

# Family

## ADVENT GUIDE

As the days draw ever closer to Christmas, we are invited into a season of waiting, hope, and wonder. Advent is a time to pause amidst the busyness of life and prepare our hearts to celebrate the most extraordinary gift of all—Jesus Christ. It's a journey of anticipation, where each candle we light, each prayer we offer, and each act of love we share brings us closer to the light of His coming.

This guide is designed to help your family embrace the spirit of Advent together. Through prayers, reflections, and activities, you'll explore the virtues of hope, peace, joy, and love—gifts that remind us of God's presence in our lives. Whether through quiet moments of reflection or joyful family traditions, we hope this guide brings you closer to one another and to the heart of Christmas.

Let this season be a time of connection and growth. May you rediscover the simple yet profound truth that God loves you deeply and that His light shines brightly, even in the darkest times. As you journey through Advent, may your hearts be filled with hope, your homes with peace, your spirits with joy, and your lives with love.

This resource has been created for your family by the Lismore Catholic Schools Parent Assembly: supporting family faith formation and family school partnerships in Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools.

DIOCESE OF LISMORE

## Catholic Schools Parent Assembly

*Parents in Partnership*



# \* The Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath is rich in Christian symbolism, with each element representing a part of the story and themes of the season. Here's an explanation of its components:

## **The Circle**

The circular shape of the wreath represents eternity and the unending love of God. It has no beginning or end, symbolising the everlasting life and salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

## **Evergreen Foliage**

The greenery used in the wreath is often evergreen, representing life, hope, and renewal, even in the darkest and coldest times of the year. It reflects the eternal life that Christ brings.

## **Red Berries**

Red berries, if present, symbolise the blood of Christ, shed for humanity's salvation. They remind us of the sacrifice that Jesus made out of love for us, connecting Christmas with the ultimate purpose of His birth—our redemption.

## **White Flowers**

White flowers, such as poinsettias, lilies, or other decorations, represent purity, innocence, and the divine nature of Christ. They also symbolise Mary's purity, Christ's sinlessness, and the joy of His coming as the light of the world.

## **The Four Candles**

Each candle represents one week of Advent, leading up to Christmas. Three are typically purple, and one is pink. They represent the four virtues that we seek to deepen over Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

## **The Central White Candle**

Known as the Christ Candle, this candle is placed in the centre and lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Its white colour represents Christ's purity and the light He brings into the world.



# WEEK 1 - HOPE

Sunday 1st December

**Focus Virtue:** Hope reminds us to trust in God's promises, even during difficult times.

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more.” (Psalm 71:14)

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

As we light the candle of Hope today, we are reminded of the promises You have made throughout history. You promised a Saviour to a world in darkness, and You kept Your word, sending Jesus to be the light of our lives. Thank you for the hope we find in Your unchanging love and faithfulness.

Lord, sometimes we face challenges that feel overwhelming, and it’s hard to see what lies ahead. Yet even in the darkest moments, You call us to trust in Your goodness and hold onto the hope that only You can give. May this candle remind us of Your presence, shining brightly in our hearts and guiding us through uncertain times.

Fill our hearts with renewed hope, Lord, and help us to share that hope with others. Let us be a light in the lives of those around us, offering encouragement and pointing them toward Your love. As we wait for the celebration of Jesus’ birth, may we grow in faith, trusting that Your promises are true and Your plans are always good.

Amen.

**All Family Members can recite the Psalm:** “But as for me I will always have hope.”

**Reflection:** Advent is about waiting and trusting that God will fulfill His promises. Take a moment to think about the hopes you carry in your heart this season. What are you hoping for? You may like to write it on a piece of paper and place it in the centre of the Advent wreath.

## Advent Kindness Angels Activity

In this activity, your family will take on the role of “Kindness Angels” for one another. Each family member will draw a name from a hat, keeping the name a secret. Throughout Advent, the person you choose will be your special focus for small, thoughtful acts of kindness. These acts are your way of being Jesus for others. You might do a chore for someone, make their bed, write a poem, draw a picture for them or any other small act of love. As you perform acts of kindness, remember that every small gesture is a reflection of God’s love. Just as Jesus came not to be served but to serve, this activity reminds us of the joy that comes from giving selflessly.

By being a Kindness Angel, you are not only preparing your own heart for Christmas but also helping to create a spirit of love and generosity in your home. At the end of Advent, gather as a family to reveal your “Kindness Angel” and share how their acts of kindness impacted your Advent journey.



# WEEK 1 - HOPE



## Monday 2nd December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him.” (Romans 15:13)

**Prayer:**

Gracious God,

As we journey through Advent, may we grow in trust and confidence in Your plans for our lives so we are filled with hope. Let this season be a time of renewed faith, where we embrace the hope that comes from knowing Jesus as our Saviour.

Amen.

**Activity:** Write a letter, send a Christmas card or a text to a person who might need a message of hope and encouragement.

## Tuesday 3rd December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.” (Psalm 31:24)

**Prayer:**

Loving Father,

You are our strength and courage every day. As we think about the hope of Advent, we remember that You always keep Your promises. You sent Jesus to bring us salvation, and through Him, we can face life’s challenges with faith.

Guide us, Lord, to live as people of hope. Help us trust You when things feel uncertain and remind us of Your love and control over all things. Thank You for this day and the chance to walk in faith. We look forward with joy to celebrating Jesus’ birth.

Amen.

**Activity:**

Create a family Courage Shield using a paper plate or piece of cardboard. Cut out the shape of a shield and write your family name across it. Decorate it and write words or symbols of bravery. You can also include the Scripture passage: “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”

## Wednesday 4th December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” (Hebrews 6:19)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

Thank You for being our anchor, holding us steady when life feels hard or stormy. You are always with us, and Your love gives us hope no matter what happens. Help us to trust You when we feel unsure or afraid.

Thank You for being our safe place and for filling our hearts with hope and peace. We love You, and we are so glad You are with us every day.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen.

**Activity:**

Have a family chat about the idea of God as our anchor.

- What does an anchor do?
- How is God like an anchor for us?
- How is God’s hope different from just wishing for something to happen?

# WEEK 1 - HOPE

## Thursday 5th December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:12)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

You remind us in today's Scripture passage that we should be constant in prayer. Help us to offer our time to You throughout the day as we go about our work, school, and play.

Teach us to turn to You in moments of joy and in times of worry, trusting that You are always listening. Let our hearts stay connected to You, finding hope in Your presence.

Amen.

**Activity:**

As a family discuss when each person could add in a few more moments of prayer in their day. Maybe it could be as soon as they wake up or on their daily walk or on the drive to school or work. Commit to spending a little more time with the Lord this week.

## Friday 6th December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

Thank You for loving us and having a wonderful plan for our lives. Your plans are always good, even when we can't see what's ahead. We trust in the hope You have given us, knowing You are guiding us every step of the way.

Sometimes we feel unsure or afraid of what might happen next. When those moments come, help us to remember that You are with us. Give us the courage to follow Your path, knowing that Your way is always best. We love You and trust You, Lord.

Amen.

**Activity:**

Read a Bible story about hope such as The Healing of the Blind Man (John 9:1-12). Talk about how hopeful the man was that Jesus could heal him and how Jesus responded to that hope and faith.

## Saturday 7th December

**First Candle:** Ask a family member to light the first purple candle on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:** "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23)

**Prayer:**

Lord,

You always keep Your promises, and that gives us so much hope. Thank You for being faithful and true in everything You say and do. We can count on You no matter what happens in our lives.

Sometimes it's hard to keep believing when things don't go the way we expect. Please help us to hold on tightly to the hope we have in You. Remind us that You never let go of us, even when we feel weak or unsure.

We ask for Your help to be strong in faith and hope. Show us how to trust You more and to share our hope with others by being kind and helpful. Thank You for loving us so much and for being our faithful God.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

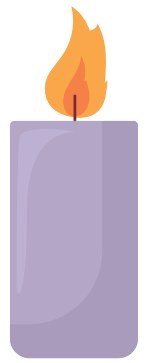
**Activity:**

Buy a small packet of seeds and some pots. Plant the seeds together as a family and discuss how waiting for the seeds to grow reminds us to be patient in our hope and to trust in God's timing.



# WEEK 2 - PEACE

Sunday 8th December



**Focus Virtue:** Peace reminds us of God's calming presence in our lives.

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

## Scripture:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests." (Luke 2:14)

## Prayer:

Dear God,

Today, as we light the second candle on our Advent wreath, we think about the peace You bring into our world and into our hearts. You sent Jesus to show us how to live with love and calmness, even when life feels noisy or hard. Thank You for being our safe place, where we can rest and find comfort.

Lord, help us to be still and feel Your peace within us. When we feel worried or upset, remind us that You are always near, ready to calm our hearts. Teach us to trust You more and to let go of the things that make us anxious.

We pray for peace in our family, in our community, and in the whole world. Show us how to be peacemakers, sharing kindness and forgiveness with others. Help us to listen to each other, speak gently, and work together to make things right.

Thank You, God, for the gift of peace that fills our hearts and homes. Help us to carry Your peace with us wherever we go this week.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

## Reflection:

Take a moment to sit quietly together as a family. Close your eyes and imagine Jesus wrapping His arms around you like a warm blanket. As you breathe in, whisper in your heart, "Jesus brings peace." As you breathe out, whisper, "I give Him my worries." Repeat this three times together.

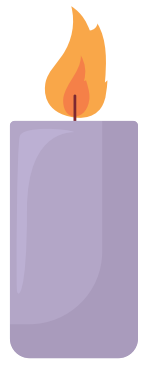
## Advent Activity: Peace Band-aids

As a family write on a piece of paper the things that can happen in your family, school and community that upset the peace. Give each family member a bandaid and a permanent marker and ask them to write one thing they can do to help bring peace to their family. Stick the band-aids over the piece of the paper symbolising how our actions can bring peace to our families and communities.





# WEEK 2 - PEACE



## Monday 9th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace.” (Psalm 29:11)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

You are the source of strength and peace in our lives, and we are so thankful for Your blessings. When we feel weak, worried, or tired, remind us that You are always with us, ready to calm our hearts. Help us to trust in Your power and lean on You when things feel hard. Fill our home with peace, Lord, and teach us to share that peace with each other by being kind, patient, and loving. Let us be a light of Your peace to those we meet this week. Thank You for giving us the strength we need each day. Amen.

**Activity:**

Take turns sharing one thing that makes you feel peaceful. Then, as a family, pick a peaceful activity to do together this week, like reading a story, taking a walk, or listening to quiet music.

## Tuesday 10th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

**Prayer:**

Dear Jesus,

You have called us to be peacemakers, just like You. We know that making peace isn't always easy, but You promise that when we choose peace, we are living as Your children. Help us to listen carefully, speak gently, and be patient with one another. Show us how to forgive when we feel hurt and to say sorry when we've made mistakes. Let Your love guide us to bring calm and understanding to every situation. Thank You for showing us what it means to live peacefully and for always being with us as we try to follow Your example. Amen.

**Activity:**

Write on a piece of paper one way you can be a peacemaker at home or school this week. Keep it where you can see it and try to do it every day.

## Wednesday 11th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you.” (John 14:27)

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for the incredible gift of peace that only You can give. Your peace is unlike anything we can find in the world—it fills us with calm even when things are hard or scary. Help us to trust in You when we feel worried or unsure, knowing that You are always near to comfort us. Teach us to take a deep breath, pray, and remember Your promises whenever life feels overwhelming. Let Your peace guide us in how we treat others, helping us to be gentle and loving. We are so grateful that You have left this gift for us, and we ask You to fill our hearts and our home with it today. Amen.

**Activity:**

Spend time creating a "peaceful space" in your home. Choose a small area where the family can pray or sit quietly. Decorate it together with a cross, candles, or peaceful drawings.



# WEEK 2 - PEACE

Thursday 12th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:14)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

You call us to turn away from anything that causes harm and to pursue what is good. Thank You for showing us the way to peace through Your love and kindness. Help us to always seek peace in our words, actions, and choices. When it's tempting to argue or hold a grudge, remind us to choose forgiveness and understanding instead. Show us how to bring peace into every relationship in our lives, starting with our family. Mary, our Mother, you are the Queen of Peace, help peace live in our hearts like it does in yours. Amen.

**Activity:**

Draw a picture of the Queen of Peace (there are lots of examples on the internet to help) and place it in your family prayer space or near your Advent wreath.

Friday 13th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone.” (Hebrews 12:14)

**Prayer:**

Lord,

Sometimes it's hard to get along with everyone, but You remind us that love and kindness can solve so many problems. Help us to be patient and work together as a family to bring peace into our home.

**Activity:**

Quietly think about someone you may not have forgiven or who you have some anger or resentment toward. Say a silent prayer to God asking you to help forgive, accept and love that person.

Saturday 14th December

**Second Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

**Scripture:**

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” (Colossians 3:15)

**Prayer:**

Jesus,

We are so grateful for the peace You bring to our hearts, no matter what is happening around us. Your peace gives us comfort when we're sad, courage when we're scared, and calm when we're worried. Help us to let Your peace take charge of our thoughts and actions so that we can make choices that honor You. Teach us to rely on You when we face challenges and to trust that You are always in control. Thank You for being our constant source of peace and for filling our hearts with Your love. Amen.

**Activity:**

Go for a family peace walk in the late afternoon or evening. Walk around your neighbourhood silently praying for peace in each home and for each family.





# WEEK 3 - JOY

15th December

**Focus Virtue:** Joy reminds us to find delight in God's presence and to share His goodness with others through a cheerful heart.

## **The Third Candle:**

Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

## **Scripture:**

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

## **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of joy that comes from knowing You and living in Your presence. Your joy strengthens us when we feel weak and lifts our spirits when life is hard. Help us to remember that true happiness isn't found in things, but in the love You have for us and the hope You've given us through Jesus.

Teach us to be joyful in all circumstances, trusting that You are always working for our good.

Fill our hearts with gratitude for the little blessings we experience each day—a kind word, a warm hug, or the beauty of Your creation. Help us to be carriers of Your joy, sharing it through our smiles, our words, and our actions.

Let our home be a place where joy overflows and Your light shines brightly. As we continue our Advent journey, remind us that the joy of Christmas is about more than gifts and decorations; it's about celebrating the gift of Jesus, who came to bring us everlasting joy. Thank You, Lord, for being the reason we can rejoice today and always. Amen.

## **Activity: Resting in God's Love**

After Mass this week, take five extra minutes to sit quietly in the pew as a family. Don't focus on asking God for anything—simply rest in His presence and reflect on how much He loves you. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine His love surrounding you. Think about how your greatest joy comes not from what you do or have, but from simply being loved by God. For younger children, encourage them to picture God smiling at them with great joy. Afterward, share as a family how it felt to simply "be" in God's love without any distractions.





# WEEK 3 - JOY



**Monday 16th December**

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24)

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord,

Thank You for each new day that You give us. Every morning is a chance to experience Your blessings and to see the beauty of the world You’ve created. Help us to find reasons to rejoice, even when things don’t go as planned. Show us how to be thankful for the little joys around us—a kind word, a sunny day, or time spent together. Let Your joy fill our hearts today so that we can be a light for others. Thank You for the gift of this day and the opportunity to glorify You in all we do. Amen.

**Activity:**

Share three joyful moments in each family member’s day.

**Tuesday 17th December**

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.” (Psalm 16:11)

**Prayer:**

Lord,

You are the source of all joy, and being in Your presence fills our hearts with happiness. Thank You for guiding us along the path of life and reminding us of Your love through the people and blessings You’ve placed in our lives. Teach us to pause and appreciate the moments when we feel Your joy. Let us seek Your presence daily and trust that You are with us in everything we do. Help us to share that joy with others, spreading smiles and kindness wherever we go. Thank You for being our constant source of strength and happiness. Amen.

**Activity:**

Take a moment as a family to sing or listen to a favourite joyful song or Christmas carol. Discuss how music can bring joy and lift our spirits.

**Wednesday 18th December**

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

We rejoice in You today and every day because of Your great love for us. Thank You for sending Jesus to bring light into the world and to show us what it means to live with joy. Help us to look for reasons to celebrate, to laugh, and to enjoy this beautiful life You’ve given us. May Your joy overflow in our hearts so we can share it with everyone we meet. Thank You for being the source of our happiness and peace. Amen.

**Activity:**

As a family, discuss how you can spread joy to someone else, like calling a friend, helping a neighbour, or writing a thank-you note. Make a Joy To Do List and ask each family member to pick an activity to do for someone outside your immediate family this week.

# WEEK 3 - JOY

Thursday 19th December

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.” (Psalm 4:7)

**Prayer:**

Gracious God,

Your joy fills our hearts and gives us more satisfaction than anything else in this world. Thank You for teaching us that true happiness doesn't come from things, but from being close to You. Help us to focus on the things that truly matter—faith, family, love, and kindness. When we feel tempted to look for joy in the wrong places, remind us to turn to You instead. Let our hearts be full of Your joy so we can share it with others through our words and actions. Thank You for the blessings You pour into our lives every day. Amen.

**Activity:**

As a family talk about real joy:

- What are some things we see in advertisements, social media, or around us that the world says will make us happy? Do they bring lasting joy, or is it temporary?
- Can you think of a time when you felt truly joyful? What made that moment so special, and how was God's love part of it?

Friday 20th December

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.” (Psalm 100:1-2)

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,

We come to You today with hearts full of praise and joy. Thank You for being a God who delights in our happiness and invites us to worship You with gladness. Help us to find joy in every moment and to remember that You are the reason for all the good things in our lives. May our family always find reasons to rejoice, even in the simplest of blessings. Thank You for being our source of endless joy. Amen.

**Activity:**

Create a Family Joy Jar by getting all family members to write 5 different activities that bring them joy that they would like to do together as a family. Explain that they have to be achievable - no holidays to Fiji! Use these throughout the holidays by drawing one out per week to do as a family activity.

Saturday 21th December

**The Third Candle:** Ask a family member to light two purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.” (1 Peter 1:8)

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

Thank You for the gift of loving You, even though we cannot see You with our eyes. You fill our hearts with a joy so big and bright that we can feel it in every part of our lives. Help us to trust in You every day and to believe in Your promises. Let our joy shine so others can see Your love through us. Thank You for being with us always and for filling our lives with Your goodness and grace.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

**Activity:**

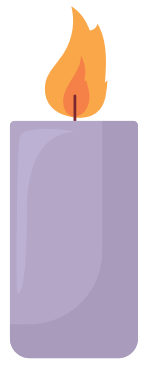
Smile at everyone you see today! Talk as a family about how smiling at others can spread joy and kindness.





# WEEK 4 - LOVE

Sunday 22nd December



**Focus Virtue:** Love reminds us that God's greatest gift to us is His unconditional love, and we are called to share that love with others.

**The Fourth Candle:** Ask a family member to light all three purple candles and the rose candle.

**Scripture:**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,  
Thank You for loving us so deeply and unconditionally. Your love is the greatest gift we could ever receive, and it changes our hearts and lives. As we light the candle of Love today, help us to reflect on the incredible gift of Jesus, sent to us because of Your great love. May we carry this love into our relationships, showing kindness, forgiveness, and compassion to those around us.

Teach us to love not just in words, but in action, reaching out to others who need care, comfort, and hope. Fill our home with Your love so it overflows into the lives of our neighbours, friends, and even strangers. Remind us each day that Your love is constant and unchanging, even when we make mistakes. Thank You for being our greatest example of love and for giving us the courage to share it with the world. Amen.

**Activity:**

As a family, assemble small "blessing bags" with snacks, toiletries, and handwritten notes to give to those in need.

**Monday 23rd December**

**Scripture:**

"Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:14)

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord,  
Thank You for teaching us what true love looks like. Help us to reflect Your love in everything we do, from how we speak to how we serve. Give us the courage to be loving, even when it's not easy, and to show patience and kindness in our relationships. Let Your love be our guide in all we do. Amen.

**Activity: Heart-Shaped Cookies**

Bake and decorate heart-shaped cookies together. Share some with a neighbour or friend as a gesture of love.



# CHRISTMAS EVE

## 24 December

**The Fifth Candle:** Ask a family member to light all candles and the white candle: the Christ Candle

### Scripture:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

### Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

On this holy day, we thank You for the gift of Jesus, the light of the world. As we celebrate His birth, fill our hearts with wonder, joy, and peace. Help us to share Your love with one another and with those in need. Just as the shepherds rejoiced and glorified You, may we also give You praise for Your goodness and grace. Bless our family and guide us to live in the light of Your Son, bringing hope and love to the world.

Amen.

### Activity:

Instead of filling today with last minute shopping, cooking and cleaning make time to do one of the meaningful activities on the next page.

*May God bless you today and fill your family  
with hope, love, joy and peace.*





# CHRISTMAS EVE ACTIVITIES

## Rituals and Reflections

**Attend Christmas Eve Mass:** Participate in a local church service to reflect on the joy and holiness of Jesus' birth.

**Nativity Play:** Reenact the Christmas story as a family, assigning roles such as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and angels.

**Candlelight Prayer Service:** Gather around candles and read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible (Luke 2:1-20). Reflect on the significance of the Nativity and close with a family prayer.

**Christmas Eve Gratitude Circle:** Share what each family member is thankful for this Christmas and how they've felt God's love throughout the year.

**"Gift to Jesus" Ceremony:** Write down one thing you want to offer to Jesus this Christmas (e.g., kindness, forgiveness, time for prayer). Place these notes in a gift box as a symbolic offering.

## Creative and Hands-On Activities

**Nativity Craft:** Make or set up a Nativity scene together. Take time to discuss each figure's role in the Christmas story.

**Star of Bethlehem Craft:** Create stars out of paper, foil, or string lights and reflect on how the star guided the Wise Men to Jesus. Hang them in a special place as a reminder to follow His light.

**Sing Carols:** Choose carols that focus on the birth of Jesus (e.g., "Silent Night," "O Holy Night"). Discuss the meanings of the lyrics and how they celebrate God's love.

## Reflection and Quiet Contemplation

**Silent Reflection:** Spend five minutes in silence as a family, simply reflecting on God's love and the miracle of the Incarnation.

**Scripture Journaling:** Write or draw what the story of Jesus' birth means to you after reading Luke 2:1-20 or Matthew 1:18-25.

**Reflect on Jesus' Name:** Discuss the meaning of Jesus' name ("God saves") and how His birth fulfills God's promise.

## Acts of Love and Service

**Deliver Gifts or Cards:** Deliver handmade cards or treats to a neighbour, a friend, or someone in need, spreading the love of Christ through kindness.

**Family Prayer Walk:** Take a short walk together and pray for your neighborhood, community, or specific people you know who need God's love this season.

These activities provide meaningful ways to celebrate Christmas Eve with a focus on God's love, the birth of Jesus, and the joy of sharing faith together as a family.

*May God bless you today and fill your family  
with hope, love, joy and peace.*

