

INSPIRE!

Advent special edition

KEEPING

Advent


A MINDFUL ADVENT:

NOT TIME YET

5+ activities

YOU CAN USE IN
YOUR CLASSROOM
TODAY!





*"To touch the hearts
of your students and to
inspire them with the
Christian spirit is the greatest
miracle you can
perform and one God
expects from you."*

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE

from the editor



There is something special about Advent. Every year, whether we are ready for it or not, Advent arrives and calls us to slow down and bring our faith back into focus. This Advent is extra special for us at Saint Mary's Press and for all who share in the Lasallian mission. Brother James Miller will be beatified on December 7, 2019.

Brother James grew up in Stevens Point, WI (a mere 2 ½ hour drive from our Winona, MN home office), attended school on the campus of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, and was a classmate of Brother Frank Carr, Director of Mission for Saint Mary's Press.

The Beatification is an exciting moment as Brother James is the first De La Salle Christian Brother from the United States to be beatified. And yet there is sadness, also, as we remember that he was martyred at age 37 and wonder how his ministry would have unfolded had his life not ended so early.

As we pause to remember and celebrate the ministry of Brother James, we are also challenged to reflect on our own call to discipleship and our place in the Church's mission of education. The work we do as teachers and catechists is not easy, but it is important. Even though we are not on the streets of Guatemala as Brother James was, we share the same mission—to transform hearts and minds in service of the Gospel.

It is our hope that this supplemental *Inspire!* issue serves as a meaningful resource as you continue your important work with children and journey with them through Advent into Christmas.

Live Jesus in our hearts... forever!

Steven Ellair



CONTRIBUTORS: Mallorie Bussey, Joanna Dailey, Steven Ellair, Sigrid Lindholm, Laurie Ziliak



@SaintMarysPress



Saint Mary's Press



Saint Mary's Press

what's inside

ACTIVITIES

10

COME, LORD JESUS
PRAYER SERVICE

11

A SPECIAL
SOMEONE'S BIRTH

12

BE A SERVANT

14

BROTHER JAMES MILLER
COLORING PAGE

16

EPIPHANY BLESSING

ARTICLE

5

KEEPING ADVENT

REFLECTION

17

NOT TIME YET



Bring to
Jesus
in prayer
the needs
of your
disciples.

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE



Keeping Advent

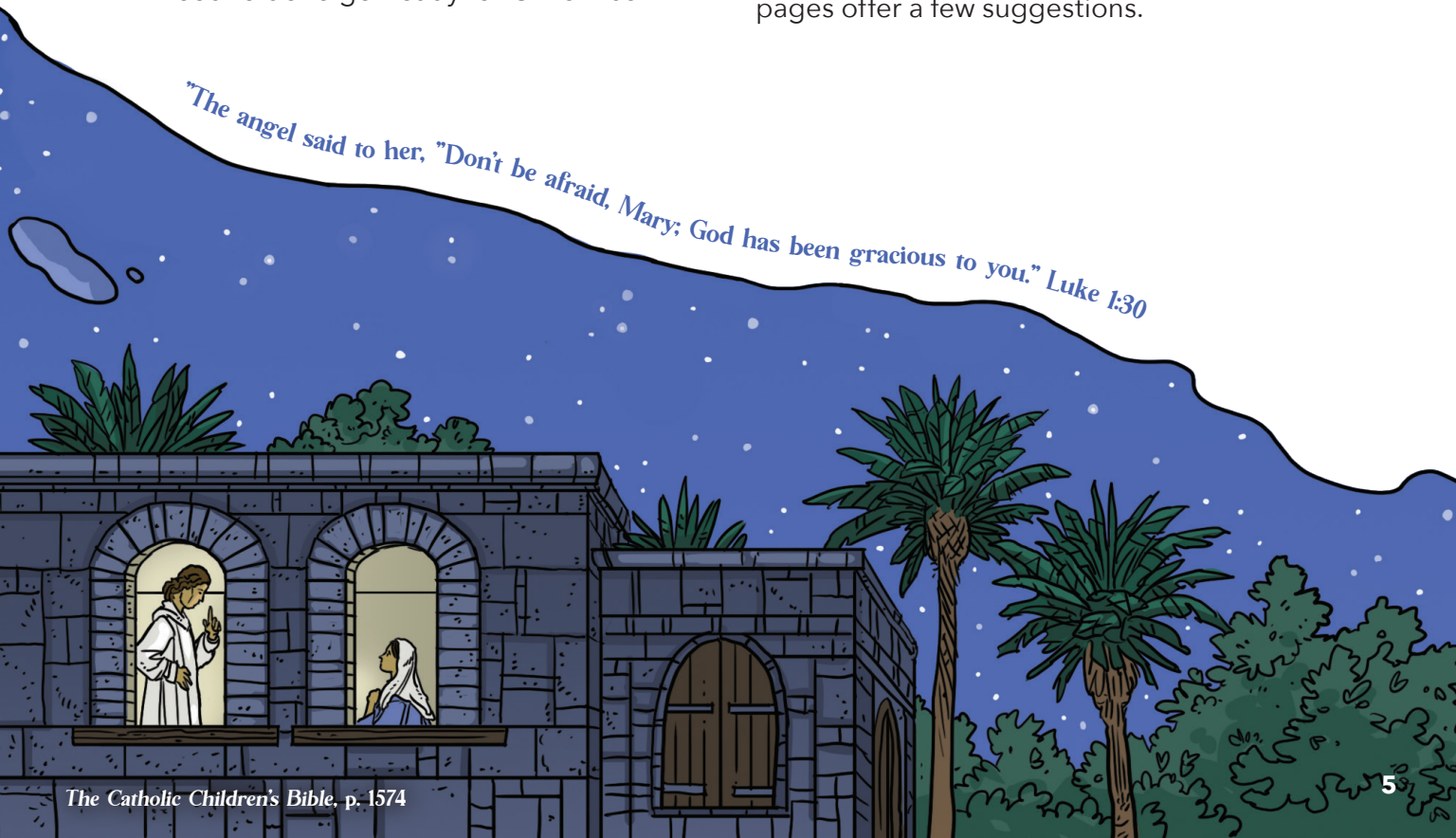
by Joanna Dailey

Christmas comes at us like a steamroller and seems to start earlier every year.

Christmas store displays go up right after Halloween, ads about the perfect gift for the perfect person begin to appear on TV and in our inboxes, Christmas music begins to fill the air, and holiday recipes begin popping up on our social media accounts. Inevitably, we start thinking about all we need to do to get ready for Christmas.

Do we have the right gifts? How will we celebrate with our family? It is easy to bypass Advent and skip right to Christmas, especially in our preparations. But Advent is an important time to stop, pause, reflect, and prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of the Savior, Emmanuel. Taking time to incorporate Advent practices into your classroom can help children keep Advent and better prepare mentally and spiritually for Christmas. The following pages offer a few suggestions.

"The angel said to her, 'Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you.'" Luke 1:30



Make room for silence and solitude

Set aside a few moments (start with five minutes) each day to experience quiet, peaceful waiting. Darken the classroom space. Pull down the shades and turn out the lights. Say a short Advent prayer (“Come, Lord Jesus, into our hearts and into our lives”) and then just wait. Why? Because we need to experience “empty time” in order to experience the “fullness of time” at Christmas.

Light candles of the Advent wreath

Consider lighting the candles just before your time of silence. You could also ritualize the moment by inviting everyone to sing an Advent song while lighting the candle(s).

Drape your space with Advent colors

Be the countercultural classroom or corner by decorating with purples and a splash of pink. If possible, try to hold off your classroom Christmas party until after Christmas, when it’s finally *time*: perhaps plan it for January 6 or for the Monday after Epiphany.

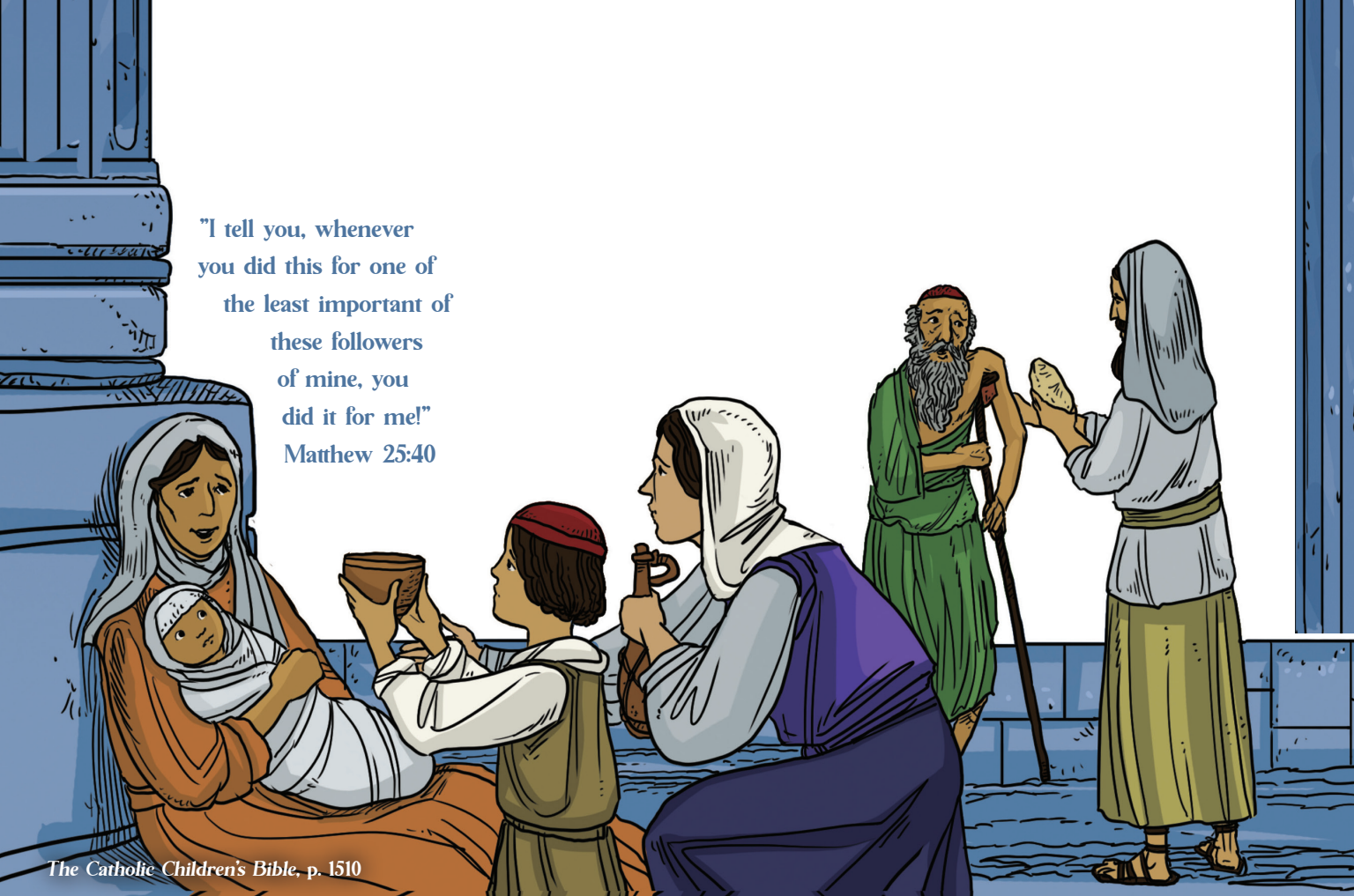
If a pre-Christmas party or gift exchange is a must, make it an Advent party, with purple gift wrap and ribbons.

This may take some out-of-the-ordinary courage, but it will give students something to talk about and remember. Besides, who needs to be ordinary?

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit” Luke 1:41



"I tell you, whenever
you did this for one of
the least important of
these followers
of mine, you
did it for me!"
Matthew 25:40



The Catholic Children's Bible, p. 1510

Display an Advent calendar

Try to find one with a Scripture quote behind every door. Ask children to take turns opening the "door of the day" and reading the Scripture quote. If you are unable to find an Advent calendar with Scripture quotes, have the class make one using Scripture citations from the Advent Sunday readings.

Remember those who are in need

If your school or parish does not have an Advent project, consider initiating one with your group. Choose a worthy organization to help with your "time, talent, or treasure" this Advent. Make an Advent bank. Invite the children to contribute what they can each week (or determine a set amount in advance) and donate the final collected amount to a worthy cause.

Set up a Nativity scene

Keep the manger empty. You may want to set up a box near the crib into which the children can place prayer intentions. (Announce whether these will be read at an Advent prayer service or kept private.) Draw names to select a child who will place the Baby Jesus in the manger on the first day of school *after* Christmas. When children return, continue the celebration! Set up the class Christmas tree and decorate it. Plan a party. Continue your quiet time, this time by the light of the Christmas tree. The Christmas season ends on January 12, 2020, with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Explore the Saints

The Advent season includes many feast days of saints. Incorporate an Advent saints component into your classroom time. Introduce saints on their feast days and invite children to think about how each saint waited for the coming of Jesus. Consider the following:

- December 3:** Saint Francis Xavier
- December 6:** Saint Nicholas
- December 9:** Saint Juan Diego
- December 12:** Our Lady of Guadalupe
- December 13:** Saint Lucy
- December 14:** Saint John of the Cross
- December 17:** Saint Hildegard of Bingen

As you make plans for the month of December, be intentional about keeping Advent in your classroom. By simply incorporating one or two Advent practices, you can help the children in your group make the journey through Advent to Christmas. ■



TRY THESE!

**COME, LORD JESUS
PRAYER SERVICE**

PAGE 10

A SPECIAL SOMEONE'S BIRTH

PAGE 11

BE A SERVANT STARS CRAFT

PAGE 12

**BROTHER JAMES MILLER
PRAYER AND ACTIVITY**

PAGE 14

EPIPHANY BLESSING

PAGE 16

Answers to page 11 activity: Numbers in boxes: 9, 3, 2, 8, 1, 5, 4, 6, 7. Put stars
before boxes numbered 3, 8, 4, and 6. Seek and Find Answer: the star

Come, Lord Jesus

Set up a prayer table with an Advent wreath and candles ahead of time. Invite the children to join you around the Advent wreath. Count out how many candles on your Advent wreath should be lit, based on which week of Advent you use this prayer service. Light the candles (real or battery-powered) as indicated, and say the word that corresponds with what each candle symbolizes (peace for the first candle, hope for the second, joy for the third, love for the fourth).

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, heavenly Father, you sent your angel to Mary.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: The Angel Gabriel gave her the Good News that she would give birth to your Son, our Savior.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We celebrate this Good News during Advent, and we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth this Christmas.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We light [this candle/ these candles] as a sign of peace [hope, joy, and love].

(Light the appropriate number of Advent candles. Say the corresponding words as you light each candle.)

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Jesus is the Light of the World. May he light our way in Advent and throughout our lives.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

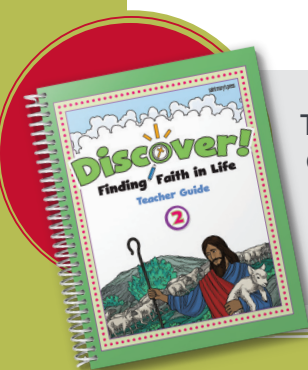
Leader: We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Close by singing an appropriate Advent song of your choice.

This prayer service is taken from the Advent chapter of the Grade 2 Catechist Guide/Teacher Guide in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **DISCOVER!**

visit smp.org/discoverparish or smp.org/ discoverschool



A Special Someone's Birth

Use the boxes to number these events in the order that they happened.
Put a star in front of the ones that show that Jesus was special.

- Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt.
- In a dream an angel told Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Savior.
- Joseph planned to break off his engagement with Mary.
- In a dream an angel told Joseph that Herod wanted to kill Jesus.
- Mary found out that she was going to have a baby.
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
- This happened because a prophet foretold that a son called "God is with us" would be born.
- The men from the East saw a star in the sky and gave gifts to Jesus.
- Herod found out that a newborn king was born.



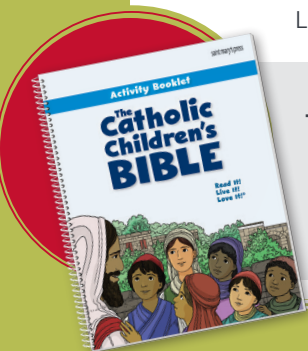
Seek and Find: Look at pages 1448 and 1449 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Find the house of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. What is just above the house, in the sky?

Level 2 Activity: **Jesus' Birth Was Special** (*The Catholic Children's Bible*, pages 1448–1449).

This activity is taken from *The Catholic Children's Bible Activity Booklet*.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **THE CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S BIBLE** AND IT'S COMPONENTS, visit smp.org/ccb

Answers for this activity can be found on page 9.



Be-a-Servant Stars Craft

MATERIALS:

- copies of the handout “Be-a-Servant Stars,” (pg. 13), one copy for each child
- a completed “Be-a-Servant Stars” sample
- purple construction paper
- markers or crayons
- several pairs of scissors
- several staplers

Prepare in advance an example of the completed craft.

Explain to the children that Jesus came to us a king who served others. Tell the group that because Jesus was born to a poor family, we make special efforts during Advent to help and serve those who are poor and in need.

Distribute the “Be-a-Servant Stars” handout and show them the example you completed. Distribute the crayons or

markers, purple construction paper, scissors, and staplers.

Invite the children to write or draw four good deeds they can do during Advent for people in need—one good deed for each star on the handout. Encourage the children to decorate their stars with colors and images.

Invite the children to cut out their stars and staple them to a piece of construction paper to take home to display.

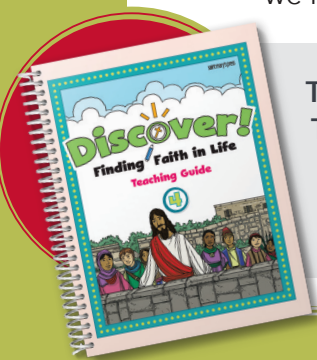
Process the Activity

- **Ask volunteers** to share their service ideas with the group.
- **Conclude by reminding the children** that when we serve as Jesus served, we help bring about the peaceful kingdom Isaiah promised.

This activity is taken from the Advent chapter of the Grade 4 Teaching Guide in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **DISCOVER!**

visit smp.org/discoverparish or smp.org/discoverschool



Be-a-Servant Stars

Jesus came to be a servant to us. Think about ways you can be a servant to others this Advent season. On each star, write or draw a way you can help others, especially those who are poor or in need. Then cut out the stars and glue them to construction paper to display at home.



Brother James Miller

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, Brother James Miller will be beatified, which is a step in the official process of recognizing him as a saint. Many will travel from the United States to Heuheuenango, Guatemala to be present for the beatification this December, and to remember the life and legacy of Brother James Miller. He was declared a martyr in 2009 and must have one miracle posthumously attributed to him to reach the next level toward official sainthood, which is canonization.

Introduce Brother James Miller by sharing the material below, saying the prayer together, and inviting the children to color the picture of him. For more on Brother James Miller, visit the DeLaSalle Christian Brothers of the Midwest [website](#). To learn more about the process of beatification and canonization, see the section on "Saints" on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' [website](#).

People of Faith

BLESSED BROTHER JAMES MILLER (1944-1982)

James was a Christian Brother who always had a desire to teach and share the Kingdom of God with those who are poor. He taught in Nicaragua and Guatemala for many years. He enjoyed teaching industrial arts and agriculture, and was known at one school as Brother Fix-It. He was martyred by gunmen while making repairs outside his school in Guatemala.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Dear Jesus, we thank you for giving us an example of working to share the Kingdom of God in the life of Brother James Miller. Help us to spread your love in our family and among all people by remembering your love for us. Amen.

This material is adapted from the Grade 4, Chapter 14 Activity Booklet in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **DISCOVER!**

visit smp.org/discoverparish or smp.org/discoverpschool



Blessed Brother James Miller



Epiphany Blessing

Choose four children to be the readers and have them stand at each of the four corners of the room. Show them their lines and practice reading with them. Distribute copies of the words to “We Three Kings” to the group. Direct the rest of the group to move to each corner of the room as the blessing is read.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. (*All make Sign of the Cross.*) Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (*Allow about 10 seconds of silence.*)

Leader: It is the time of Epiphany. We remember the Three Kings who followed a star to find the new King, Jesus. Listen again to the words of Isaiah:

“Great caravans of camels will come,
from Midian and Ephah.
They will come from Sheba, bringing
gold and incense.
People will tell the good news of what
the Lord has done!”

(*Isaiah 60:6*)

Lead the children in singing the chorus of “We Three Kings.”

Leader: Marking the front door of a house is a custom that many people follow at Epiphany. We will mark our door today. As we mark the door of our room, let us remember the Three Kings, who set out on a long journey to find a new King, Jesus. Tradition tells us their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. So we place their initials on the doorway to bless all who enter this room.

Mark the doorway or write the blessing formula on the board, as follows: first two digits of the year + C + M + B + last two digits of the new year. As you write, explain that the C stands for Caspar, the M for Melchior, and the B for Balthazar, the traditional names of the Three Kings. Then move the group to the first corner of the room.

Reader 1: Lord God, fill this room with kindness for one another.

All: Help us to seek Jesus our King always.

(*Group moves to the second corner*)

Reader 2: Bless every corner of our world with safety, peace, and love.

All: Help us to seek Jesus our King always.

(*Group moves to the third corner*)

Reader 3: Teach us to welcome everyone and fill our hearts with Christmas joy.

All: Help us to seek Jesus our King always.

(*Group moves to the fourth corner*)

Reader 4: Teach us to respect other and be open to adventures and surprises.

All: Help us to seek Jesus our King always.

(*Group moves to the third corner*)

Leader: During this year of 20__ (name the year), may the Lord bless you and keep you. May God’s face shine upon you and bring you peace.

All: Amen.

This prayer service is taken from the Christmas/Epiphany chapter of the Grade 3 Teaching Guide in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

A MINDFUL ADVENT:

NOT TIME YET

BY JOANNA DAILEY

THIS YEAR ADVENT BEGINS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1.

In past years, in my efforts to prepare for this season of preparation, I often found myself behind before I had even started—digging out the Advent wreath the Sunday *after* the first Sunday of Advent, and with a feeling of regret that I had not planned better.





Advent always brings to mind a phrase my mother sprinkled throughout her conversation during this season: “not time yet.” When I would find her baking cookies in the kitchen and ask for a taste, she would reply, “Just one, because it’s really not time yet.” Not time yet—for parties, or presents, or cookies. And then, finally, it was time—Christmas Eve, the after-midnight meal, the family Christmas party, packed with aunts, uncles, cousins, and “all of the above.” Even Santa came! Finally, it was Christmas.

**“SO LET’S
DECIDE NOW
TO CELEBRATE
ADVENT
THIS YEAR.”**

So let’s decide now to celebrate Advent this year. Let’s plan to put a little “not time yet” into our lives and into the lives of the children with whom we minister. This does not mean that we should not take advantage of special Christmas events, like concerts and displays, or attend parties and open houses. (Although I would welcome a cultural shift from Christmas parties *before* Christmas to Christmas parties *after* Christmas.) But a few little changes in routine, a few countercultural shifts, will help us remember to prepare our hearts, prayerfully, for the coming of Christ.

We would never think of celebrating Easter a few weeks early, just because we enjoy celebrating. As religious educators, we should make small efforts to help children celebrate Advent and Christmas mindfully.

After all, Christmas marks the beginning of our salvation: Jesus, the Word Made Flesh, come among us as a little child. This is a celebration worth waiting for! ■

Bring your Advent & Christmas celebrations new meaning!

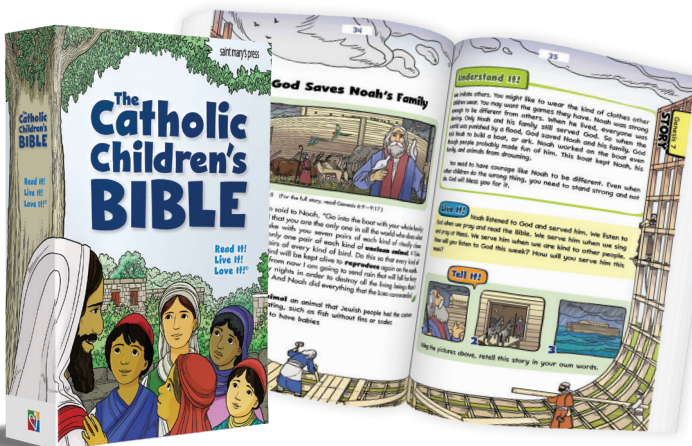


NEW! DISCOVER THE SAINTS

helps children discover who saints are and why they're important to our faith! Over 30 well-known saints are featured in this beautiful, rich book. With room for prayers and reflection, a child can make this book their own.

DISCOVER THE SAINTS
\$5.95, #5045

GET 10 FOR \$50 WITH PROMO CODE SAINTSGIFT



THE CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S BIBLE

is a complete Bible with 125 Featured stories highlighting key Bible passages and is great for young readers, in the easy-to-read Good News Translation.

THE CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S BIBLE
\$29.95, #4151

LEARN MORE AT SMP.ORG

Inspire! Advent Special Edition // Subscribe today! smp.org/inspire

The gift they'll open all year

INSPIRE! subscriptions are the perfect gift for your teachers and catechists!

Make it a meaningful Christmas. Inspire! magazine grew out of a deep passion we have for supporting catechists and teachers as they engage children in a process of faith formation that is filled with life and joy!

Each issue is filled with engaging activities, encouraging reflections and inspiring articles to equip your teachers and catechists in their good work!

Add inspiration to those who you serve with all year long.

Get 3 issues (Winter 2019) Spring 2020, Fall 2020) for only \$19.95.

Order by December 13 and your recipients are guaranteed to get the January issue!

visit smp.org/inspire

