



Advent Family Lessons

Our Advent Family Lessons are offered as a way to fulfill some aspects of our overall curriculum in a way that is convenient and enjoyable for our families. We instituted this as a way to both honor family life and help families discover or rekindle Catholic traditions while learning more about the faith together. This is a special aspect of the Religious Education program, designed to honor family life as the “Domestic Church.”

How to complete Advent Family Lessons



Choose at least 2 activities from the following pages.



After completing the activities, each family should fill out and submit the reflection sheet in either hard copy format, or via our online form. **This assignment is due by January 10, 2025. One form should be submitted per family. **For families in Summer Program, Homestudy, Family Program – Please note that there are no stamp/activity log requirements for the Advent Lessons; the only assignment is to complete the reflection sheet.**



Online forms can be found [at this link](#).



Hard copy sheets can be found at the end of this document and printed.

- Have your child hand the sheet in at class
- Drop off in our drop-off/pick-up bin, located outside the front door of the school (facing the parking lot) – please be sure to put the sheet in an envelope marked “Advent Family Lessons”
- Mail to us at:

St. Joan of Arc Religious Education, 101 Evans Road,
Marlton, 08053 – Attention: Advent

****Please do not scan and email assignments – we can only accept online form or hard copy forms.**


Lesson Options – Choose at least 2 from the following:

- ✚ ***Blessing and Lighting of the Christmas Tree and/or Blessing of the Manger:*** To download and print the Blessing and lighting of the Christmas tree, [click here](#). For the Blessing of the Manger, [click here](#).
- ✚ ***Christmas Giving – Donating items for those in need:*** You can find many opportunities for donating to our brothers and sisters in need during the holiday season. Here are a few:
 - **John F. Pilles Jr. Memorial Coat Drive** – You can find the informational [flyer here](#), and donations can be taken until **December 18th**. Please note that all items donated must be **new**.
 - **St. Nicholas Toy Drive** sponsored by Mt. Carmel Guild, which is collecting toys to be dropped off to our church gathering room through Sunday, **December 8th**; you can find [additional information here](#).
 - **St. Joan of Arc Helping Hands Christmas Fund** – Monetary and gift card donations welcome, all contributions due by **December 6th**. [Please click here](#) for additional information.


****There are many other opportunities for giving to others in need at Christmastime; please feel free to choose another opportunity that you hear of, if not listed here.**
- ✚ **Make an Advent wreath (or take out the Advent wreath, if you already have one!) and follow some of the weekly activities below:**
 - ❖ Week 1 – [Hope](#)
 - ❖ Week 2 – [Prepare](#)
 - ❖ Week 3 – [Joy](#)
 - ❖ Week 4 – [Love](#)
- ✚ ***Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (Feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowful):***
 - **Work on a service project as a family** – Unforgotten Haven is a great local organization that offers many opportunities to help others. [Click here](#) for a list of their projects with details.
 - **Bake a special treat or a cook a meal for someone else - a person or family in need**, whether the need is spiritual (loneliness, sadness) or physical (hunger, thirst). Or you may choose to adopt a family through an organization and provide a Christmas meal for them. However you choose to carry this out, have your family include the person/people you are serving in your prayers throughout the season (or longer). Online resource for baking/cooking: <https://catholiccuisine.blogspot.com/> (This is a comprehensive Catholic cooking site that offers recipes and ideas for many Church holy days and the liturgical seasons. On the right side of the screen, there is an index entitled “Perfect for...” where you may click on specific areas such as cookies, cupcakes, Advent, etc.)
- ✚ ***Tradition of the Jesse Tree:*** Advent is a season of waiting, and a Jesse Tree is a great way to prepare for Jesus by journeying through the stories on Jesus’s family tree. For each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone on Jesus’s family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you’ll see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations. For ideas, templates, and Bible readings, there are two great links which provide instructions and free printables: [Simply Catholic](#) or [Faithmag](#).
- ✚ ***Preparing our Hearts for Baby Jesus (for younger children or for a younger child and an older sibling):*** This activity focuses on getting ourselves ready for the birth of Jesus by doing good for others. Children make a simple craft of Jesus in the manger and each time a family member observes him/her doing something kind, a piece of hay is added to the manger. This craft can be very simple – mangers can be made from paper bags with the top cut off, hay can be pieces of yarn or paper. **** You can find instructions at this link.** ****** The manger should be something children can either make themselves or can help with; the purpose


is really to encourage and teach little ones that showing kindness towards others is one of the best ways we can get ready for Christmas.

*An older sibling can choose to do this activity if he or she commits to being the “observer” who adds hay to the manger when noticing the younger child’s good deeds.

 ***Advent with the Saints: St. Nicholas Day – December 6th and Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – December 12th***


- To celebrate St. Nicholas’ Feast day, you can find some great ideas [here at Catholic Icing](#), and also [here at the St. Nicholas Center](#).
- To celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and learn more about Juan Diego, visit [Teaching Catholic kids at this link](#).

 ***Advent Angels*** – Each week, place family member names in a hat and pick out a name. The goal is for each person to perform acts of kindness and service (in secret) for the person whom they’ve picked. You can switch the names from week to week to spread joy and creativity, or continue with the same person for the all the weeks of Advent.


 ***International Traditions:*** Many countries around the world have unique and beautiful traditions for Advent or Christmas. Learn about and include one of these traditions with your family. Here are a few examples:


- Germany – leave shoes out for St. Nicholas and learn more [here](#)
- Philippines – attend a Simbang Gabi Mass (7 pm on 12/9 at St. Joan’s!) and learn more [here](#)
- Mexico and Guatemala – celebrate and learn more about Las Posadas [here](#)

 ***Christmas Carol Festival December 15th at 3:00pm in the Church:*** Come with your family and friends to celebrate Christmas the ST. JOAN OF ARC WAY! [Please click here](#) or more information!

 ***Advent Calendar of Daily Activities for Children:*** [Children can follow this calendar](#) with simple daily tasks that can help them grow spiritually during Advent. (Following the calendar for at least one week during Advent can count for this activity.)

 ***Wandering Wise Men:*** This activity is similar to the Wise Men ADVENTures in the link above, and was partially inspired by the popularity of the Elf on the Shelf. [Check out the link here](#) for details!

 ***Celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany:*** For Catholics, Christmas is not over on December 26th! The Christmas Season for us actually extends through January 8th, when we celebrate Epiphany Sunday. Choose one Epiphany activity to celebrate this day; [check the link here](#) for some ideas, or do some searching online for additional activities.

 ***Family Traditions:*** Does your family have a special faith tradition activity that you do every year for Advent or Christmas? If you do, you can include that activity as one of your Advent Lessons!
Remember that the activity must be faith-based

Advent Family Lessons Family Reflection (All Grades, one per family)
Due by January 10th

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Names of Students in Family: _____

Which lessons did you choose to do?

1. _____

2. _____

(From the lessons you did as a family, select your favorite lesson and completely answer the following questions – feel free to use the back of the page if you need to.)

What was your favorite lesson?

Why was this lesson your favorite?

How do you think it helped you get ready to celebrate Jesus at Christmas?