

St. Laurence Catholic Parish
Elementary “Flex” Faith Formation
Week 11



Liturgical Season of Advent Lesson

Essential Question (“EQ”):

Why and how do Catholic Christians celebrate the Season of Advent?

PARENT CATECHIST PREPARATION

To prepare for this week’s lesson:

- Establish a dedicated time and comfortable learning space for your family discovery session.
- Create a [Prayer Table](#) (or check out [How to Make a Prayer Table for Kids](#)) in a special corner of your home. Keep your family Bible reverently displayed there to be used for readings in your lessons. When proclaiming *The Word* to children, it is more impactful to read directly from the Bible and not just from their workbooks.
- Prepare your adult heart and mind ahead of the lesson by watching [THE TRUE MEANING OF ADVENT](#) by Fr. Mike Schmitz or [REFOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS](#) with Sr. Miriam.

Also, take a peek at [ADVENT IDEAS FOR CATHOLIC FAMILIES](#), [MAKING ADVENT REAL FOR CATHOLIC KIDS](#) or [HIDING BABY JESUS](#) for ideas on how you and your family can more intentionally celebrate the *Season of Advent* together this year. Perhaps take time in setting up your family crèche (manger) by beginning with a [BLESSING OF A MANGER SCENE](#) and staggering the ‘arrival’ time of its key personalities. Consider establishing one or more of the [MANGER MOMENTS](#) traditions as you wait for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

- Reflect upon a favorite Bible passage that you would like to share with your children about waiting for Our Lord and why it is important to you, or consider any one of the following:

Supplies **you may want to have on hand before beginning the Lesson:**

- A Catholic family or children's Bible (go to [USCCB](#) for approved Bible translations); on campus, we use the [ST. MARY'S PRESS CHILDREN'S BIBLE](#), but any Catholic children's or family Bible will suffice.
- An electronic device with reliable internet access
- Sticky notes
- Art or any unlined paper
- Crayons, markers and pencils as needed
- (Optional): Materials necessary for any of the craft ideas selected during the EXTEND segment of the lesson below.



OPENING PRAYER

Begin your discovery session today with your child or children in prayer. Gather together in your dedicated prayer space and ask your children to quiet their minds and hearts as you pray together. Begin with the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#) and recite a favorite family prayer, choose one of the [COMMON PRAYERS BY GRADE](#), pray the Our Father, or sing [THE ADVENT SONG FOR KIDS](#) together as a family. Conclude by praying the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#).

ENGAGE

(Mental warm-up)

Say, "Today, we are going to learn about *Advent*, which is a special season celebrated by the Church. I want to begin today by sharing with you one of my favorite scripture passages from the Bible about God's promises to us and why Jesus is our hope and salvation..." (*Read your favorite passage from the Bible and explain WHY it is important to you or your favorite passage*)

EXPLORE

(Pre-assessment of faith concepts)

Ask/Discuss, "What do you know about the Liturgical Season of Advent celebrated by the Catholic Church?"

- ❖ As your child or children share their ideas, have them jot a few down on a sticky note (with their name) and then place them on the wall in your discovery space. (For younger children, you may act as the 'scribe'). Retain the sticky notes to have an understanding of what your child or children already know or don't know. This will be helpful as you move along in your lessons.
- ❖ To facilitate thinking and discussion use some of the following questions: What is Advent? When do we celebrate Advent (i.e. when does it occur in the Church or Liturgical calendar and in what month)? When does/did Advent begin this year? What does the word *Advent* mean? How long do we celebrate Advent? Why is Advent important to most Christians, but especially to Catholic Christians? Who are

we waiting for during Advent? What is the Liturgical color used by the Church during Advent and why? What are some special things that we see in church during Advent? What are some of the things we do individually and as a community during Advent and why? How can celebrating Advent help us prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas and his Second Coming at the end of time? *Plus any others you can think of...*

EQ “Essential Question”

(This question serves as a cognitive bookend for your child or children – i.e. it is the targeted “so what” or “take-away” of the lesson being presented)

Share and post a physical representation of the lesson’s EQ in your study space:

Why and how do Catholic Christians celebrate the Season of Advent?

EXPLAIN

(Either guided with your assistance or working independently, have your child or children review their relevant grade-level material – listed below - and complete the workbook activities. *Empower older children by allowing them to mentor younger siblings*):

- PREK3:** *Allelu!* Lesson 11 (*Jesus is Coming*) Parent Activity Sheet (in the folder you picked up); *Allelu!* [Lesson 11 Home Session Activity Plan](#)
- PREK4:** *Allelu!* Lesson 22 (*We Wait for Jesus with Joy*) Parent Activity Sheet (in the folder you picked up); *Allelu!* [Lesson 22 Home Session Activity Plan](#)
- Kinder:** *Allelu!* Lesson 21 (*Getting Ready for Jesus*) Parent Activity Sheet (in the folder you picked up); *Allelu!* [Lesson 21 Home Session Plan](#)
- Grade 1:** *Alive in Christ*, pages 19-22 (*Waiting for Jesus*)
- Grade 2:** *Alive in Christ*, pages 19-24 (*Change Our Hearts*)
- Grade 3:** *Alive in Christ*, pages 19-22 (*Our Lady of Guadalupe*)
- Grade 4:** *Alive in Christ*, pages 15-20 (*Prepare for Jesus*)
- Grade 5:** *Alive in Christ*, pages 15-18 (*Get Ready!*)
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EXTEND

(As a family, gather back together and have each child share, in turn, what they learned about Advent. Together as a family, come up with a list of *at least three new things* that you learned, were surprised by or think others should know about this Liturgical Season of the Church. Then, *extend the lesson together by completing at least one of the activities* provided below).

Early Childhood/Lower Elementary

- Video [BROTHER FRANCIS: INTRO TO ADVENT](#) or [WHIRL KIDS CELEBRATE ADVENT](#)

- Craft [PAPER PLATE ADVENT WREATH](#) or [RIP ART ADVENT WREATH](#)

Upper Elementary

- Video [ADVENT IN 2 MINUTES](#) or [WHAT IS ADVENT? GANGNAM-STYLE](#)
- Craft/Activity [ADVENT COUNTDOWN & ART ACTIVITY](#) or [ADVENT WREATH GAME](#)

EVALUATE/REFLECT

Restate today's Essential Question (EQ) – *Why and how do Catholic Christians celebrate the Season of Advent?*

- **Say**, “Think back to the passage that I read from the Bible at the beginning of our lesson today. What do you think it tells us about the Season of Advent? (*Discuss together, affirming and reinforcing appropriate answers/teaching points*).
- **Summarize what’s been learned during this lesson, emphasizing those concepts which may have been missed or misunderstood in the EXPLORE step above.**

Say, “In today’s lesson, we learned about the Liturgical Season of Advent and how we, as Catholic Christians, use this time to prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, at Christmas. The word *advent* (*adventus* in Latin) means “coming.” Advent is the first season of the Church calendar, or *Liturgical year*, and begins a cycle which is repeated every year by remembering how Jesus’ work on earth during his lifetime led to the Salvation of all people. People waited many years for God to send someone special to save the world from darkness and sin. During Advent, we think about the *Incarnation*, or when God sent his only Son, Jesus, to become one of us; born as a tiny and helpless human baby, and destined to be the Savior of all people for all time.

Advent always begins on the Sunday closest to November 30th. This year, Advent started on Sunday, November 29th. Advent marks the four weeks leading up to the celebration of Christmas. During Advent, we prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus by remembering him in *three* special ways. We remember Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem in the *past* (which we celebrate on Christmas Day), we anticipate his coming in glory in the *future* (as he promised his return at the end of time) and we celebrate his coming to us in word and sacrament in the *present*, as we experience him in our daily lives through Mass, the Bible, prayer, the Sacraments, etc. It is a time to reflect on Jesus’ love for us and for the whole world.

In the church, we see special signs and symbols during the Advent season. The color displayed on the priests’ vestments and decorations around the church is always purple. The color purple reminds us of the coming of *the King* (i.e. it is a royal color), but also reminds us to change our hearts for Jesus and repent (or be sorry for our sins). During Advent, we can help our hearts change and seek forgiveness through prayer, small acts of sacrifice or penance and charity directed towards others. In many churches and homes, an Advent wreath or an Advent calendar may be used as signs of the season which help us count down the weeks until Christmas. The candles of the Advent wreath remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World and of our lives.”

- **Separately reflect on these questions:** During Advent, we are called to clean out the “stables” of our minds, hearts, homes and lives to ‘make room’ for Jesus. Think about the Virgin Mary as she awaited the coming of her baby – Jesus - that first ‘advent’ season, knowing that He would eventually save her and the entire world. How do you think she might have prepared to receive him? ***What is one way in which you could better receive Jesus and grow closer to Him during Advent? How can you, as a family, better keep your focus more on Jesus during Advent and not on the distractions of the coming celebrations?*** (i.e. What specifically can you do?) (After some reflection time, turn and share your answers with another family member). **Be sure to challenge yourselves to adopt at least one new Advent practice until Christmas.** 😊

CLOSING PRAYER

Gather together in your dedicated prayer space and ask your children to quiet their minds and hearts as you pray together. Begin with the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#) and recite a favorite family prayer, choose one from the [COMMON PRAYERS BY GRADE](#), sing [LORD JESUS COME](#) together as a family, or ask your child/children to offer up their [INTERCESSORY INTENTIONS](#). Conclude by praying the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#).



BONUS (optional)

- ***The History of the Christmas Crèche:*** Saint Francis of Assisi is known for introducing the first Crèche (or Manger scene) in Italy in the year 1223 to inspire the faithful's devotion to the Child Jesus at the *Feast of the Nativity* (Christmas). Find out more about this common Catholic practice at [SAINT FRANCIS AND THE CRIB](#). **As you continue to prepare the 'stables' of your lives, minds and hearts for the coming of our Lord, Jesus, at Christmas, pray the following prayer together asking St. Francis for his intercession in your focus on Jesus during the weeks of Advent, or write one of your own...**

St. Francis,

You spent many hours preparing a Nativity scene that would remind the world how the Infant Jesus came to us in poverty.

Please help me find time to prepare well for the great feast of Christmas.

Show me how to clean out my heart — sweeping away envy, unrealistic expectations and activities that distract me too much from the true purpose of Advent.

Guide me in making good decisions about how I spend my time and my dollars during these days of waiting and preparing.

As I look upon the empty manger where Christ was born, inspire me to live humbly and simply.

Intercede for me, so my preparations this Advent make a lasting difference in my life.

Amen.

- ***Faith in Action!***: Families find it helpful during Advent to follow a calendar of faith-based activities reminding them of Jesus and preparing their hearts for the commemoration of his birth at Christmas. Make a [CATHOLIC](#) or [25 DAYS OF SERVICE](#) Advent calendar (or create one of your own using a calendar template online). Together

as a family, perform the daily assigned tasks and reflect on how that activity focuses you on the gift of Jesus and how that brings you closer to God, the Father. Or, consider creating a [JESSE TREE](#) where each ornament symbolizes a person or event in the Old Testament that foretold the coming of Christ.

- ***Saints of the Season:*** **Saints Nicholas** (Feast Day, December 6), **Juan Diego** (Feast Day, December 9) and **Saint Lucy** (Feast Day, December 13) are all Saints who are celebrated during the season of Advent. Research at least one of these Saints, and discuss what they did during their life (i.e. what they are known for) and why you admire them, as well as how they lived for Christ and drew people closer to God. Write a short biography about your chosen Saint, or draw a picture reflecting what they are known for.

Want to extend your family's formation about this topic? Check out these additional resources which can be used at the Parent Catechist's discretion, if desired:

- ***Parent Preparation Videos/Resources:*** [THE TRUE MEANING OF ADVENT](#), [WHAT DID MARY DO FOR ADVENT?](#), [REFOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS](#), [ADVENT: MORE THAN A CHOCOLATE CALENDAR](#), [THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ADVENT](#), [FOR YOU, O LORD, MY SOUL IN STILLNESS WAITS](#), [WHAT IS ADVENT FOR CATHOLICS?](#) , [HIDING BABY JESUS](#)
- ***Lesson Plans:*** [ADVENT CONVERSATION STARTERS & PRAYERS](#), [LOYOLA PRESS GRADES 1-3](#), [LOYOLA PRESS GRADES 4-6](#), [CATHOLIC TOOLBOX](#), [ADVENT RESOURCES](#), [EQUIPPING CATHOLIC FAMILIES FOR ADVENT](#)
- ***Videos:*** [THE LITTLE DOUGLINGS ADVENT](#), [LITTLE DOUGLINGS EPISODE 2](#), [LITTLE DOUGLINGS EPISODE 3](#), [WHAT IS ADVENT?](#), [WHAT IS ADVENT? GANGNAM STYLE](#), [ADVENT IN 2 MINUTES](#), [WHAT'S WHAT IN THE CHURCH: THE ADVENT WREATH](#), [WHIRL KIDS CELEBRATE ADVENT](#), [ST. NICHOLAS - VEGGIE TALES](#), [LORD JESUS COME ADVENT SONG](#), [CATHOLIC KIDS HOMILIES: ADVENT](#), [CATHOLIC KIDS: ADVENT](#), [WHAT MORE COULD HE GIVE](#), [BROTHER FRANCIS: INTRO TO ADVENT](#), [MY TIME WITH JESUS: ADVENT](#)
- ***Crafts:*** [CATHOLIC ADVENT CRAFTS](#), [JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM](#), [ADVENT SAINTS ORNAMENTS](#), [ADVENT CRAFTS](#)



- ***Activities:*** [8 PRACTICAL WAYS TO GET READY FOR ADVENT](#), [ADVENT ACTIVITIES](#), [CATHOLIC MOM](#), [CATHOLIC TOOLBOX](#), [CATHOLIC SPROUTS](#), [NATIVITY OBJECT LESSON](#), [LEGO NATIVITY INSTRUCTIONS](#)