



Month: December: The Season of Advent

Thanksgiving is over, and Christmas will be here before we know it, yet as we continue our time of watchful waiting, and preparing, try to put off the holidays for a little bit, in order to tune into the gospel, and to prepare our hearts for the mystery of the Incarnation, the coming of the Prince of Peace.

Theme: Peace

Advent is a special time of year when peace becomes something visible. We long for peace, not just peace on earth, or the absence of conflict, but more deeply, we long for the peace of Christ. Our world is longing for peace in so many places such as Iraq, Israel, and Africa, but we also long for peace in the hearts of those struggling with poverty of all sorts, and victims of natural disasters. This Advent let our prayer for Christ's coming be a longing for wars to end: for troops to return to their families: and for justice, a longing that things set awry will be made right.

Sacrament: Confirmation

There is a close relationship between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. We are born spiritually in the sacrament of Baptism, but when we are confirmed, we receive a special grace which deepens our faith and gives us strength to share it with others.

Family Activity: Straw for the Crib

This custom, which began in France, helps children see their efforts as they prepare for the coming of Jesus with acts of kindness. Place a small crib in a place of honor where everyone sees it throughout the day. Each child in the family may place a piece of straw or yellow yarn in the crib each night for every kind act done during the day. The figure of the Christ Child is not placed in the crib until Christmas Eve, by that time the crib should be filled with soft straw as a bed for the Child.

A Blessing for the Christmas Tree: Gather around the tree after it's decorated and say this prayer together.

"God of all creation, we praise you for this tree which brings beauty and memories and the promise of life into our home. May your blessing be upon all who gather around this tree, all who keep the Christmas festival by its lights. We wait for the coming of the Christ, the days of everlasting justice and peace. You are our God, living and reigning, forever and ever. Amen."

St. Information: St. of the Month-St. Nicholas. Feast Day: December 6.

On the eve of St. Nicholas Day, read the story of kind St. Nicholas, the special protector of children. Explain the custom of children putting shoes outside the bedroom door to receive gifts from St. Nicholas.