

Divine Mercy Parish Office of Religious Education

1620 Whitney Ave
Hamden, CT 06517
203-433-2809 (call or text)
divine.mercy.ore@gmail.com

December: Waiting for Jesus

This month we will work on preparing our hearts for Jesus. Please see the family and student activities below.

Family Activities

Complete a family activity from the list below and submit the Family Activity Reflection [here](#).



1. Advent Wreath: Together as a family make or set up your Advent wreath. Each week, light another candle and say the weekly [Advent prayers](#).

Consider giving the Advent wreath a greater significance by praying weekly for a special purpose that needs an extra dose of hope using [these prayer cards](#).

****We would love for you *all* to participate in this activity.****

2. Advent in 2 minutes: Watch [this video](#) and talk with your family about what Advent is and isn't. How can your family truly celebrate Advent in this time we are waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus?

3. Reverse Advent Calendar: Most Advent calendars have you open or take something out each day. For this reverse Advent calendar, add a non-perishable item to a box each day and donate all the things you gathered at Christmas.

4. [Christmas Tree Blessing](#): As you put up and decorate your tree, talk about how evergreens remain green all year and are a sign of life. Bless your Christmas tree together as a family.

5. Good Deed Manger: Advent is a time of waiting and preparing our hearts for Jesus. We talked about a lot of different ways to prepare for Jesus. A fun way to encourage children to prepare their hearts is by having a Good Deed Manger. Create an empty manger out of a box, or anything you have around the house. Any time someone makes a sacrifice or does something nice, they put a piece of straw (or yarn or a yellow strip of paper) in the manger. Each piece of hay will help the manger be more comfortable for Jesus. You can see how this looks [here](#), but again, make your manger however works for your family! (Grades K-5)

Student Activities

Children complete one of the activities from the list below and submit their activity [here](#).

1. [Advent Coloring Page](#): Color the picture of the Advent wreath. Talk with a family member about what each candle means and how we can celebrate that each week. (Grades K-2)

2. Nativity Christmas Ornament: Find some time to make ornaments for your own tree, or to give to others as gifts for Christmas. Here are a few options, but feel free to get creative! (Grades K-8)

[Option 1](#)

[Option 2](#)

3. DIY Nativity Set: Don't have a nativity set (or you do but want another)? Visit [this site](#) to print out your own nativity. You can print it out in color and just cut and glue it together, or you can print it out in black and white to color yourself. (Grades K-8)

4. The Legend of the Poinsettia: Watch the read aloud of *The Legend of the Poinsettia* by Tomie de Paola [here](#). Then make your own poinsettia like the one [here](#) (you can make it any way you want- this is just one example). Put your poinsettia somewhere special (maybe in your prayer space!) to remember that every simple gift can be beautiful. (Grades K-5)

5. Las Posadas: Watch the read aloud of *The Night of Las Posadas* by Tomie de Paola [here](#). The story tells us about a Spanish tradition of recreating Mary and Joseph's journey on Christmas Eve as they look for a place to stay. Then, color a picture of the nativity [here](#). (Grades K-5)

6. Graham Cracker Nativity: You'll love this twist on the Christmas graham cracker house- it's a graham cracker nativity! Find out how to make one [here](#). (Grades K-8)

7. [Christmas Bible Scavenger Hunt](#): For this activity, you will search through your Bible to find out the details from the birth of Jesus in two Gospels- Luke and Matthew. (Grades K-3)

8. [Christmas Story Bible Comparison](#): The story of Jesus' birth is told in two Gospels- Luke and Matthew. Read both accounts and notice the differences between them. Complete the questions. (Grades 4-8)

9. Christmas List for Jesus: Make a Christmas list for Jesus. What do you want him to give you this year? What can you give him? (Grades 4-8)

Extra Activities

Some other things you can do with your family this month:

** There are TONS of resources out there. If you are looking for something in particular and need help, just let me know! **

1. [Advent Song](#)
2. [How to Draw and Advent Wreath](#)
3. [How to Draw Advent Saints](#)
4. [More Advent Resources](#)
5. **Celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12):** The feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe remembers when the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego in Mexico. She asked Juan Diego to have a church built on that site. The local bishop was skeptical of his story and asked for a sign. Read about what happens next in this exciting story [here](#). After you read about what happens to Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe, decide with your family how you want to celebrate their feast days. You can make a craft, cook a special meal, or pray the rosary. Find some more ideas [here](#).
6. **Celebrate the feast of St. Lucy (December 13):** We celebrate St. Lucy, a virgin and martyr, traditionally pictured with a tray containing 2 eyes. She is the patroness of the blind and those with eye ailments. She used to bring food and blankets to prisoners in the dark, so she wore a wreath on her head with candles in it, so she could have both arms free to carry the supplies. Celebrate her feast day with a craft, special food, and other celebrations . There are plenty of ideas [here](#) and [here](#).
7. **For Parents: [Do You Want to Hold My Baby?](#)**