

New Revised Standard Version:

Catholic Edition

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## *December 1*

Today's Topic: Advent



Watch the Video for December 1

Read the following:

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Matthew 3:1-3

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things you would like to do as a family to prepare for the coming of Christmas?
2. What do these two passages tell you about Christmas?

## *December 2*

Today's Topic: Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer



Watch the Video for December 2

Read the following:

Isaiah 53:3-6

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

John 1:10-14

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Was there anything in the story of Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer that surprised you? What was it?
2. How does today's reading remind you of the story of Rudolph?

## *December 3*

Today's Topic: Holly and Mistletoe



Watch the Video for December 3

Read the following:

Psalms 51:1-3, 7

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Romans 5:6-9

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of any other plant that is associated with Christmas?
2. Red and green are Christmas colors. Red can remind us of what Jesus did for us in dying for our sins. What does the color green make you think of?

## *December 4*

Today's Topic: Handel's Messiah



Watch the Video for December 4

Read the following:

Isaiah 9:6-7

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Look over the names Isaiah uses for Jesus. How is each of these important to you?
2. What are some of your favorite Christmas songs that talk about Jesus?

## *December 5*

Today's Topic: Gift of the Magi and The Fourth Wise Man



Watch the Video for December 5

Read the following:

Proverbs 14:31

Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him.

Matthew 25:34-40

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What does the story of Della and Jim teach you about the true nature of Christmas giving?
2. According to the passage in Matthew, what are some ways we can serve God by helping others?

## *December 6*

Today's Topic: Saint Nicholas



Watch the Video for December 6

Read the following:

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and will be repaid in full.

Luke 6:31-38

Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. How was the real Saint Nicholas like Santa Claus?
2. In what ways can you be like Saint Nicholas this Christmas?

## *December 7*

Today's Topic: WW1 Christmas Peace



Watch the Video for December 7

Read the following:

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart,

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of someone you can give the message of peace to this Christmas?
2. In the midst of battle, the story in today's video tells us that some found peace in singing *Silent Night*. What are some songs you know that bring you comfort and peace?



## *December 8*

Today's Topic: The Candy Cane



Watch the Video for December 8

Read the following:

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Titus 2:13-14

While we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways the candy cane can be used to teach people about Jesus?
2. What are some of your favorite Christmas treats?

## *December 9*

Today's Topic: The Nutcracker



Watch the Video for December 9

Read the following:

Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Luke 4:16-21

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you about the story of the Nutcracker?
2. What do these verses teach you about what Jesus can do?

## *December 10*

Today's Topic: Truth or Tradition?



Watch the Video for December 10

Read the following:

Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Was there anything in today's video that you thought was truth but was really tradition? What was it?
2. Why is it important to distinguish truth from tradition?

## *December 11*

Today's Topic: Traditional Christmas Foods



Watch the Video for December 11

Read the following:

**Psalms 34:8-10**

O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him. O fear the LORD, you his holy ones, for those who fear him have no want. The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

**Philippians 4:4-9**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Family Discussion Questions:**

1. Different types of Christmas foods were mentioned in today's video. What one is your favorite? Is there one you would like to try?
2. Food is often associated with rejoicing. Why do you think this is so? What food makes you rejoice?

## *December 12*

Today's Topic: Angels



Watch the Video for December 12

Read the following:

Psalms 41:1-2

Happy are those who consider the poor; the LORD delivers them in the day of trouble. The LORD protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land. You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.

Hebrews 13:1-3

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some stories about angels from the Bible?
2. The video suggested some ways in which we can act like angels by helping others. What is something you would like to do this Christmas to help others?

## *December 13*

Today's Topic: Christmas Trees



Watch the Video for December 13

Read the following:

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

John 3:14-17

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Did you learn something that you did not know about Christmas trees from the video? If so, what was it?
2. Name at least one thing about Christmas trees that you like best.

## *December 14*

Today's Topic: Nativity Scenes



Watch the Video for December 14

Read the following:

Psalms 2:7

I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you.

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. If you could be part of a Nativity scene, who would you like to be and why? If you have enough members of your family present, act out a nativity scene right now.
2. The shepherds first saw an angel of the Lord, then a great number of angels, and then finally the Lord Jesus. They then told others what they had heard and had seen. What are some of the things you think they might have said to others about what they had just experienced?

## *December 15*

Today's Topic: Go Tell It On The Mountain



Watch the Video for December 15

Read the following:

Isaiah 55:11-12

So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Acts 10:34-36

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What did you learn from the video?
2. Why is it important to understand that God considers everyone the same regardless of their race, education, sex, age, where they live, or how much money they may or may not have? How should this affect the way we view others?



## *December 16*

Today's Topic: A Christmas Carol



Watch the Video for December 16

Read the following:

Psalms 51:7-10

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The heart of Ebenezer Scrooge was changed. Why do you think Christmas has such an effect on people?
2. Scrooge said that he would honor Christmas and “keep it all the year.” What is something you can do to keep the spirit of Christmas burning in your heart all year long?

## *December 17*

Today's Topic: Christmas Trivia



Watch the Video for December 17

Read the following:

Hosea 11:1

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew 2:13-15

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you name something about Christmas that was not covered in the video?
2. According to the above passage, why did Joseph take Mary and the baby Jesus into Egypt? Can you think of anyone else from the Bible who was also "called out of Egypt" to serve God?

## *December 18*

Today's Topic: Gifts



Watch the Video for December 18

Read the following:

Esther 9:22

As the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

Ephesians 4:7-12

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What were some Christmas gifts that you received in the past?
2. Think of a spiritual gift that God has given to you. What is it?

## *December 19*

Today's Topic: Birthday Cakes for Jesus



Watch the Video for December 19

Read the following:

Psalms 18:46

The LORD lives! Blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation,

Colossians 1:12-18

Giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers--all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What would you put on a Birthday cake for Jesus? Why not make one and do it?
2. Can you think of some other things you can do to celebrate Jesus' birthday?

## *December 20*

Today's Topic: X-mas



Watch the Video for December 20

Read the following:

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to observe all the words of this law.

Romans 11:33-36

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The passage in Deuteronomy teaches us that God will make some things known to us. What are some things God has revealed to you?
2. Before you watched today's video, did you know that "X" stood for Christ? How does this information make you feel about the phrase "Merry X-mas"?

## *December 21*

Today's Topic: Season of Light: Christmas-Hanukah-Kwanzaa



Watch the Video for December 21

Read the following:

Psalms 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

John 1:1-5; 8:12

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. . . . Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Do you like the various lights we see at Christmas time? What are some of your favorites?
2. What did you learn about Hanukah or Kwanzaa that you did not know before?

## *December 22*

Today's Topic: We Three Kings of Orient Are



Watch the Video for December 22

Read the following:

Psalms 72:11

May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

Matthew 2:1-8

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The wise men gave gifts to Jesus. What is something you can give to Jesus this Christmas?
2. From either the Bible or tradition, what are some other things you have been taught about the wise men?

## *December 23*

Today's Topic: The Star of Bethlehem



Watch the Video for December 23

Read the following:

Numbers 24:17

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near-- a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites.

Matthew 2:9-12

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the various explanations of the Star of Bethlehem do you think is more likely?
2. Can you think of a poem, rhyme or verse that uses the word "star" in it?



## *December 24*

Today's Topic: The Twelve Days of Christmas



Watch the Video for December 24

Read the following:

Proverbs 2:6

For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

James 1:17

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you name or sing the gifts of the Twelve Days of Christmas?
2. Do you think *The Twelve Days of Christmas* was really a secret code or just an urban legend? Why?

## *December 25*

Today's Topic: Was Jesus Born on December 25?



Watch the Video for December 25

Read the following:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Does it really matter what day we celebrate the birth of Christ? Why?
2. Think of something you can do today that would make Jesus happy. What is it? Why not do it?