



PRAYER AS YOU READ THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Holy Spirit, we believe that you have inspired the writing of Scripture. Through the words in the Bible you speak to our own hearts according to what we currently need. As we read this story of how Jesus came to this earth to walk among us, speak to our hearts. Comfort and heal us. Assure us and challenge us. Open our eyes. Warm our hearts. Call us closer to you. Fill us with hope and joy. Inspire our celebrations this Christmas so that amidst all of our merry-making, we may be mindful of the true gift we are celebrating: God with us, Emmanuel.

You can find the Christmas Story in Luke 2:1-20!



MAKE ROOM FOR JESUS!

Don't let your Christmas be so busy and focused on external things, that you forget to prepare and celebrate in your heart! It is our Savior's birthday, after-all.

Find this and other resources at dmdiocese.org/LivingAdvent



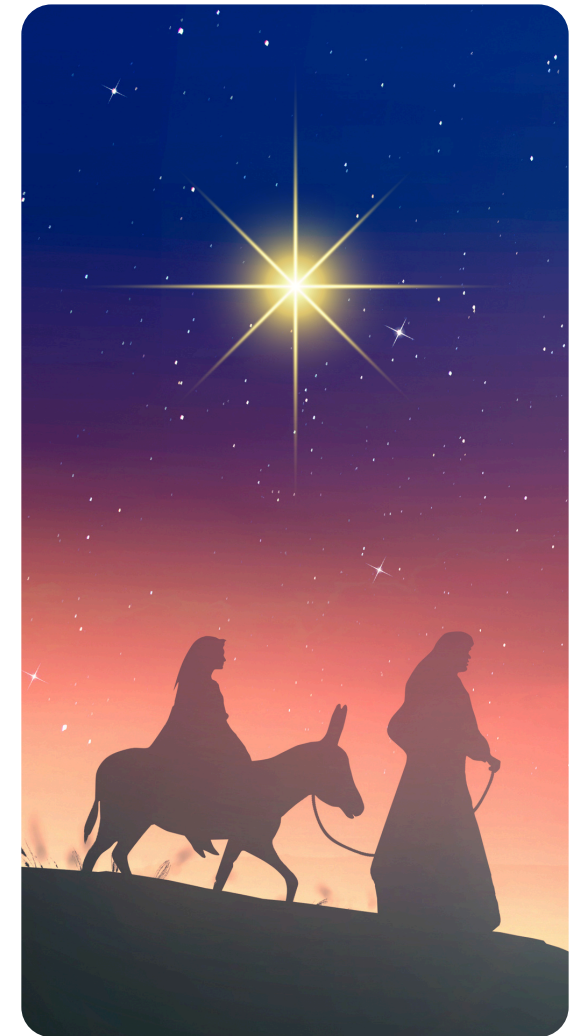
GRACE BEFORE YOUR CHRISTMAS MEAL

*"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord."
(Luke 2:10)*

Free us from all anxieties, dear Lord, as we gather to celebrate this great feast of the birth of your Son. Thank you for this food and for all of the loved ones surrounding our table. Thank you for the gift of Jesus and the freedom and life he's brought us. We can't help but let our joy bubble over on this holy day. Be with us and bless our food and our celebrations. May we, like the angels, bring this good news of great joy to all we meet. Amen.



With support from:
St. Joseph Evangelization Center



MAKING ROOM FOR JESUS

Faith perspectives to add to your holiday traditions

CELEBRATING OUR FAITH

Our Faith presents us with such good news for our lives, that whole days are designated just to celebrate these realities, and in a mysterious way, experience them again! Celebratory rituals are passed on through the generations. Some of them are just plain fun, but many of them are also rich in symbolic meaning.

With a little intentionality, family traditions already in place can be natural teaching moments where parents can pass on lived faith and add deep meaning to their family festivities.

One simple way to add this faith perspective, is by making prayer part of these already sacred family moments.



BLESSING YOUR ADVENT WREATH

Lord, we gather around this symbol of our waiting for you. May the never-ending circle of this wreath and its evergreen branches remind us of the eternal life you came to bring us. May the flames of these candles remind us of the light you bring into the darkness of our own sin and of our troubled world. Bless this wreath and those who look at it during this Advent season. Let it be a sign of hope and a challenge to prepare our hearts for your coming: at Christmas, at the end of time, and your various “comings” in our daily lives. Amen.



PRAYER AS YOU DECORATE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

God of life, we joyfully place this Christmas tree in our home in preparation for your birthday. From a tree, our first parents ate the forbidden fruit, turning away from you and bringing death to all. On a wooden cross your Son Jesus carried out your plan of love, offering salvation and fullness of life to all. Jesus taught that we were all to remain connected to him like branches to a vine. We thank you for this tree, symbol of our salvation history.

As we enjoy the fun of decorating our tree, let it bring us closer together. Let the twinkling lights remind us of the meaning and hope you bring to our lives. Let the ornaments remind us of the many blessings and gifts with which you grace our lives. Let the star or angel we place at the top be a proclamation of our faith in your presence among us. Amen.



PRAYER AS YOU SET UP YOUR CRECHE

Good and gracious God, each year we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus, at Christmas. He came and lived among us as a man, speaking to us with a human voice and loving us with a human and divine heart.

As we set up our crèche, may it remind us of just how close and accessible you are to us, Jesus. You felt the warmth of your mother’s embrace, and needed the protection that Joseph could provide. You were announced by angels, but welcomed by poor, ordinary shepherds. Foreigners made a long journey to greet you, following a star. We, too, join this scene, adoring at your manger-bed and thanking you for coming to us. Amen.

BLESSING YOUR CHRISTMAS BAKING



Creator of the Universe, you always provide for our needs. We thank you for the good things of the earth that give nourishment to our bodies. We thank you for Holy Communion, Jesus’ Body, which gives nourishment to our souls each time we go to Mass.

As we bake together, preparing special treats for our Christmas celebrations, bless us and bless this food. Just as Jesus blessed, broke, and gave the bread that was himself, help us to always remember that we, too, are to give of ourselves to others. Help us to share our time, our talents, our friendship, our faith and even our belongings with those you place in our lives. Amen.



PRAYER AS YOU PREPARE YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Generous God, thank you for the many gifts you give us, those that could be wrapped in a package, and those that couldn’t: our lives and health, our families and friends, creation, experiences, & the simple joys of life. The three kings brought gifts for Baby Jesus. You gave the very gift of your Son. As we prepare our gifts to give this Christmas, fill our own hearts with gratitude and generosity. May the people who receive them experience your love through us. Amen.

Make gift-giving more meaningful:

- Give hand-made gifts
- Give time/experiences instead of stuff
- Simplify — a few thoughtful gifts can mean more than an over-abundance