

Advent Family Lessons – December 2025



Our Advent Family Lessons are offered in place of formal classes in December. We instituted this to both honor family life and help families discover or rekindle Catholic traditions while learning more about the faith together. This is a special aspect of the Religious Education program, designed to honor family life as the “Domestic Church.”

How to complete Advent Family Lessons

-  Choose 2 activities from the following pages.
-  To view links, these lessons have been posted at our webpage here under “Documents”:
<https://sacredheartmh.org/religious-education>.
-  After completing the activities, students should fill out the reflection sheet. You can either download/print the sheet at the end of this document (Summer and Fall Sessions), or students can fill out the sheet electronically in the Google Classroom (Family Session).
****Please note that there is now one reflection sheet for all grades to use.**
-  Reflection sheets are due by **January 13th, 2026**.
-  Students can check the Religious Education bulletin board in the church (next to the sacristy) for additional resources and activities.

We would love to share pictures of our families working on Advent Lessons on our Sacred Heart Parish webpage! If you have pictures that you’d like us to share, email them to barbkane@sacredheartRE.org.
(Please include a description of the Lesson/what is happening in the picture.)

Advent Family Lessons for December 2025



During the month of December and into January, students are to work with their family to complete two of the suggested lessons outlined below, and then complete and submit the student reflection sheet.

Lesson Options – Choose **2** from the following:

-  **Tradition of the Jesse Tree:** Advent is a season of waiting, and a Jesse Tree is a great way to prepare for Jesus by journeying through the stories on Jesus's family tree. For each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you'll see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations. For ideas, templates, and Bible readings, there are two great links which provide instructions and free printables: [Simply Catholic](#) or [Faithmag](#). Visit our bulletin board in the vestibule of the church if you would like a hard copy of the Jesse Tree activity.
-  **Advent Angels** – On the first day of Advent, Sunday, November 30th, place family member names in a hat and pick out a name. The goal is for each person to perform acts of kindness and service (in secret) for the person whom they've picked. You can switch the names each Sunday of Advent to spread joy and creativity or continue with the same person for the entire 4 weeks of Advent.
-  **Advent Calendar of Daily Activities for Children:** [Children can follow this calendar](#) with simple daily tasks that can help them grow spiritually during Advent or they can pick up an Advent calendar from the church by the RE bulletin board.
-  **Advent with the Saints: St. Nicholas Day – December 6th and Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – December 12th**
 - To celebrate St. Nicholas' Feast day, you can find some great ideas [here at Catholic Icing](#), and also [here at the St. Nicholas Center](#). (My favorite is the Neighborhood St. Nicholas Surprises – [check it out here!](#))
 - To celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and learn more about Juan Diego, visit [Teaching Catholic kids at this link](#).
-  **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and/or Sacred Heart Christmas Carol Festival on Dec. 7th or 8th:**
 - The **Sacred Heart Christmas Carol Festival** is a great way to enjoy Advent as a family. Consider joining us on **Sunday, December 7th at 3pm in the SHS Auditorium**. Check the parish bulletin for additional details as we get closer to the date.
 - **The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception** is a feast day to celebrate that Mary was born without sin. We invite you to attend **Mass on December 8th**. To learn more about this special day and help explain it to your children, please [visit this link](#) and check the parish bulletin for Mass times (online bulletin can be accessed at <https://sacredheartmh.org/> at the right of the page).
-  **Preparing our Hearts for Baby Jesus (for younger children or for a younger child and an older sibling):**
 - This activity focuses on getting ourselves ready for the birth of Jesus by doing good for others. Children make a simple craft of Jesus in the manger and each time a family member* observes him/her doing something kind, a piece of hay is added to the manger. This craft can be very simple – mangers can be made from paper bags with the top cut off, hay can be pieces of yarn or paper. You can find ideas for how to make this craft on our Pinterest board at https://www.pinterest.com/SHRE_MtHolly/baby-jesus-nativity-craft-ideas/; the purpose is really to encourage and teach little ones that to show kindness towards others is one of the best ways we can get ready for Christmas.
 - *An older sibling can choose to do this activity if he or she commits to being the “observer” who adds hay to the manger when noticing the younger child's good deeds.

 Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (Feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowful)

- **Bake a special treat or a cook meal** for a person or family in need, whether the need is spiritual (loneliness, sadness) or physical (hunger, thirst). You may choose to adopt a family through an organization and provide a Christmas meal for them. Whichever way that you choose to carry this out, have your family include the person/people you are serving in your prayers throughout the season (or longer). **Online resource for baking/cooking:** <http://catholiccuisine.blogspot.com> (This is a comprehensive Catholic cooking site that offers recipes and ideas for many Church holy days and the liturgical seasons. On the right side of the screen, there is an index entitled “Perfect for...” where you may click on specific areas such as cookies, cupcakes, Advent, etc.)
- **Do a ‘Reverse Advent Calendar’** – Check the bulletin for the needs of our St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, and each day in Advent, place an item from the list in a box or basket. At the end of Advent, donate to St. Vincent de Paul.
- **Advent Stocking Project for Brookdale Seniors** – make cards, a craft project, or stuff a stocking for the seniors at Brookdale in Westampton. Please see [this flyer](#) for more information.
- **Christmas Giving – Donating items for those in need:** You may be able to find local organizations that are holding gift drives, and our own **St. Vincent de Paul Society** is doing something similar this year for people in our community (they are collecting through December 7th). For information on this, please check the weekly Parish bulletin.

 **Wandering Wise Men:** Have your Wise Men figurines search the house for baby Jesus and get creative using Bible quotes or good deed notes as part of their search. Can you tell this was partially inspired by the popularity of the Elf on the Shelf (“Wise Men in the Den”?). [Check out the link here](#) for details!

 **Celebrate Epiphany:** Most people think that Christmas is over after December 25th, but Christmas is longer than one day. We celebrate the Epiphany in January (January 6th, 2026), and by then, most people already have their Christmas decorations packed away. Resist that temptation this year and leave the decorations up until the Feast of the Epiphany, which marks the end of the Christmas season. Gather as a family, have a special dinner, and then take down the decorations. Talk about your favorite holiday moments while you’re bringing the season to a close. Check [here](#) for more ideas on ways to celebrate.

 **International Traditions:** Many countries around the world have unique and beautiful traditions for Advent or Christmas. Learn about and include one of these traditions with your family. Here are a few examples:

- **Germany** – leave shoes out for St. Nicholas and learn more [here](#)
- **Philippines** – attend a Simbang Gabi Mass and learn more [here](#)
- **Mexico and Guatemala** – celebrate and learn more about Las Posadas [here](#)
- **Poland** – share the Oplatki (available during Advent in the vestibule at Sacred Heart) before Christmas Eve dinner and learn more about it [here](#) or [here](#)

 **Pontifical Mission Society Art Contest:** The Pontifical Mission Societies (TPMS) are a worldwide network at the service of the Pope, supporting the missions and young Churches through prayer and charity. Their annual Christmas Artwork Contest provides a beautiful opportunity for students to reflect on Advent themes and express them creatively. As children paint, draw, and design, they consider how the light of Christ can shine through their own hands and hearts. The art contest allows children’s art to become an expression of faith, a witness to the Gospel, and a joyful celebration of the season. To enter and learn more: <https://pontificalmissions.org/mca-artwork-contest>.

Reflection Sheet can be found on the next page!

Name (first and last): _____

Grade: _____

Student Reflection

Please check the **2** lessons/activities that were completed by your family:

- ☐ Tradition of the Jesse Tree
- ☐ Advent Angels
- ☐ Advent Calendar of Daily Activities for Children
- ☐ Advent with the Saints: St. Nicholas Day and Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- ☐ Attend the Immaculate Conception Mass or SH's Christmas Carol Festival (Dec. 7 or 8)
- ☐ Preparing Our Hearts for Baby Jesus
- ☐ Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- ☐ Wandering Wise Men
- ☐ Celebrate Epiphany
- ☐ International Traditions or Pontifical Mission Society Art Contest

(Please answer the following question in words or with a drawing. Use the back of the page if you need more space!)

1. Which activity was your favorite and why did you enjoy it?

2. How did it help you get ready to celebrate the Birth of Jesus or the Christmas Season?

3. "Jesus is the reason for the season!" Share a time during this Advent and Christmas season that you saw someone sharing the love of Jesus. How did they show that they are a follower of Christ?

4. Share one way that you can bring the joy of the Christmas season and bring the love of Jesus into every day: