre-registering is required. | [Website](#)



RECIPES

two advent drinks

(but not for the kids!)

Cranberry Gin Fizz

¼ cup Ginger Ale

¼ cup cranberry juice

1 shot of Gin

Shake and serve with candied cranberries and a sprig of rosemary!

Candied Cranberries

Mason jar and lid

Bag of fresh cranberries

2 cups of sugar

½ cup of water

Dash of bitters (optional...we recommend cacao bitters!)

Boil water and 3/4s the sugar into a simple syrup, coat the cranberries in the simple syrup, let it dry mostly, then throw in the mason jar with the rest of the sugar and shake. Store in a mason jar for 2+ weeks!





08

get wrapping
(homemade wrapping paper!)





In a year in which we've all been encouraged to stay home, let's wrap up this unconventional year with unconventional wrapping paper that may already be waiting and ready in your home!



Remember covering your school textbooks with **grocery bags**? Put those grocery bags to good use once more! Some grocery stores even roll out holiday designs.

Kraft paper can be purchased inexpensively and in bulk. There's something classically beautiful and, dare I say, musical about brown paper packages tied up with string. Bonus, have the kids use cookie cutters, stamps or even a pine cone dipped in paint to create your own wrapping paper pattern!

Packing paper can be reused to serve its original purpose as padding inside a gift or it can become wrapping paper with a little extra texture.

Make your own Good News this holiday season! During Advent, collect **newspaper pages** with festive headlines or eye catching photos (but make sure you only use newspaper pages on boxed gifts so the ink doesn't rub off on the gift itself). For smaller gifts, your favorite page of The Catholic Telegraph magazine will work too! Who knew gift wrap could be beautiful, educational and evangelizing?



get wrapping | with fabric

If you'd like to reuse these pieces of fabric for your next gift-giving occasion, reserve this gift wrapping method for your family so you can ask for it back when gift-giving is complete.



Bed sheet bags are often made of the same fabric as your new sheets and have a strip of velcro to hold them shut. Since there's no way to get your sheets packed back up tightly enough to store spare sheets in this bag, giftwrap they become!

Canvas tote bags do double the work as both gift and gift wrap!



Bandanas are another way to make the gift part of the presentation.



Scraps of fabric make excellent wrapping paper. Just tie a bit of ribbon or twine around your gathered fabric to make a jaunty bag.

Drawstring bags may find their way into your home through other purchases you've made. Tie a sprig of rosemary or a piece trimmed from the Christmas tree to give it the festiveness it needs.





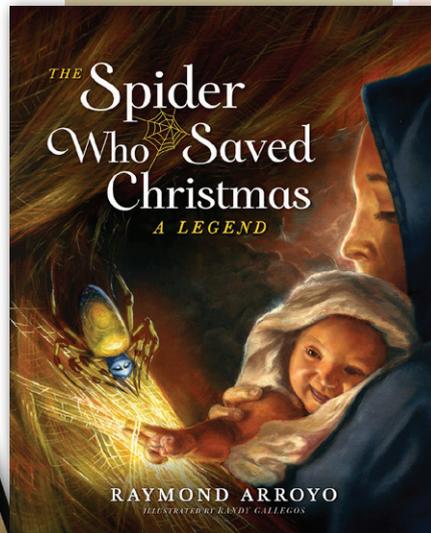
09

*our 2020
gift guide*





GIFT GUIDE
to read



“Mary looked lovingly at her Son and nodded off to sleep.”

1. The Word on Fire Bible

Give the Gospel in a beautiful new way. Likened to “a cathedral in print,” notes from Bishop Robert Barron, the Church Fathers and many of the greatest saints and scholars surround the biblical texts.

\$30 | wordonfire.org

2. The Spider Who Saved Christmas

Who knew that a spider could inspire the Christmas spirit? Meet Nephila. She lives in a cave and plays a crucial role in this Christmas story. *New York Times* bestselling author Raymon Arroyo brings an imaginative new take on an ancient legend.

\$16 | amazon.com

3. My First Catholic Words

West Chester father Zach Hinger wrote this book hoping to add a little more faith to his girls’ early education. This board book is the perfect Mass companion. Watch your little one spy and identify objects around the church.

\$10 | joyfullittlecatholics.com



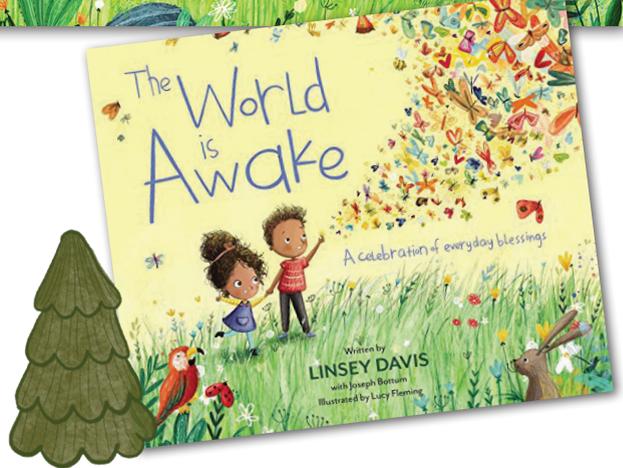


Just look at the sunrise that's painted the sky.
And look at the songbirds, all starting to fly.
The world is awake—it's a wonderful place,
alive with God's power and glad with His grace.

4. *The World is Awake*

Advent is a time of gratitude and preparation. This children's book written by Linsey David and co-written by Joseph Bottum, former editor of *First Things* magazine, is a celebration of everyday blessings. Open your child's eyes to the beauty of God's creation before tucking them into bed each night.

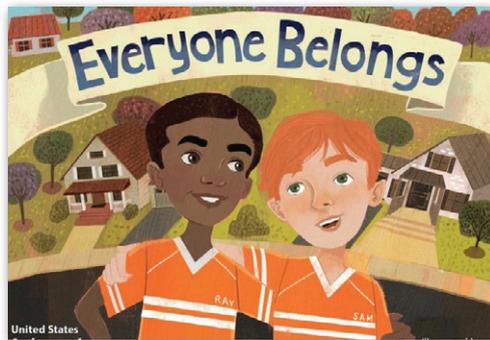
\$14 | [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



5. *Everyone Belongs*

A timely children's book from the USCCB about the Christian response to racism. Intended for children ages 5 - 12, this book tells the story of Ray Ikanga, a young boy who moves to the U.S. with his family as refugees. Together with your children, you'll learn valuable lessons in respect, forgiveness and how to celebrate our differences.

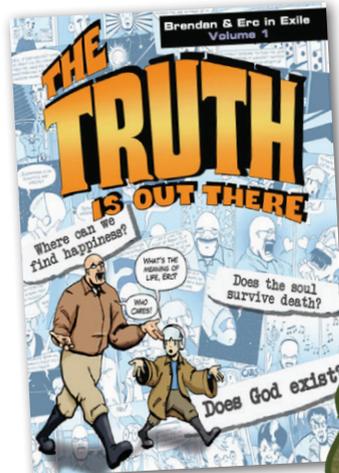
\$9 | [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



6. *The Truth is Out There*

Here's a read for teens and young adults! A series of Catholic graphic novels combining humorous sci-fi with catechesis and apologetics. Perfect for anyone wanting a fun and unconventional way to learn about the faith.

\$30 | [shop.catholic.com](https://www.shop.catholic.com)





GIFT GUIDE

to work

1. Angelus Tote Bag

Inspired by Jean-François Millet's "The Angelus," this block print tote bag represents the intrinsic union of work and prayer in Christian life.

\$20 | [etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com)

2. Daily Tasks Notepad

"One earns paradise with one's daily tasks." A beautiful nudge as you sit down to plan your day.

\$22 | [brickhouseinthecity.com](https://www.brickhouseinthecity.com)

3. St. Therese Tea Towel

A combination of beauty and functionality, this St. Therese Tea Towel is thoughtfully handmade by a local mother and seamstress. When a mountain of dirty dinner dishes seems both insurmountable and mundane, let this towel be a reminder of your call to sainthood. Even the dishes can be done with great love.

\$21 | [meadowcressboutique.com](https://www.meadowcressboutique.com)



GIFT GUIDE
to warm

1. Holy Family Candle

Along with their beautifully designed yearly Advent devotional, Blessed Is She offers small items to help you focus on your daily worship and contemplation. Let this candle depicting the Holy Family be a source of light and warmth this winter. And when the candle has burned itself out, re-use the ceramic holder all year long.

\$20 | blessedishe.net

2. Drinking Chocolate Mix

Cincinnati Chocolate makers, Maverick Chocolate Company, allow you to enjoy world-class chocolate at home. Just add milk to their 65% dark drinking chocolate.

\$20 | MaverickChocolate.com

3. Mystic Monk Coffee

Mystic Monk beans are roasted by Carmelite Monks. Their roasts will impress the coffee connoisseur on your list and help support our favorite morning Catholic radio show, The SonRise Morning Show. Give the gift of coffee year round with their Flavor of the Month Subscription!

MysticMonkCoffee.com



“The pinnacle of our non-flavored coffees, Christmas Blend 2020 is made with beans from all over the world, including a special Ethiopian Yirgacheffe coffee and more.”

GIFT GUIDE

to nurture

1. St. Joseph's Workshop Puzzle

Nurture a creative and humble heart with the help of St. Joseph the worker. This chunky puzzle is a great first for your little saint in the making.

\$19 | saintlyheart.com

2. Mary Doll

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared as an Indigenous woman to St. Juan Diego. Our Lady of Aparecida appeared as a Black woman in Brazil. Our Lady of Fatima appeared as a Portuguese woman. Mary is your mother and mine. She appears to us as we are. Let your little one see himself or herself in Mary's loving face.

\$35 | beaheart.com

3. Wooden Mass Kit

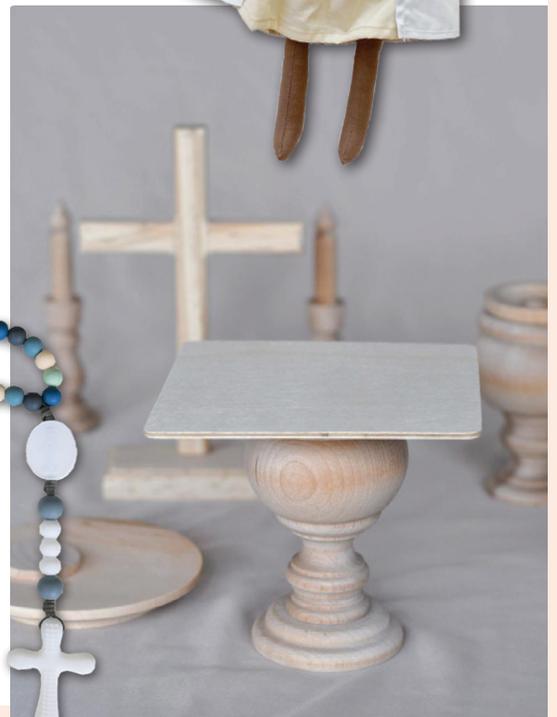
Make learning about the Mass effortless and entertaining! These sturdy, unfinished pieces are ready to be customized and well-loved.

\$65 | etsy.com

4. Chews Life Rosary

You chose life, now let your sweet babe chew life! A silicone rosary perfect for soothing teething gums and reminding the littlest among us that the rosary can change the world! (BTW, You can find rosaries here for the big people in your household, too!)

\$38 | chewslife.com



GIFT GUIDE

to inspire



1. St. John Paul II Print

A quick, inexpensive, and elegant gift. Download and print this simple illustration of JP II, choose your favorite frame, and voila! An inspirational work of art that takes no time at all.

\$3 | thesimplesaints.com

2. Catholic Family Crate

Pray, play and learn as a family with this thoughtful collection of cards, books and activities. Learn about the saints' feast days, the Bible and about the liturgical seasons of the Church! Appropriate for ages 3 and up.

\$40 | catholicfamilycrate.com

3. Handmade Crucifix

St. John Vianney said, "Never let your home be without a crucifix upon its walls, to the end that all who enter it may know that you are a disciple of a Crucified Lord."

\$34 | catholicwoodworker.com



GIFT GUIDE

to wear



1. St. Michael Mask

St. Michael the archangel, defend us from sickness! Show off your faith on your face and help keep yourself and those around you safe.

\$12 | sockreligious.com

2. Miraculous Medal

Keep Mary close always.

\$45 | telosartshop.com

3. Marian Bandanna

A bandanna is an endlessly useful accessory. Wear it as a scarf, a mask, or in your hair. Use it as gift wrap for another small gift. Great for imaginative play, functional and stylish wear.

\$20 | beaheart.com



GIFT GUIDE
to hold



1. Holy Water Bottle

"By this holy water and by Your Precious Blood, wash away all my sins, O Lord. / Flood my soul with Your Spirit and love. / Shine through me, so that in Your mercy, I might be a light to others. / Amen."

\$28 | reliquarysupply.co

2. Memento Mori Keychain

Inspired by our own mortality, this memento mori keychain is a daily lesson in perspective. A handy way to remember to live your life in the abundance of God's grace.

\$22 | providential.co

3. Hail Mary Rosary Bowl

This beautiful handmade dish is both a perfect and beautiful piece to place your rosary in, and a visual reminder to pray through Mary's intercession.

\$46 | etsy.com



RECIPES

swedish candy cane cookies

(mom's recipe)

These favorite recipes come from my mom who was born and lived in Melbourne, Australia, until she married my dad who was sent there for a rest during World War II after invading Guadalcanal with the U.S. marines. Mom and dad were featured on the front page of the Cincinnati newspaper in 1945 as the first Australian war bride to come to the city where my dad was born.

*From Sister Victoria Vondenberger, RSM, JCL
Director of the Tribunal Office*

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 2/3 cup sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¾ cup butter/margarine
- 1 unbeaten egg
- 2 tsp vanilla

Directions

1. Sift together flour, sugar and baking powder.
2. Mix all ingredients together then add red food coloring to half the dough.
3. Form into candy canes by making two "worms" of each color and rapping them around each other shaping them into candy canes – not too thick so they keep a candy cane shape.
4. Bake in 350° oven for 15-20 minutes.





10

*how to decorate
with purpose
& beauty*





Decorating in December usually means Christmas lights, trees and Santa. Thoughts of decorating for Advent - for the anticipation of Christ's birth - don't usually extend past the standard Advent wreath and candles. But it doesn't have to be that way! This year, consider decorating for Advent with all the joy and enthusiasm you usually reserve for Christmas decor.

No matter what your decorating style is, you can make your home a cozy atmosphere for Advent with these simple steps!

pick a focus

- Choose one room, or even just a space in the room to focus on. What activities do you perform in this space? Cozying up and reading? Dining with family? Studying at your desk?
- Once you pick a focus, the goals for decorating the space will come much easier. The goal for my house is making it a warm, inviting space for myself, friends and family. It is somewhere I can unwind at the end of the day, feel safe and comforted, yet inspired, energized and creative.



color

- Warm colors warm a space, while cool colors can make a space feel stiff and distant. The solution lies somewhere in between. Since these colors are opposites on the color wheel, they contrast and complement each other. For example, red and green, blue and orange, yellow and purple are contrasting pairs of colors. If you're working with primarily cool colors, it would be good to warm the space up with wood rather than metal (which goes into the next step).
- The walls in our house are off-white, so we rely on the furniture and decor to provide pops of color. We chose to embellish with emerald, cranberry and brass/gold colors this Advent season.





texture

- If your space is filled with metal accents, hard lines and smooth surfaces, then warm it up with knit blankets, a velvet pillow, ceramic vases, glass bowls, baskets, twine, macrame, rugs, ribbon, etc. Have fun with it! Layer them!
- We layer a soft blanket with a flowered pillow on our deep turquoise velvet couch. A tray with some prayerful books and candles also provide texture





shape, size, layering and balance

- This step is especially useful for designing a fireplace mantel. You don't want everything the same height and size. Add height with candle sticks, a mirror leaning against the wall, or get creative by placing a ceramic pot on top of some books. You don't want everything to be in a straight line. Layer your items in front of and on top of each other to create depth. Add organic shapes if there is too much symmetry or perfect, hard lines in your space.





light

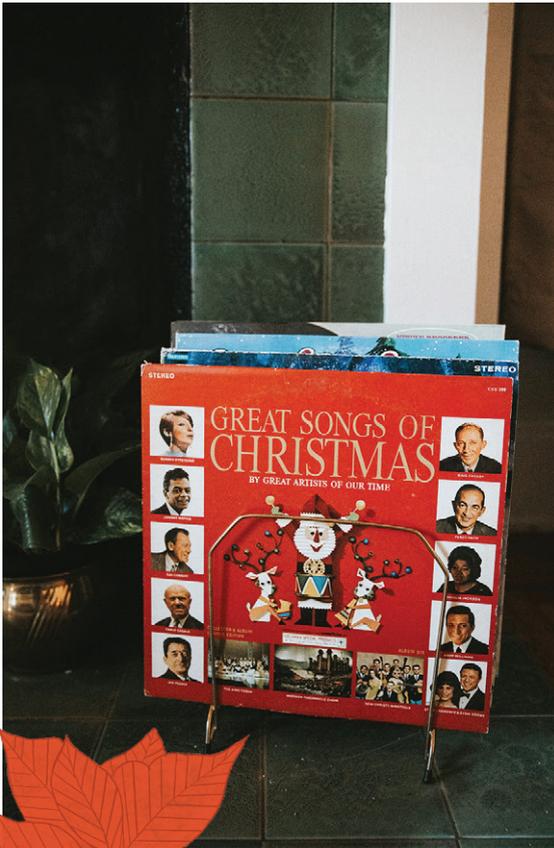
- Try positioning your space near a window(s), not only for natural light, but to relax and look at the beauty outside. Light can also come from the glow of a fireplace, flickering candles, strung lights, mirrors or a nightlight.
- We have a disco ball in our art studio room to bounce the light from the window, mirror and overhead light.



life

- Bring the outdoors in - whether that's a bouquet of flowers, dried flowers or house plants. For this liturgical season, bring in some scented pine cones, real pine branches for your Advent wreath, holly (or other plants from the Advent plant article).
- This Advent, we brought in an Advent wreath and Christmas tree, as well as dried orange garland (homemade!), scented pine cones and various Advent plants.





nostalgia

- Consider adding a bit of history. Some great examples are framed pictures, polaroids, a guest-book journal you've kept over the years or a blanket your grandma knitted. Put something in your space that is unique to you, reminds you of happy times, has been passed down through the generations or is part of an aged-old tradition.
- I hung up an Advent calendar from my childhood. I also hung the pickle ornament on our tree because it's a German tradition that I grew up with. My roommate puts out a vintage Santa bubble light because it reminds her of her childhood Christmases at her grandparents' house.



faith reminders

- This Advent season, set up a nativity scene, but don't put the baby Jesus in the manger until Christmas morning. Decorate with images of the Holy Family, an Advent wreath, Advent plants, a Jesse tree and/or candles throughout your house.

Advent is an opportunity to prepare for the birth of Jesus both in your heart and in your home. Use these tips as inspiration to make your space a place of faith and comfort.





12

added extras

*infant stations
coloring pages*

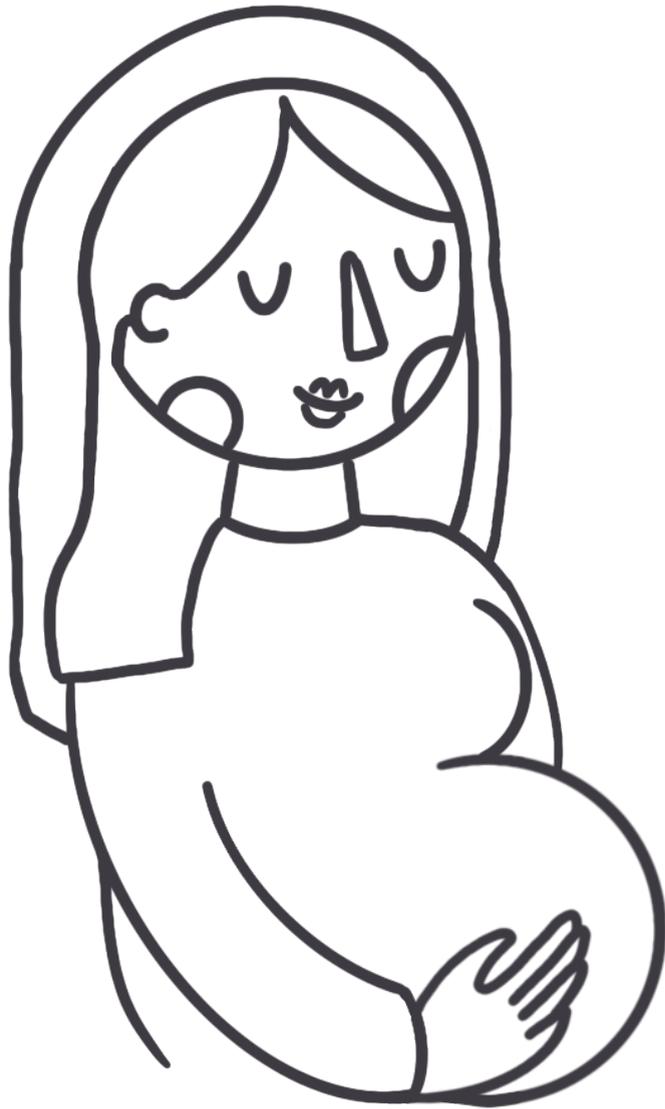
&

*diy bethlehem advent
calendar printables*



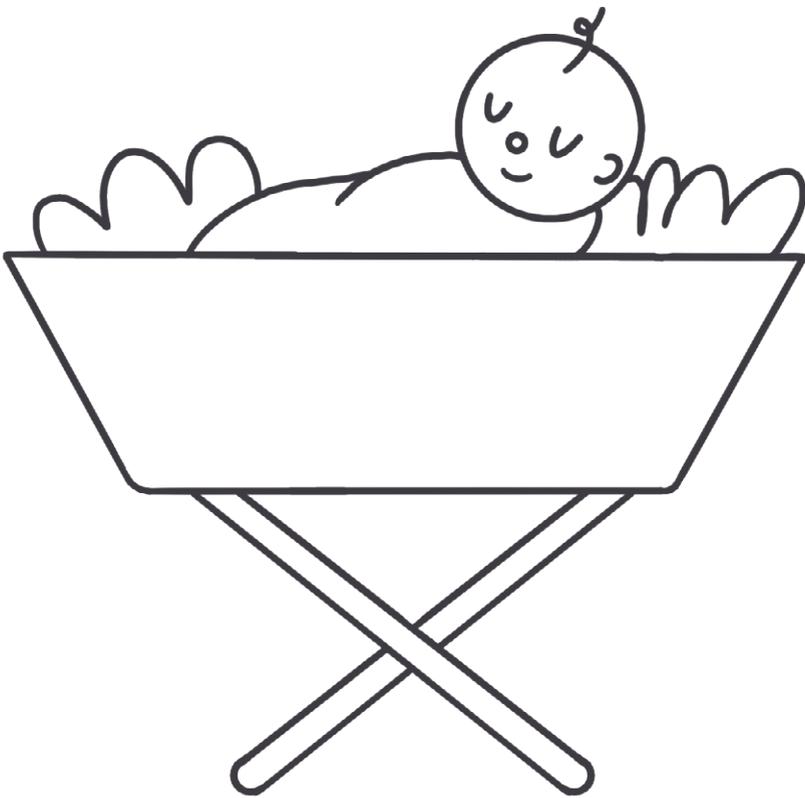
01

Jesus is incarnate



02

Jesus is born



03

Mary feeds Jesus



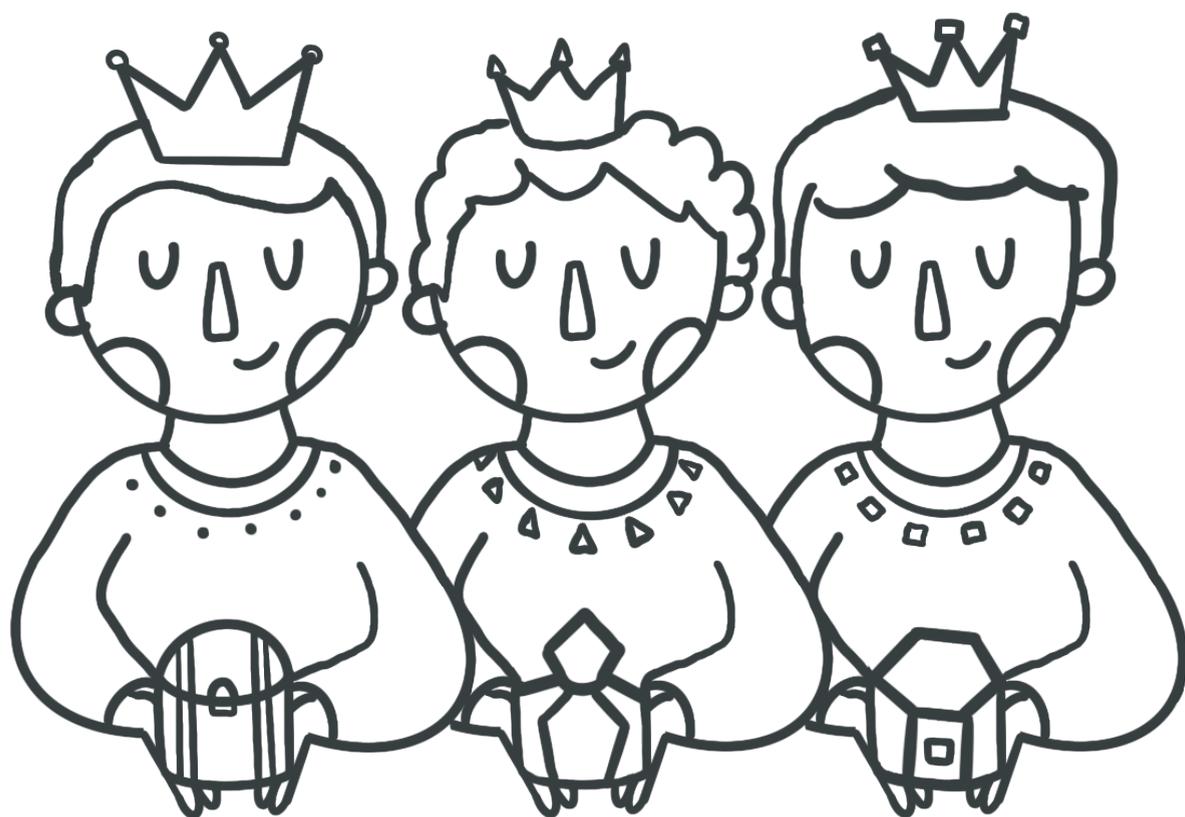
04

Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes



05

Jesus is adored by the magi



06

Jesus is presented in the temple



07

Jesus flees to Egypt



08

Jesus cries



09

Jesus is carried by his mother



10

Jesus plays with St. Joseph



11

Jesus learns to walk



12

Jesus sleeps



MakingCatholicMemories



BETHLEHEM 



Share a toy or talent
with someone today.

Joyfully clean up a
mess you didn't make.

Send love to your mom
(e.g. picture, phone call, letter).

Say a prayer for someone
who was unkind to you.

Compliment 5
people today.

Praise someone
on a job well done

Check in on a friend
you haven't seen in a while.

Light a candle and pray
for someone who has died.

Take turns saying what
you were thankful for today.

Make plans to visit someone's
grave later this week (and do it).

Bake cookies for
someone and drop them off.

Pray for all those in prison.

Leave a kind note on
your neighbor's doorstep.

Do a chore without complaining.

Pick out 3 items you don't use and make plans to donate them to someone in need.

Fast from something you enjoy.

Look through your canned goods and pick some things to donate to the food pantry.

Pray a rosary today.

Pick a saint you don't know well and read about them as a family.

Prepare a meal as a family.

Share your faith.
(Ask a friend how you can pray for them today).

Add an examination of conscience and act of contrition to your bedtime prayers.

Do a difficult physical activity and offer it for Mary's intentions.

Make cards or crafts for your grandparents or someone in the nursing home.

Try to use less water today and offer it for those who are thirsty.