

Advent Family Lessons for December



WHAT ARE THE ADVENT FAMILY LESSONS?

Our Advent Family Lessons are offered in place of formal classes in December. 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 DOES OUR FAMILY DO THE ADVENT FAMILY LESSONS?

All details about our Advent Family Lessons can be found on our Advent page at this link:

<http://parishofsacredheart.org/advent-lessons>

There are different options for fulfilling the lessons, depending on the preferences of your family with regard to how you choose to express or learn about your faith.

WHAT DO CHILDREN HAVE TO HAND IN?

Children must hand in reflection sheets, which will be distributed in class; sheets are also available for download at the link above. There are no chapter reviews from the text to hand in this year.

CAN I GET THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LESSONS IN HARD COPY?

Yes! If you cannot access the lessons document online at the link below, please let us know and we will gladly provide you with a copy.

VERY IMPORTANT

Please note 2 very important details regarding this assignment:

- ⇒ All reflection sheets **MUST** be handed in at the first class in January in order for your child to be considered "present". If sheets are not handed in at your child's first class back, this will count as a child being absent for December.
- ⇒ Please be sure to download and/or print everything you need for the lessons as soon as possible. We take the page down during January and lessons will not be accessible after that point.

We would love to share pictures of our families working on Advent Lessons to our Facebook page! If you have pictures you'd like us to share, email them to jdonohue@parishofsacredheart.org. Please include a description of the Lesson/what is happening in the picture.

You can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SacredHeartReligiousEducationProgram

Advent Family Lessons 2018



During the month of December, students along with their families are to complete three of the suggested lessons outlined below, and the student reflection sheet.

Lesson Options – Choose 3 from the following:

- ⇒ ***Blessing and Lighting of the Christmas Tree and/or Blessing of the Manger – See the link on the Advent page***
- ⇒ ***Christmas Giving*** – Donating items to be given as Christmas gifts for those in need. You can check the bulletin for opportunities to do this, and we also have a link to the Providence House Holiday Wish List on the Advent page. (Providence House Domestic Violence Services is a Catholic Charities organization which supports women and children in crisis.) Please note that if you would like to support Providence House, all donations must be dropped off by December 14th; further information is available at the aforementioned link.
- ⇒ ***Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (Feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowful)***

Bake a special treat or a cook meal for 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: <http://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.)

Do a ‘Reverse Advent Calendar’ – Check the bulletin for the needs of our St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, and each day in Advent, place an item from the list in a box or basket. At the end of Advent, donate to St. Vincent de Paul.

- ⇒ ***Advent Family Day at Sacred Heart***

This event will take place on Sunday November 25th from 2 pm – 4 pm in the auditorium, and includes an Advent wreath-making activity for the family! Please see the Advent page to register!

*Please note that families must RSVP to this event by November 23rd so we will have enough supplies for everyone.

- ⇒ ***Advent Wreath, Prayer/Activities***

If you don’t already have one, make a family Advent wreath and follow the prayers and activities on our link on the Advent page. (There is also a link there where you can learn more about the Advent wreath.) We have two options for this - an Advent wreath blessing and an Advent wreath family prayer service. Both can be found on our Advent page as links. There are MANY resources online regarding how to make an Advent wreath, so check out Pinterest or Google for some ideas! ☺

- ⇒ ***Simbang Gabi Mass/Masses (attending 2 or more Masses or participating in Choir/Children’s Nativity on 12/16)***

This is a beautiful Filipino Catholic tradition that we are blessed to celebrate at Sacred Heart. Mrs. Risa Ferguson, who is a Burlington Township music teacher and music minister at Sacred Heart,

helps to organize the Masses and especially helps with the last Mass on December 16th, which includes a choir and a children's Nativity. If your child would like to get involved, please contact Mrs. Ferguson at SacredHeartSimbangGabi@gmail.com. For more information on the celebration of Simbang Gabi, see the link on our Advent page.

Simbang Gabi Masses Dates/Times: 12/7, 7:30 pm (Holy Day Mass as well); 12/8, 6:30 pm; 12/9, 7:00 pm; 12/10-12/14, 7:30 pm; 12/15, 6:30 pm. (There is a potluck party in the auditorium following the 12/15 Mass – all are welcome!) Please see the bulletin for more information on Simbang Gabi!

⇒ ***Christmas Carol Festival at Sacred Heart***

This is a wonderful event that has become a tradition here in our parish! Families are invited to come to the auditorium on Sunday, December 2nd at 3 pm for caroling and refreshments. Bring your family and friends! You are also encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for our St. Vincent de Paul food pantry.

⇒ ***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 ideas for how to make this craft on our Pinterest board at https://www.pinterest.com/SHRE_MtHolly/baby-jesus-nativity-craft-ideas/ 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.

⇒ ***Missionary Childhood Association Christmas Art Contest***

This is an organization within the Church, directed by Rome, which works to support children in need all over the world. Each year, the MCA holds a Christmas art contest for children in parishes and schools. **This year, submissions are to be sent via an online format. You can access this online submission form from our Advent page.**

You may choose to take a picture of your child's artwork and email it to jdonohue@parishofsacredheart.org so we will be aware that it was completed (and we would love to see the beautiful artwork done by our children!) If you send in a picture of your child's artwork, please indicate if it would be alright for us to share it on our Religious Education Facebook page (we will mention the artist by first name only).

Reflection Sheets can be found on the next two pages!

Name: _____

Student Reflection – Grades 1 - 3

Please check the lessons completed by your family:

Three Lessons (please check the Lessons you chose)

- Blessing and Lighting of the Christmas Tree and/or Blessing of the Manger
- Christmas Giving/ Wish List
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Advent Family Day at Sacred Heart
- Advent Wreath and Advent Wreath Blessing OR Advent Wreath Family Prayer Service
- Simbang Gabi Mass/Masses
- Christmas Carol Festival at Sacred Heart
- Preparing Our Hearts for Baby Jesus
- Missionary Childhood Association Art Contest

(Please answer the following question in words or with a drawing. Use the back of the page if you need more space!)

Which lesson did you really enjoy doing?

How did it help you get ready to celebrate the Birth of Jesus?

Student's signature: _____

Parent signature: _____

Name: _____

Student Reflection – Grades 4 - 8

Please check the lessons completed by your family:

Three Lessons (please check the Lessons you chose)

- Blessing and Lighting of the Christmas Tree and/or Blessing of the Manger
- Christmas Giving/ Wish List
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Advent Family Day at Sacred Heart
- Advent Wreath and Advent Wreath Blessing OR Advent Wreath Family Prayer Service
- Simbang Gabi Mass/Masses
- Christmas Carol Festival at Sacred Heart
- Preparing Our Hearts for Baby Jesus
- Missionary Childhood Association Art Contest

(From the lessons you did as a family, select your favorite lesson and completely answer the following questions on the back or on an additional sheet of paper - handwritten or typed.)

What was your favorite lesson?

Why was this lesson your favorite?

How did it enhance your preparation for Christmas?

Would you like to make this a tradition in your family? Why?

Student's signature: _____

Parent signature: _____