



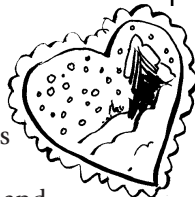
## Thoughtful Moments

### He comes

*"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand (James 5:7-8).*

### Heart made

This year, encourage children to give handmade gifts instead of purchased ones. Gifts such as bookmarks, drawings, small books, and ornaments are examples of gifts that are handmade and heart made.



### Blessing mobile

For centuries, Catholics have given thanks before their meals. Many families say, "Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen." To help you remember to say thanks, tie a paper plate, plastic knife, fork, and spoon to a wire hanger and hang it where you eat your meals.



## Favorite Advent memories

What special memories will you make for your family this Advent?

Stuart's family had an Advent tradition originating in Germany.

"Each year we honored the Christkindl (Christ child).

On the first Sunday of Advent, we drew names

out of a hat and the person you picked became your

Christkindl.

During Advent, we prayed for our

Christkindl

and did nice things in secret. On Christmas morning we revealed ourselves to our Christkindl by presenting a hand-made card."

"One year our Advent wreath broke and we couldn't afford to buy a new one," said Lorraine. "So I melted down all the candle stubs I could find and

poured the wax into four glass jars. I tied purple bows around three of them and a pink bow around the last and perched them on a cluster of evergreen branches. It was different but I loved it."

Matt said, "I grew up in on a farm.

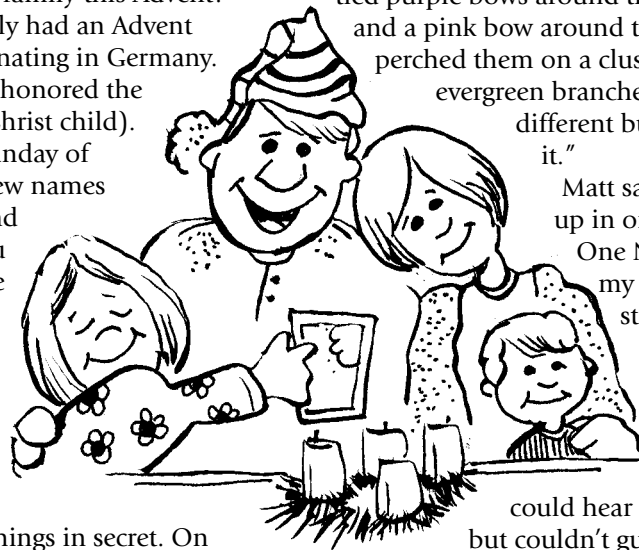
One November, my father started doing secret

things in the old chicken coop. We

could hear hammering but couldn't guess what he

was doing. It drove us crazy. On

Christmas Eve, he gave us each a candle and led us out to see the final creation - a candle-lit Nativity scene complete with angels, some of our animals and a doll in a hand-made manger. It took my breath away."

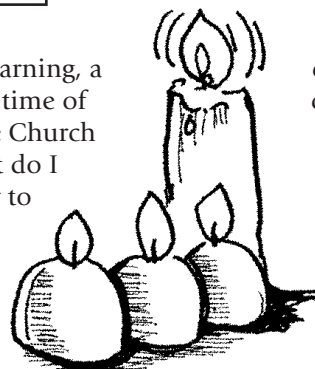


## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

## Why do Catholics celebrate Advent?

Advent is a time of warning, a time of preparation, a time of urgency. It is when the Church wants us to ask, "What do I need to do to be ready to greet the Lord?" We know that Jesus will

come at our death and he will come at the end of time. The season of Advent encourages us to make the necessary preparations so we can joyfully greet Jesus whenever we meet him next.

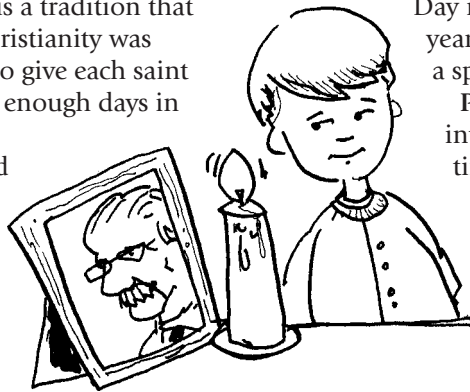


## Celebrate saints and souls in November

Remembering the dead in November is a tradition that dates back to the early Church. After Christianity was legalized in 313 A.D., the Church tried to give each saint and martyr a feast day but there weren't enough days in the calendar for each one.

Eventually Pope Gregory IV designated Nov. 1st as All Saints Day to celebrate the saints and martyrs in Heaven. All Souls Day on Nov. 2nd came later and commemorates souls in Purgatory, as well as people we loved who have died.

**Start with Mass.** This year All Saints



Day is on a Saturday. After attending Mass (this year it is *not* a Holy Day of Obligation) share a special family meal.

**Pick one.** Put the names of several saints into a hat and let each person pick one. Spend time during Advent learning about that saint.

**Celebrate your memories.** Visit a cemetery where family members are buried and light a candle to help remember them.

Decorate their graves and share your favorite memories of your loved ones.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Mark 13:33-37, Getting ready for company

When we expect someone important to visit, we make special preparations. We clean house, prepare plenty of food or drink, put on good clothes. Otherwise, we may ignore the dust on the furniture and eat leftovers.

Advent is the Church's way to remind us that company is expected. We spruce up by going to Confession and reconciling with our Lord and our Church. We clothe ourselves in new habits that lead to greater holiness in the coming year.

St. Mark quoted the parable of the master's mysterious return to remind us



that Jesus will come when we least expect it. We have no way of knowing when the Second Coming will be, or even when our own lives will end. Jesus reminds us to be watchful, sweep off the layer of dust on our souls, and be ready to welcome

him when he comes for us.

**What can a parent do?** Help your children pick one bad habit to eliminate during Advent. Countdown to Christmas on a special calendar to build excitement for our Savior's coming.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Nov. 12 – St. Josaphat (1623).** Born in the Ukraine to Orthodox parents, St. Josaphat converted to Catholicism, became a Basilian monk, then a priest, and was named Bishop of Vitebsk (now in Russia). He worked hard for unity in the Church and was martyred for his efforts.

**Nov. 17 – St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1231).** The daughter of the King of Hungary, Elizabeth chose a life of penance and service. Married at the age of 14, her beloved husband was killed after only six years of marriage. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order

and spent the last years of her life caring for the poor. She is the patron of Catholic charities.

**Nov. 30 - First Sunday of Advent.** During this four-week season, we anticipate the Messiah's birth, remembering the time when he was awaited. During Advent we also look forward to Christ's reign and his coming on the last day. Catholics all over the world light candles in an Advent wreath each night of the season to signal the coming of the true light of Christ.



### Parent TALK

We were getting to Mass later and later. The day that the ushers made us stand in the Narthex until the homily was over was the last straw.



The next Saturday night, I helped each child lay out clothes for the next day. Then I made pancakes and put them in a baggie in the refrigerator. Finally, I opened our Bible to the Gospel reading for Mass the next day and set it on the table.

The next morning, I put the pancakes in the toaster to warm them up and breakfast was ready in no time. While we were eating, one of the kids read the Gospel and we talked about it. We all cleaned up, got dressed, and even arrived at church before Father processed down the aisle.

The best part? Preparing for Mass and reading the Gospel ahead of time helped us enjoy it even more.

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