

Meaning of the Season

The Christmas season is called "Advent" which means "the coming of Christ the Messiah into the world." The official season begins four Sundays before the holiday as believers prepare their hearts for the arrival of the Savior and celebrate the moment when "God with us" became literal reality. We celebrate more than a special baby's birth; we celebrate "Incarnation," which means "God becoming flesh and living among us." (John 1:14)

Meaningful Gift Giving

Three Gifts: This creative approach to gift-giving limits everyone to three gifts, each representing one of the three gifts the Wise Men brought to a baby king.

- Gold (a precious metal): The gift that would be most precious—possibly the biggest item or something they've wanted for a long time. Place a Gold bow on Red wrapping paper to symbolize the most costly gift God gave when Jesus shed his blood for our sins. Before opening read John 3:16 together.
- Frankincense (a sweet-smelling perfume): This item would be the "sweetest" to them; something that fits their personality, their passions, their interests or hobbies. Many choose a favorite food item for this gift. Wrap it in Silver paper, representing the fulfillment of the promised Messiah. Read Isaiah 9:6 together before opening.
- Myrrh (an oil used for many practical purposes, like anointing): This gift is a highly practical item. Although it may not be exciting, some things simply need to be replaced. One year you might give each child new bedding; another year, fun pajamas. A sweater, socks, t-shirts, tights, and the like, can be bundled together in one big box. Wrap this gift in Green paper, representing Jesus as the everlasting hope of mankind. Read Titus 2:13 together before opening.

Gifts from the Heart: During the first week of December, call the family together to talk about the meaning of Christmas as you make paper ornaments with construction paper and ribbon. Place them in a basket or gift box. Let the family know that during the rest of the month you will give "gifts from the heart"—gifts that money can't buy, such as Dad getting the newspaper for a sick neighbor or daughter helping little brother pick up his room. Each time you catch someone giving a "gift from the heart," write it on a paper ornament and hang it on the Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve, gather the ornaments and wrap them. Put a label reading: *To-Jesus, Love-* and insert your names. Before unwrapping presents take time to give these "gifts from the heart" to Jesus in celebration of his birthday. Open the gift to Jesus and take time to pull out each ornament and read it aloud. You can have a birthday cake, donut or cupcake with a candle to sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus or thank God for giving the best "gift from the heart" on that first Christmas.

Going Further Resources

Use these recommended resources to become even more intentional about Faith@Home this Christmas season.



What God Wants For Christmas

An interactive nativity set designed to be used the seven days preceding Christmas. Available from familylife.com



The Catholic Family Home: Celebrations and Traditions for Holidays, Feast Days and Everyday

Great ideas for bringing your faith home to your family. Available from amazon.com



The Legend of the Christmas Tree

A story of how the first Christmas tree became a symbol of Christ's birth. Available from amazon.com



The Legend of the Candy Cane

A story about the symbolism found within the candy cane. Available from amazon.com



Intentional Holidays

Get ideas for holiday intentionality by listening to the podcast available at stmichaels-westend.org for free download from itunes.

HomeLife™
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Christmas@Home



A Family Guide to Celebrating the Birth of Christ

Become more intentional by trying a few ideas from this guide designed to help you create and capture Faith@Home moments.