

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

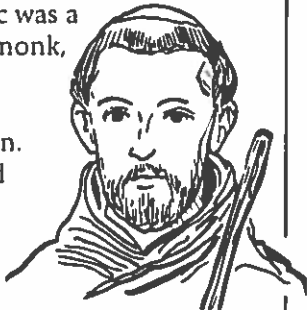
December 2018

St. Joan of Arc Parish
Father Mike Joly

Thoughtful Moments

St. Dominic of Silos

St. Dominic was a Benedictine monk, born around 1000AD in Navarre, Spain. He was exiled because of a conflict with the local ruler. Recognized for his leadership abilities, St. Dominic was made abbot of St. Sebastian's monastery at Silos. He's also known for having freed hundreds of prisoners from the Moors. St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominicans, was named after him by his mother, Joan of Aza, after praying to St. Dominic for a son.

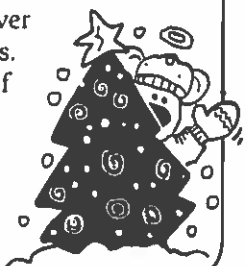


The Wait

We spend Advent waiting for something wonderful to happen. While impatient to get to that something wonderful, we can forget that the wait can be wonderful, too. Help children take it one week at a time. Wait, hope, prepare, and rejoice at the miracle of Christ's birth.

A Catholic difference

Catholics are never alone in our efforts. We are members of the Church, the body of Christ, and together we make a difference.



Find the true meaning of Christmas in L-O-V-E

Children of all ages enjoy gifts on Christmas morning, but Catholic parents know that there is more to Christmas than presents. It is a celebration of hope fulfilled. God promised he would send us a Savior so we could live in Heaven with him forever. He sent his own Son. Help children to experience the true meaning of Christmas by celebrating with L-O-V-E:

L – Lower your outside activities.

More than the gifts you give, children will cherish the Christmas memories you make. Limit the number of invitations you accept, and set aside the extra time as family time.

O – Offer anticipation. Instead of focusing on gifts and lists, anticipate

the Savior's arrival by marking the days on an Advent calendar you make together. Light an Advent wreath.

Decorate your Nativity scene gradually.

V – Visit. In addition to weekend Mass, make trips to church so children can visit Jesus. Take Christmas cards you have received and pray for the people who sent them.

E – Extend love. An effective way to experience love at the holidays is to

give it. Act with love, especially when dealing with family. Extending patience and kindness during the holiday season can be a challenge and a true act of love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ..." (John 3:16).

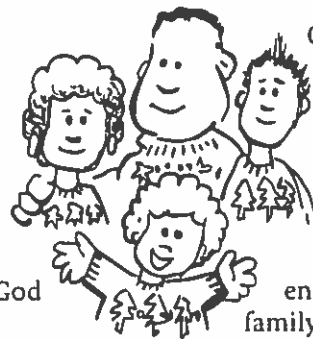


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics refer to the family the "domestic church"?

The Church calls families "the domestic church" or "little churches" because it is the first place where young, baptized Christians learn about Faith.

We learn how to love God and become part of the



Church through our families. Our parents had us baptized in the Church, taught us to pray, took us to Mass, and passed on the Faith (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1656). What the Church does—helps us encounter God and his love—the family does on a smaller scale.

Faith doesn't require understanding

Throughout history, God has given people mysterious messages that defy reason but require faith. When Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God (Luke 1:26-38), she couldn't help but wonder how that could happen. The angel's explanation hardly clarified things. Instead of asking more, she simply said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

that faith doesn't require understanding. In the same way, we don't have to understand what God wants from us to know that it is for the best. Very little in the angel's message was logical but Mary didn't pretend to get it. She said, "Yes," because she had complete faith in God.

This month is the perfect time to talk with children about Mary's example of faith. When we are worried or uncertain, we can do what Mary did because good things always happen to people who say, "Yes," to God.



Children are used to trusting adults and know

Scripture LESSON

Luke 2:41-52, Jesus in the world

In this reading, the Holy Family went to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. This was an important moment in Jesus' life. In the Jewish faith, a boy becomes a man around the age of twelve and is recognized in a special ceremony called a Bar Mitzvah. On this occasion, Jesus stayed behind to learn from the teachers, who were amazed by his questions.

When his parents discovered him days later, they were shocked. How could he just wander off without telling them? Jesus calmly explained that he was "about his Father's business."



This was the first recorded time Jesus referred to his identity as God's Son. Yet he knew his duties to his heavenly Father would be fulfilled in time.

Meanwhile, he returned obediently to Nazareth and fulfilled his obligations to his earthly parents.

What can a parent do?

Christians live in neighborhoods, schools, and communities. We are subject to legitimate earthly authority. We can grow in holiness wherever God has placed us. Find ways to teach children to be holy while still living in the world.

Feasts & Celebrations

Dec. 2 – First Sunday of Advent. Today begins a new liturgical year in the Church. During the season of Advent, we anticipate Christ's birth and look forward to his coming on the last day.

Dec. 8 – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1854). A Holy Day of Obligation which commemorates that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without original sin. Attending Mass together is a wonderful way to celebrate.

Dec. 9 – St. Juan Diego (1548). St. Juan Diego was visited by the Blessed Mother at Tepeyac Hill in Mexico. She asked that a chapel be built for her, and sent him with roses to the bishop as a sign. When the roses were emptied from his cloak before the bishop, it retained the image of the Blessed Mother.

Dec. 17 - St. Olympias (408). Born to a wealthy family in Constantinople, this holy widow devoted her large fortune to caring for the poor and supporting her friend, St. John Chrysostom, in his work.



Parent TALK

Growing up, my Christmases were a blur of waiting for the day and being let down when it ended. I braced myself for my children to experience



the same when our pastor explained that the Catholic Church celebrates Christmas for twelve whole days. "Christmas," he explained, "is just

the beginning."

So we lit our Advent wreath and decorated slowly. We played Advent music – songs that spoke of our hope that God would be faithful to his promises.

Christmas Day began with joyful carols at Mass and receiving Jesus in the Eucharist—the best Gift of all. The next twelve days were spent visiting family and friends, enjoying our favorite Christmas music, watching Christmas movies, and eating cookies.


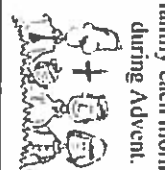














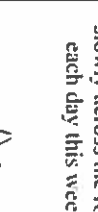






Someone asked why our daughter said, "Merry Christmas" on New Year's Day. I explained that for Catholics, Jesus' birth was such a joyous occasion, the Church set aside twelve days to celebrate it.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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 (Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)



Family Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2 Make and bless an Advent wreath. Light the first purple candle each night this week.</p> 	<p>3 Come up with a short prayer that you can say together as a family each morning during Advent.</p> 	<p>4 Set up the Nativity scene but leave out the Holy Family.</p> 	<p>5 In honor of St. Francis Xavier, patron of Catholic Missions, pray today for all who bring the Gospel to people overseas.</p> 	<p>6 To honor St. Nicholas, fill an old shoe with treats and leave it outside someone's door.</p> 	<p>7 Take turns playing "Name that Christmas hymn." Winner gets to pick dessert.</p> 	<p>8 In honor of Mary's conception free from Original Sin (Immaculate Conception), attend Mass and pray a family Rosary tonight.</p> 
<p>9 Light two purple candles in the Advent wreath each night this week. Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."</p> 	<p>10 Put up the Christmas tree. Decorate it a little each night until it's ready for Christmas.</p> 	<p>11 Find time this week to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in your church – even if it's just for a few minutes.</p> 	<p>12 Place a rose in a vase today in honor of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.</p> 	<p>13 Commit to going the whole day only speaking kindly to one another.</p> 	<p>14 Make hot chocolate and watch a Christmas movie together.</p> <p>Family Movie Night!</p>	<p>15 Decorate sugar cookies with symbols that remind you of Jesus' birth. Share them with loved ones.</p> 
<p>16 Light two purple candles and the pink one for joy. See which of you can sing loudest at Mass today.</p> 	<p>17 As a family, vote on a local charity to pray for each night this week. Bonus: Make a small donation if you can.</p> 	<p>18 Help children make an examination of conscience, then go to Confession together. Go out for a treat after to celebrate.</p> 	<p>19 Place the Mary and Joseph figures of your Nativity set across the room from the rest of the scene. Move them slowly across the room each day this week.</p> 	<p>20 At dinner tonight, have everyone take turns sharing a favorite Christmas memory.</p> 	<p>21 Christmas is a stressful time of year for parishes. Send thank-you notes to the rectory staff, showing appreciation for what they do.</p>	<p>22 Write letters to Jesus telling him that you look forward to his coming.</p> 
<p>23 Light all four candles in the wreath tonight. Reread today's Gospel Reading.</p> <p><i>Luke 1:39-45.</i></p> 	<p>24 Place Mary, Joseph, and the empty manger in the Nativity scene.</p> 	<p>25 Rejoice! Place the Baby in the manger and read the story of Jesus' birth in <i>Luke 2:1-20</i>.</p> 	<p>26 Place the Mary and Joseph figures of your Nativity set across the room from the rest of the scene. Move them slowly across the room each day this week.</p> 	<p><i>"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary; she betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:1-7)</i></p>		