



# Advent Blessings in the Home

*Advent Wreath ♦ Crèche ♦ Christmas Tree ♦ Christmas Gifts*

## *Blessing of the Advent Wreath*

The Advent Wreath reminds us that even as the night grows longer, Christ's light will grow stronger. As we light an additional candle each week, the Light of Christ grows brighter, casting away the darkness of sin and anxiety. Light the candle each night at dinnertime. Use it as part of your mealtime prayer for the season. When lighting the first candle, you may say this prayer:

**L**ord Jesus Christ,  
you are the Morning Star and our unfailing light.  
As the darkness of night and sin surrounds us,  
you draw us ever nearer with your warmth and light.  
Bless this Advent Wreath and all who gather around it.  
May it remind us that you came to earth in human form  
to save us from our sins  
and to show us the Father's love and mercy.  
May we be vigilant, watching and waiting for the day  
when you return in glory to establish your Kingdom  
where you live and reign, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## *Blessing of the Crèche*

The tradition of the Christmas Manger, or Creche, was started by St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. Using live animals, he set the scene near his hermitage and invited the people of the nearby town of Greccio to celebrate Midnight Mass. He wanted them to see the simple and vulnerable humanity taken on by the Almighty God. There was not a baby in the manger, yet Francis preached with such love and fervor that he had a vision of the Christ child, which he held and kissed. Today, some people wait until Christmas Eve to place the Christ-child in the manger. When your manger is prepared, you may say the following prayer.

**L**ord Jesus Christ,  
you are God,  
and yet you revealed yourself to us as a helpless baby born in poverty.  
Bless this manger scene and all who look upon it.  
May it stir in us a deeper love for you.  
Grant us the grace to see your face—the Babe in Bethlehem—  
when we look into the face of others.  
Teach us to be humble and to live each day  
as a sacrifice of praise that is pleasing to you,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## *Blessing of the Christmas Tree*

Today, we start seeing Christmas trees pop up in malls and stores as early as October. By mid-November, they are everywhere! The Christmas tree as we know it was a German custom that originated in the late 16th-century. The custom was most likely brought to Canada and the United States by Hessian soldiers around the time of the Revolutionary War. Evergreens are a sign of eternity since they alone survive the dormancy other trees experience in winter. The tree itself, bedecked with lights, ornaments and other treats is a reminder of the beauty of heaven where all the trees will clap their hands (*see Isaiah 55:12*). When your tree has been decorated, gather as a family and pray this prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you are light in our darkness  
and the splendor of the Father.  
Bless this Christmas tree and all who gather around it.  
May its beauty remind us of your own beauty  
and give us a glimpse of the longed-for day  
when we will see our heavenly Father face to face  
amidst beauty that no eye has seen.  
May it be a place of joyful gathering  
where our family and friends can grow in love  
as we look for your coming at the end of time,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever,  
Amen.

## *Blessing of Christmas Gifts*

Our lives are so busy during Advent that it is sometimes difficult to find time for prayer and or to reflect on preparing our hearts and making room for the Lord. It is possible to use some of our daily December activities in a way that opens our heart to Christ even as we do them. The giving of gifts provides a wonderful opportunity to show our gratitude to God and our love for others. Consider in love what gifts to buy for your loved ones and, to the extent you are able, focus more on the giving than the hectic shopping. Think about your loved one as you wrap presents. It doesn't have to be perfect if you wrap it with love! If there are people on your list who you don't particularly like, use this gift as a reminder of some of the good qualities that person has and ask God for the ability to see this person through God's own loving eyes. After all of the gifts are wrapped and under the tree, pray this blessing as a family.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
though you are great in majesty  
you were born into our weakness  
and experienced our lives in all things but sin.  
You suffered and died on the cross  
as a loving gift for your people.  
Bless these gifts and those who receive them.  
May they remind us of the countless gifts you bestow on us.  
May we give them freely and with Christ-like love.  
Strengthen the bond of love between ourselves  
and those who will receive this gifts,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.