

Chapter 14 Christmas

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Three Days

Easter

Ordinary Time

Christmas

Next to the yearly celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the Church holds most sacred the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the Christmas season.

(Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars, 32)

Overview

In this chapter the children will learn that Christmas is a season to give glory to God.

For Adult Reading and Reflection

You may want to refer to paragraph 526 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Catechist Background

What was your most memorable celebration of Christmas? Why?

In some of our cultural settings, we are apt to think of Christmas as one single day rather than an entire season. For the Church, however, Christmas Day is a beginning: the beginning of the Christmas season.

For about two weeks we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation, the coming of the Word made flesh to us. As we profess in the Nicene Creed,

“... for our salvation,
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.”

Each day of the Christmas season renews the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. In the northern hemisphere, the Christmas season is a celebration of light at the darkest time of the year. The traditional Christmas lights of this season remind us

that Jesus, “the light [which] shines in the darkness,” (John 1:5) is the true light who enlightens our lives every day of this season and throughout the year. Jesus truly is light for all people.

The feasts of this season reflect the light of Christ, each in its own way. As we celebrate the Feasts of the Holy Innocents, the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord, we rejoice in the everlasting truth that Jesus Christ is our light and our life. Each day of the Christmas season we have reason to sing: “Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord” (Christmas antiphon).

Throughout the Christmas season how will you celebrate that Jesus Christ is our light and our life?

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(*Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars*, 32)

Overview

In this chapter the children will learn that Christmas is a season to give glory to God.

For Adult Reading and Reflection You may want to refer to paragraphs 1174 and 526 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Catechist Background

What was your most memorable celebration of Christmas? Why?

In some of our cultural settings, we are apt to think of Christmas as one single day rather than an entire season. For the Church, however, Christmas Day is a beginning: the beginning of the Christmas season. For about two weeks we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation, the coming of the Word made flesh to us. As we profess in the Nicene Creed,

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The feasts of this season reflect the light of Christ. As we celebrate the Feasts of the Holy Innocents, the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord, we rejoice in the everlasting truth that Jesus Christ is our light and our life. Each day of the Christmas season we have reason to sing: "Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord" (Christmas antiphon).

Throughout the Christmas season how will you celebrate that Jesus Christ is our light and our life?

Focus on Life

Chapter Story

It was the Sunday after Christmas, the Feast of the Holy Family. Dominic rolled out of bed and said, "Today's a good day! After we come home from Mass, we're going to Aunt Cecilia's house to celebrate Christmas."

As Dominic's family were on their way to Aunt Cecilia's, he said, "I wonder what gift I will get from Jesus this year."

Dominic's sister Maria was three. She said to him, "What do you mean, Dominic? Why will Jesus give us a present?"

Dominic's dad explained, "Every year Aunt Cecilia makes cards. On the cards she writes the name of gifts that God has given us. She puts the cards near the Christmas crèche. And we all take turns picking one of the cards that tell us about our gifts from Jesus."

Dominic said, "Last year I received the gift of trees and plants. My card said, 'I give you the gift of trees and plants. When you look at these gifts, remember I want you to keep growing in God's love.'"

That afternoon after the family dinner, Aunt Cecilia invited the family to gather around the Christmas crèche. Dominic helped Maria choose a gift card. He read it aloud for her, "I give you the gift of animals. When you see them or hear them, remember I want you to learn about them and take care of them."

Then Dominic picked his card and read about his gift, "I give you the gift of the moon and the stars. When you see them shining, remember that I am the Light of the World."

That night as Dominic, his sister, and their parents were leaving Aunt Cecilia's, Dominic's dad said, "Cecilia, you really help make the Christmas season and the Feast of the Holy Family special."

What do you think was special about Dominic's family's celebration?

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