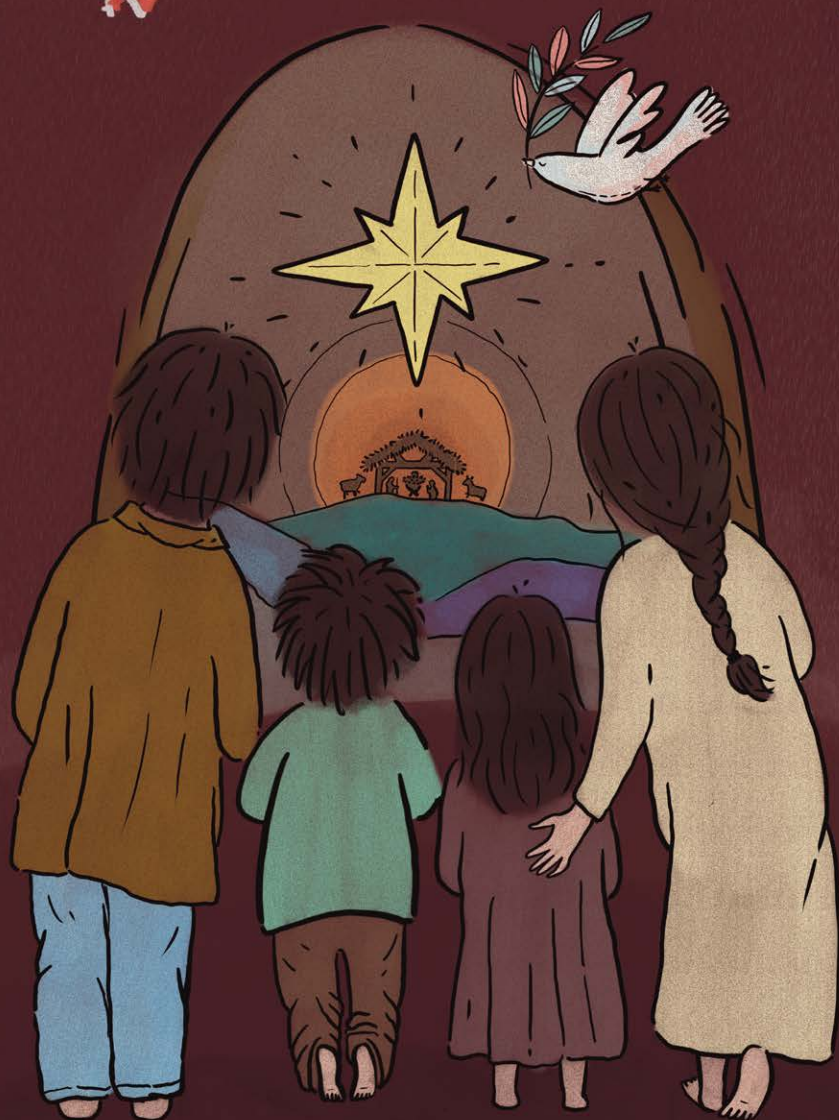


a Thrill & Hope,



Advent to Christmas Reflection Booklet
2025-26 (Year A)





Inaugurated in September 2013, the Office for the New Evangelisation (ONE) is an office in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore working to realise the Archdiocese's vision of being a vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church.

As a catalyst for the New Evangelisation, the mission of ONE is to guide and navigate New Evangelisation efforts in the Singapore Archdiocese to ignite and evangelising movement.



This initiative is supported by the GIFT Campaign under the Catholic Foundation.



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Dear sisters and brothers,

If you notice, the prices of material things (food, clothing and housing) keep going up and up and never seem to come down. The rising cost of living is often driven by greed, the desire to have more.

Our spiritual life should have the same trajectory (always rising) because this is asked of us when Jesus said, *"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt 5:48). The call to perfection is found in 1 Peter 1:16: *"Be holy because I am holy"*. Yes, we might react and say that it is impossible to be as perfect or holy as our Father in Heaven.

However, to say this and still be convicted to continue growing in holiness is to have the same trajectory as those ever-increasing prices. Our holiness, where we are at this stage of our lives, is the starting point. During this time of Advent, we should remind ourselves: just as the prices are set to go up, my spiritual life is also set to go up. We should strive to be holier. We should strive to make that effort to journey to new, unknown places in our heart and spirit, places that will eventually bring us closer to the Lord.

Our Lord Jesus Christ took the plunge to become man to show us that it is still possible for man to move closer to the Lord.

I wish you a meaningful time preparing for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Fr. Terence Pereira

Episcopal Vicar for the New Evangelisation

The Purpose of this Booklet

This resource is intended for families, RCIA groups, parish organisations, ministries, small Christian communities and neighbourhood Christian communities. It may also be used for individual reflection.

- To promote the Christian community in the neighbourhood as a place where we can hear the Word of God and put it into practice.
- To give participants an experience of community and a sense of their mission by reaching out to neighbours and those in need.
- To gather parish organisations / ministries to pray together as one and put Christ back in the centre.
- To increase communication between family members. Love should be the main message in all communication, so the sessions are aimed at families sharing stories, doing meaningful activities together, sharing faith, and being reconciled with one another.

How to Use this Booklet

These reflections may be used either (1) before participating in Sunday's liturgy, as a way of preparation to receive God's Word at Mass; or (2) after participating in the liturgy as a continuation of 'breaking open the Word of God' in our lives.

In the spirit of generosity, group members volunteer beforehand to read Scriptures and other parts of the text.

You can take turns being the facilitator each session. The role is simply to help keep time and invite everyone to participate.

Someone should record the discussion in general terms and then email it to the members who are absent.

The duration of each session is about two hours.

The time and place for the next meeting should be announced at the end of each session.

Session Format

1 OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

2 READINGS

The three scripture texts should be read at least twice, allowing some time for a silent listening to the Word.

Then the passages are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given write up. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

3 REFLECTIONS

Someone reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

5 TAKE HOME

Discern how the Word of God is inviting us collectively, or individually, to respond through concrete action(s).

4 SHARING QUESTIONS

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharings. The latter is meant to prompt sharings based on the specific context i.e., Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions, as well as time for everyone to respond.

6 CLOSING PRAYER

The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group. Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.

7 APPENDIX: ACTIVITIES

The appendix section contains activities that further enrich our spiritual journey with our fellow sisters and brothers in Christ.

Facilitating Group Reflection

When we gather in Jesus' name, we're not just having a meeting — we're inviting Christ to be among us. Here are some simple attitudes and practices to help make your group time meaningful and prayerful.

BE PRESENT

For where two or three meet in my name, I am there with them - Matthew 18:20

Remember that Jesus is truly with us. Speak and listen with reverence. Take your time when reading scripture or prayers. Be fully present — not just with your mind, but with your heart.

INCLUDE EVERYONE

May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you - John 17:21

Welcome each person warmly. Help new members feel at home. Use language that is simple and clear so no one feels left out. Invite others to read or share in a way that makes space for everyone

BE GENTLE

...and their great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen - Mark 10:42-43

Avoid sounding like a teacher or giving long speeches. Don't pressure others to agree with you. Speak simply and humbly. Allow time for everyone to share without dominating the conversation.

STAY CHRIST-CENTRED

If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me - Luke 9:23

At the heart of our reflection is God's Word and the call to follow Jesus. If the group starts to drift off-topic, gently bring the focus back to what God is saying to us today.

DO NOT OVER-PREPARE

Because when the time comes, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say - Luke 12:12

You do not have to plan every sharing in advance. Wait patiently and trust that the Holy Spirit will inspire someone to speak when the time is right. When someone does share, give thanks — it's a gift.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

...your light must shine in people's sight, so that, on seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven - Matthew 5:16

Faith leads to action. At the next session, take a moment to share how you've tried to live out what you reflected on last time. Small acts of love and service make God's presence visible in the world.

CATHOLICSG RADIO

brings you the audio version of
2025-26 Advent to Christmas Reflection Booklet.



Join our presenters as they take you through the reflection via the CatholicSG Radio app, starting from 27 November 2025 all the way to the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord!

Live broadcast

Thursdays at 8am

Same day encore at 9pm

Repeat broadcasts

8.00am

11.45am

3.45pm

9.00pm

each day from Friday to Monday

Listen now via **radio.catholic.sg** or as podcast on Spotify!
Access the Spotify playlist by scanning the following QR code:



Podcast Versions

The same reflections will be available as podcasts on the app itself.

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU BETTER?

THANK YOU FOR USING THIS BOOKLET!

We hope that these reflections will help you and your community to grow in faith. As you journey through it, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

Does this booklet meet your expectations?
What else would you like to see in future booklets?
Your feedback is important to us.

Let us know how we can improve!



one.org.sg/feedback

(YEAR A)

Sundays of Advent

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 2:1-5
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:37-44

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 11:1-10
Romans 15:4-9
Matthew 3:1-12

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 35:1-6,10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 7:10-14
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24



OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

Come, Lord Jesus,

fill us with hope as we gather in Your name. Open our minds to Your ways as we listen to Your Word and open our hearts so that we may grow in Your love. Give us the grace to grow in anticipation as we reflect on Your coming to be with us, confident that You are always Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 2:1-5

The time of Advent is a privileged time to consider the ways we are moving towards the Lord in conversion, a point that Isaiah makes as he seeks to bring Israel back to the Lord. Conversion promises something better, like the transformation of the destructive implements of war to constructive tools. Despite the ebbs and flows of our faith lives, we cling on to the fundamental changes that we have made for the Lord and build on these as we seek to follow Him more closely.

2nd Reading:

ROMANS 13:11-14

When we arrive home after a lengthy period away, we are sometimes greeted with musty smells and stale air. The first thing we do is to air out the place, to open the windows and to let the air and light in. St. Paul reminds us that we need to do the same with our spiritual lives, to not allow staleness in our faith to fester and to give up the bad habits that lead us away

from God our Father. This Advent is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual spring cleaning.

Gospel:

MATTHEW 24:37-44

Waiting can be quite tedious. The waiting that the Lord is calling us to is even more difficult in that we have to constantly stay alert without knowing the time or hour when He will return. This alertness can be tiring if we see it solely as waiting for Him, but this can also be a timely call for us to look at how we live our faith lives and consistently prepare our hearts to receive the Lord.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

Much can be said about good planning and being prepared, especially when it comes to getting ready for big events or projects. Good preparations help events to go smoothly, hence we invest a huge amount of effort into proper planning and development. There is also a popular saying that goes: "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." We plan and make good preparations out of the fear of failure, seeking the security that comes when we feel that we have prepared for all possible contingencies.

Does this same reasoning apply to the preparedness that is asked of us at the start of Advent? If our motivation for preparation comes from a place of fear, this is a somewhat negative view of planning. When viewed in the light of the Gospel preparation can be driven by fear of punishment if we are caught unaware. Thankfully, proper preparation for the Lord is not like this at all.

The preparation we are called to is one of joyful anticipation, looking forward with hope towards the coming of the Lord. This is grounded in our knowledge of the Lord's goodness and the real experience of His love in our lives. Our disposition changes greatly when our actions are driven by fear of failure or negative repercussions, compared to when we get ready with joy to welcome someone whom we care deeply for.

It is the second sort of preparation that elicits the thrill of hope as we anticipate the joy of the Lord's presence with us in the weeks to come. This Advent, let us submit to this thrill of hope as we allow God our Father to surprise us, giving us grace upon grace beyond anything we expect in our preparations.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- Think of a time you prepared for something that brought you great joy. How was the Lord present in that preparation?
- As we prepare for His coming at Christmas, how are we preparing our hearts, and what might we need to change during this time of waiting?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

Conversion is not only personal endeavour, but also something we live together as a community. How are we supporting one another in this journey, and how are we as a community turning back to God?

For Ministry

Planning is essential in ministry, but it is just as important to involve the Lord in our preparations. How can we make sure Jesus is part of our plans, so that He leads us to where He wants us to be?

For Family

As a family, how can we move beyond our usual routines this Advent and plan ways to be more ready to receive the Lord Jesus?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Advent is a beautiful time of anticipation before Christmas. Christmas is for everyone to realise that our Father loves them, and the expression of His love is sending His Son for everyone.

Learn the meaning of the symbols that are used during the Advent and Christmas season (refer to appendix).

CLOSING PRAYER

The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group. Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.

We thank You, O Lord, for Your presence with us.

As we go our separate ways, we ask that You help us to grow in hope, trusting in Your promises and conforming our lives to Your call. Keep us close to You so that we may always experience the thrill of hope that comes from loving You. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord and our Hope.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

Jesus Christ,
You who are God the Son, became one of us.

You joined us in humanity to meet us where we are. We praise You for the privilege to proclaim, "Emmanuel, God is with us!". May we journey through this Advent season companioned by hope because You alone, are the Hope of the world and the Hope in the world. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 11:1-10

This week, we focus on the prophecy of Isaiah, written at a time when the Kingdom of Judah was threatened by the Assyrian Empire. The people were filled with insecurity and a sense of chaos. Prophet Isaiah offered hopes of new beginnings through a Messianic Prophecy: a promise that a messiah would come one day (Isa 11:1), fulfilled in Jesus. This promise, also known as the Davidic Covenant, was God's pledge that someone from David's line would rule forever. But this rule would be through peace, not conquest.

2nd Reading:

ROMANS 15:4-9

St. Paul was writing to the early Christian community living in Rome to address the tensions that had arisen between the Jews and gentiles (non-Jews). Despite their differences, he reminded them that they were of one people, bound by their common identity as children of God our Father. As Christians, they were to bring hope and to live it out through peace and unity with one another because God our Father had

first loved them.

Thus, St. Paul exhorted them to glorify the Lord by their lives through hopeful perseverance and to remain united in peaceful coexistence.

Gospel:

MATTHEW 3:1-12

The fundamental principle of St. John the Baptist's teaching is repentance: a call to urgent and complete transformation. The word "repentance" comes from the Greek word *metanoēō*, which means a change or a conversion of mind and heart. Being lowered into and raised from the waters of baptism symbolised this repentance: death to the old life of sin and being reborn into the new life in God our Father.

What were the people called to change towards? They were to reorient their entire being towards Jesus Christ, who is the fulfilment of hope and peace. The Kingdom of Heaven is made complete in Him.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

All three readings speak of hope and peace amidst challenging situations. This Advent, we, too, are invited to make room for seemingly opposite realities: to be grounded in the messy reality of our lives and still experience hope and peace.

The context of the 1st Reading was an impending war. The people hoped for a powerful king who would bring them victory. Instead, Jesus' power lies in peace, justice, harmony, and integrity. Many of us still associate God our Father's power with majesty. We are invited to expand our image of God and accept that, like a *"wolf [that] lives with the lamb"* (Isa 11:6), Jesus is both a powerful and righteous king, and a gentle and humble servant of the poor.

The 2nd Reading encourages us to rise above the existing differences in our circumstances and to choose the path of peace and unity because we are all anchored in a common

hope of *"following the example of Christ Jesus"* (Rom 15:5). Tensions and conflicts are as prevalent in the early Christian communities as they are in our fragmented relationships today. Thus, St. Paul reminds us that the interior peace necessary to love one another must originate from our hope in Christ. Every time we choose to love in hope and to remain at peace with one another, we welcome Jesus into our lives.

St. John the Baptist's seemingly harsh and direct exhortation of repentance in the Gospel stems from the urgency of the coming of Christ. During this sacred season, we are also called to repent and reorientate our entire beings to Jesus, who is hope and peace Himself. Such anticipation is expressed through an honest examination and renewal of our current image of Jesus our Lord, and choosing to love one another regardless of external circumstances.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- Where in your life do you experience opposite realities, and how can you invite God our Father into these places to bring both hope and peace?
- What is one concrete way you can respond to God our Father 's call this Advent to turn towards Him in love?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

What tensions are in your community, and what hopeful changes can bring peace?

For Ministry

Are there goals in your ministry that create division, and how is the ministry being called to turn back to God our Father and respond together?

For Family

What hurts or frustrations are keeping our family from living in peace and hope?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Now that you have discovered the meaning of some of these Advent and Christmas symbols, share them during your sharing sessions and invite others to add symbols that are meaningful to them.

CLOSING PRAYER

*The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group.
Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.*

O Lord, as we continue to prepare for the coming of Your Son, we find ourselves surrounded by conflicts and disharmony. In this season of anticipation, Your Word offers us peace; a peace that comes from transformation within our own hearts. Your Word teaches us that peace begins within us, and it is this peace we are called to share with others. Thank You, Lord, for giving us such enlightenment and direction. We make this prayer through Your most holy and precious name.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

Loving and gracious Father,

on this Gaudete Sunday, we praise You for Your goodness and wondrous love. Our hearts are filled with joy. There are dry and barren areas of our lives, where You will pour out Your grace and make all things new. We are weak but you will fill us with courage and patience, and renew our hope in Your coming Kingdom. The signs of Your glory are all around us, even in the smallest things, as reminders of Your faithfulness. We are thankful and we know that we are loved. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 35:1-6,10

We have reached the midpoint of our journey towards witnessing the fulfilment of God our Father's promise in the birth of Jesus. The waiting peaks as we sharpen our focus on the splendour and glory that await us. At the same time, we may grow weary; our resolve wanes a little, and impatience and anxiety may creep in. Yet, just as Isaiah comforts Israel during times of confusion and desolation, we are encouraged to persevere, drawing on the gift of fortitude and the love of God our Father, the foundation for our hope. We know with certainty that "God is coming". When we face discouragement, Isaiah reminds us of a truth echoed later by the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation: "*For nothing will be impossible with God*" (Luke 1:37).

2nd Reading:

JAMES 5:7-10

St. James teaches that God our Father will reveal His plans in His time. A farmer anticipates his harvest not in a vacuum but cooperates with the Lord's blessings in nature through good and difficult seasons.

He trusts that, in the Lord's time, he will be graced with the fruits of his labour. Similarly, we are called to wait proactively and watchfully, not distracted by the world. We stretch our hearts to deepen faith and trust, avoiding grumbling or impatience. Like the farmer tilling land without immediate results, we persevere, seeing with faith, not sight. The journey through Advent teaches us that holy waiting bears eternal fruit.

Gospel:

MATTHEW 11:2-11

We all face moments of doubt. St. John the Baptist likely doubted while imprisoned. Jesus' reply to his question was indirect: He pointed instead to His works, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy in our 1st Reading. It is reminiscent of Jesus' response to Philip, "*believe me for the sake of the works themselves.*" (Jn 14:11) Often, our expectations limit us, but Jesus calls us to look beyond and recognise God our Father's work in unexpected ways. When faith is tested, Jesus invites us to recall how He has worked in our lives, strengthening our hope even when the future is unclear.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

This Sunday, also known as Gaudete Sunday, invites us to rejoice as we continue journeying through this season of waiting. This joy is founded on our confidence that God our Father keeps His promises. We are buoyed by the assurance of experiencing His love in our lives, even though His ways may not be our ways (Isa 55:8).

In the 1st Reading, Isaiah paints a vision of radical renewal: wastelands bloom, the blind see, deaf hear, dumb speak, and the lame leap. When the hand of God our Father moves, it is not merely an improvement; it is life-changing. Isaiah's message is clear: there will be everlasting joy, and all sorrow and lament will end. We, too, hold on to this promise as we wait.

St. James, in the 2nd Reading, teaches us to wait on the Lord. Our faith is tested and bears the fruit of endurance (Jas 1:3). We actively await in eager anticipation, *"because the Lord's coming will*

be soon." We prepare our hearts, emptying them of distractions, and turning again towards the Lord. It is not a time of anxious waiting, but is rooted in hope and trust.

In the Gospel, St. John the Baptist seeks confirmation of Jesus' identity from prison. Jesus answers with evidence of His works: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are healed, the dead are raised to life, and the poor hear the Good News. Isaiah's prophecies are fulfilled in Christ, our Messiah, who undergirds our faith. Even in doubt or darkness, we can recognise His saving hand. These readings invite us to embody joyful hope, as we await the coming of Jesus. He is the *"explanation to anyone who asks [us] for a reason for [our] hope"* (1 Pet 3:15), the hope that strengthens the weary, fortifies faint hearts, and sets prisoners free. It is the hope of the Kingdom of God, present here and now, into which we are already being drawn.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- How have I been able to resolve the tensions in my life to walk more clearly with the Lord?
- What is the life-changing decision that I need to make to resolve these tensions?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

As we wait for the Lord, what have we given up, and what changes bring us joy and hope?

For Ministry

How is our ministry helping people turn back to God, and what signs show this change?

For Family

How are we staying watchful and helping our family live the changes they want to make?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Make at least three of these Advent and Christmas symbols yourself. You can follow simple guides on YouTube. As you shape them, hold in prayer three people you know who have not received the Sacrament of Baptism, keeping them in mind with each symbol you create.

CLOSING PRAYER

*The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group.
Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.*

Heavenly Father,

We give You praise and thank You for revealing Your love to us through Your Word. We are encouraged to persevere, using the gift of fortitude, through good and difficult seasons to cooperate with Your blessings as we look beyond and recognise Your works in unexpected ways. We make this prayer through Your most holy and precious name.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

God our Father,

we thank You for giving us this prayerful gathering, as we wait in joy and excitement for the birth of Jesus Christ. As we listen intently to Sacred Scripture, may we be moved by the Holy Spirit and respond to all that You desire of us. Just as Christ was conceived in Mary's womb through her obedience, may He take root in our hearts through our own obedience.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 7:10-14

The Prophet Isaiah tells how God our Father offered King Ahaz of Jerusalem a sign to show that the House of Judah would survive the war. Isaiah encourages Ahaz to ask for the sign, but Ahaz refuses. Although the king says he does not want to test the Lord, this shows he does not really trust that God our Father can save Jerusalem. But God's plan would not be stopped by an earthly king. Isaiah then prophesies the birth of a child named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us", pointing to the future coming of Jesus.

2nd Reading:

ROMANS 1:1-7

St. Paul identifies himself as a servant of Christ Jesus, devoted to the proclamation of the Good News of God our Father. This message had been promised long ago through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures. It is about Jesus, who was born from the line of David and declared to be the Son of God with power through His resurrection from the dead. Through Jesus, St. Paul received the grace of apostleship to invite all

people to faith, including non-Jews. He reminds the Church in Rome that they, too, are called to belong to Christ and to live as His holy people.

Gospel:

MATTHEW 1:18-24

St. Joseph is caught in a bind. He is betrothed to Mother Mary, and although they had not yet lived as husband and wife, Mother Mary was found to be pregnant. This had serious consequences for the couple. According to Jewish law, an engaged woman found not to be a virgin could be stoned to death. In an act of mercy, St. Joseph decided to divorce Mother Mary quietly to spare her life. It was then revealed to St. Joseph that Mother Mary's pregnancy was truly miraculous and the work of the Holy Spirit. Unlike King Ahaz from the 1st Reading, St. Joseph had faith and did exactly as he was told.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

As the readings proclaim today, we are celebrating the birth of Emmanuel: God is with us. He is not only with us spiritually; He has become human like us, yet without sin. Can we confidently say that we have reached this awe-inspiring moment in our celebration – recognising and believing that God our Father is truly with us in Jesus Christ? As a community of believers, do we recognise and accept not only His birth but also Christ in His life, death, and resurrection?

Authentically accepting Christ involves a radical transformation of our lives. This is what St. Paul calls the “obedience of faith”, a wholehearted response to the truth revealed by God our Father. We see this in the lives of the three figures mentioned in our 2nd Reading and Gospel: St. Joseph, Mary our Mother, and St. Paul. St. Joseph changed his mind about divorcing Mother Mary quietly when the angel of the Lord revealed to him God’s plan of salvation. There were serious consequences to taking Mother Mary as his wife, yet he

obeyed the angel’s command. He not only accepted the Word of God in faith, but acted on it as soon as he awoke from sleep. Likewise, Mary our Mother said to the Lord during the Annunciation, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38). St. Paul, on encountering Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, chose to devote his life entirely to the Gospel.

Have we made the choice to place our faith in Jesus and follow Him in our daily lives? True faith leads to a real transformation of life, seen in the way we reach out to others with compassion; especially the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised in our community. Where might God our Father be inviting us to deeper transformation today? Like St. Joseph, Mary our Mother, and St. Paul, we are called to respond in obedience. The plan of salvation continues to unfold, and the work of Jesus, carried out in perfect obedience, is alive in us, His Body, the Church.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- When I face tensions in my life, do I recognise the call to respond with faith?
- What are some areas of my life where I need to respond like, St. Joseph, Mary our Mother, and St. Paul?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

What are the areas where we need to respond like St. Joseph, Mary our Mother, and St. Paul, to better celebrate Christmas this year?

For Ministry

What radical steps can members of our ministry take in obedience of faith, so that we work together to celebrate Christmas more meaningfully this year?

For Family

What faith have we shown within our family recently, and how has it helped us prepare for Christmas this year?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

This week, pray for the three persons you have made the symbols for, and make arrangements to give each one their symbol on Christmas Day.

CLOSING PRAYER

*The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group.
Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.*

Heavenly Father,

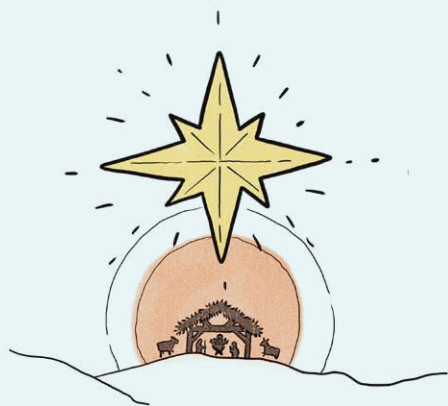
we learn that trusting in You is most important. St. Joseph shows us an example of faith: even when he did not understand, he placed his trust in You and obeyed. St. Paul also urges us to live by faith. Encouraged by their witness and strengthened by Your faithfulness, we thank You for calling us to be messengers of the Good News. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



the word was
made flesh
& lived among us

(YEAR A)

Solemnities of Christmas

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Isaiah 52:7-10

Hebrews 1:1-6

John 1:1-18

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Numbers 6:22-27

Galatians 4:4-7

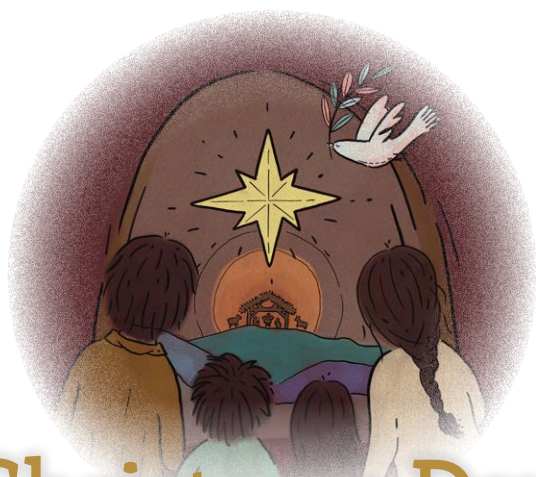
Luke 2:16-21

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12



Christmas Day, *Nativity of the Lord*

OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

O loving Father,

the birth of Your Son brings us great joy as the sign of Your love. His coming shows us that You desire to be with us and to speak to us through the Scriptures. Remembering Your Word, we celebrate the birth of Your Son. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 52:7-10

This section is written during or after Israel's exile to Babylon. Naturally, they long for freedom, peace and a return to Jerusalem. Speaking through the Prophet Isaiah, God our Father consoles His chosen people in their trial. He reminds them that even though they are living under a foreign power, they are still His people ("Your God is king!"). Belonging to Him is not a matter of slavery or possessiveness. On the contrary, it is what Israel has always longed for, because only through God our Father's kingship can the "*ruins of Jerusalem*" (the brokenness of the exiled Israelites) be restored to wholeness and joy. This is God's promise to all who long for healing and peace today.

2nd Reading:

HEBREWS 1:1-6

Fulfilment and sonship are the themes here. In the 1st Reading, we see the Lord promise salvation and peace. The people eventually return to Jerusalem, but continue

to experience a deeper, more persistent kind of oppression: the weight of sin. Writing after the time of Christ, the author of the letter to the Hebrews looks back and sees how God our Father fulfils His earlier promises in the most perfect way. He does not merely send another messenger, He sends His Son. In Jesus, divine love is no longer just spoken, but embodied and enacted.

Gospel:

JOHN 1:1-18

The Gospels are about Jesus Christ. St. John (the Apostle) begins by calling Him "the Word". With words, we express ourselves and build relationships. Formerly, God our Father uses prophets like Isaiah and St. John the Baptist (mentioned in the Readings) to be "*witness[es] to speak for the light*". But at His work's climax, God our Father does not send a message, He sends the Word Himself, who "*was made flesh and lived among us*". As His Son, Jesus perfectly expresses God our Father's love. He is the King, the Prince of Peace, whom all humanity has been waiting for.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

Christmas is one of those blessed days when many, regardless of religious belief, expresses peace and goodwill to family and friends. Our secular culture celebrates this for a day or three before everything is "back to normal": the grind of daily living. Unfortunately, even we Catholics experience something similar. We now have to face that exam, that project, that family situation. If only every day could have the joy and tranquillity of Christmas!

But the Incarnation of Christ did not take place just to give us a public holiday or a few social gatherings to momentarily distract us from our troubles. What are we really celebrating? The entry of our Lord into the world and His presence with us! *"The Word was made flesh and He lived among us."* The joy of celebrating Emmanuel ("God-with-us") is therefore meant to continue well beyond Christmas!

We all know the comfort of a loved one's support in time of trials. However, this comfort can be lost if we are too absorbed in our difficulties. Similarly, the struggles in life can seem overwhelming if we forget that Jesus Christ is always with us. He does not come to remove those struggles, for they are the very moments in which virtue grows. Rather, He comes to free us from the greatest source of misery: sin.

Our Lord constantly warns us against sin. It is not because He is moralistic and preoccupied with our actions, but because He wants us to see that sin is the greatest tragedy. It is the only thing which can take away our eternal happiness. Let us learn to be present to God, who is always with us. May the joy of His entry into the world sustain us not just today, but all the days of our lives.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- What words come to mind when you think of Christmas?
- How could these words help you or encourage you in the coming year?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

How does the celebration of Christmas change the way you live as a community?

For Ministry

How has Christmas shaped your ministry in the past, and what changes do you hope for after this year's celebration?

For Family

What helps your family keep the joy and spirit of Christmas alive beyond the day itself?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Give the symbols to the three persons you chose and explain their meaning. Then share with them that Christmas is above all, the celebration of the love of our Father, and not only about gifts, food, and drink.

CLOSING PRAYER

*The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group.
Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.*

Loving Father,

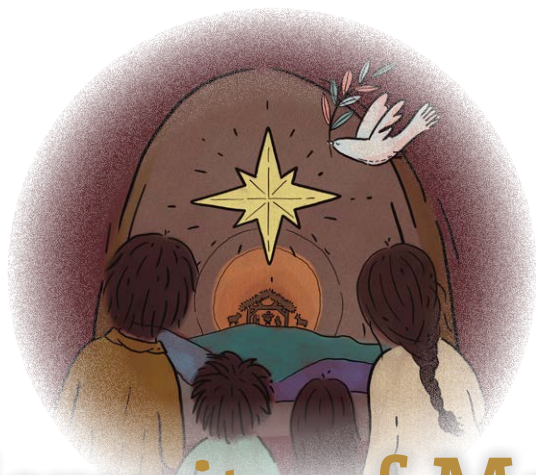
we thank You for the Incarnation of Your Son, who is the messenger par excellence and the greatest sign of Your love for us. In Jesus, born among us and present in the Most Holy Eucharist, You show Your deep desire to be with us. We can never fully thank You for this gift of love, but we lift our hearts in gratitude. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



Solemnity of Mary, *Mother of God*

OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

All loving Father, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, You gave the world Your Son, our Saviour and Lord. As we continue to rejoice in this Christmas season, and in honouring Mary as the Mother of God, we give You praise and honour. Your Word in our open hearts enables us to understand more deeply the mystery of Jesus Christ's Incarnation. During this time, we want to draw closer to Your Son and to strengthen our faith in Your saving love. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

NUMBERS 6:22-27

This episode takes place after the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, during their difficult journey through the wilderness. Amid uncertainty and hardship, God our Father commanded the priests to bless the people in His name. This blessing reassured them that He was near and dwelling among them, inviting them to trust in His faithful care through every season. In the fullness of time, this blessing finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, born of Mary, the Mother of God. Through her willing "yes", the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, making God's presence fully known in the mystery of the Incarnation.

2nd Reading:

GALATIANS 4:4-7

St. Paul reveals God our Father's loving plan through the Incarnation of Christ. At the appointed time, He sent His Son to redeem us, so that we might be adopted as His children and heirs. St. Paul reminds us that salvation comes not through observing the Law of Moses, but

through God our Father's grace and initiative. This passage invites us to embrace the freedom and closeness of our new relationship with God our Father as His beloved children. The Church honours Mother Mary as the *Theotokos* (Mother of God), recognising that through her faithful "yes", Jesus entered the world and brought salvation to all.

Gospel:

LUKE 2:16-21

We are drawn into the quiet humility of Bethlehem in this scene of the Gospel. The newborn Jesus lies in a manger next to Mother Mary, watched over by St. Joseph, and welcomed by shepherds. God our Father chooses simplicity and poverty to reveal His saving love. Mother Mary treasures these hidden moments in her heart, and together with St. Joseph, names the child Jesus – "God saves". The mystery of the Incarnation unfolds in this humble setting. Here, we are reminded of the heart of God our Father: gentle, near, and full of mercy, coming to dwell with us through a family open to His will.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

On the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, we pause to reflect on a profound mystery at the heart of our faith: Jesus is truly God and truly man. By honouring Mary as the Mother of God, the Church affirms that the child she bore is not just human, but the eternal Son of God our Father; one Person with both a divine and human nature, united perfectly. This mystery of the Incarnation, God becoming flesh, reveals God our Father's incredible love for us. He chose to enter our world fully as one of us. Through Jesus, our salvation is made possible.

Understanding that Christ is both fully God and fully human is essential to our faith. Only Jesus, being God, could conquer sin and death and offer us eternal life. Yet, He also shared in every aspect of our human experience – our joys, struggles, and sufferings – so that He could be the perfect bridge between God and humanity. This union of divine and human natures reminds us that God's love is not distant or abstract, but personal, intimate, and deeply real.

Mother Mary's faithful "yes" to God our Father opened the way for this great mystery to unfold. Like the Israelites wandering through a difficult wilderness, we too face uncertainties and trials in life; but just as God our Father's blessing then promised to dwell among His people, today His presence remains with us as a source of peace and belonging. We are called to trust in this faithful presence and to live as His beloved children.

As we celebrate Mother Mary's motherhood of God, may we imitate her openness and humility. Let us allow Him to work in us, so that we too may become living witnesses of Jesus Christ's mercy and love. May we share with others the joy, hope, and freedom that comes from being united with God our Father through Jesus, His Incarnate Son.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- How have you discerned the will of God our Father in the past?
- Have you given up your plans to do the will of God our Father?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

The faith of Mother Mary was expressed by her obedience to the will of our Father. How does our community express faith?

For Ministry

In what practical ways can our ministry follow Mother Mary's example of surrender, by trusting God's invitation over our own ideas and will?

For Family

How can our family, like Mother Mary, show faith by respecting one another and trusting God's will for each member?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Speak with these same three persons. Ask them how they honour their mothers, and why.

CLOSING PRAYER

The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group. Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.

Ever-caring Father,

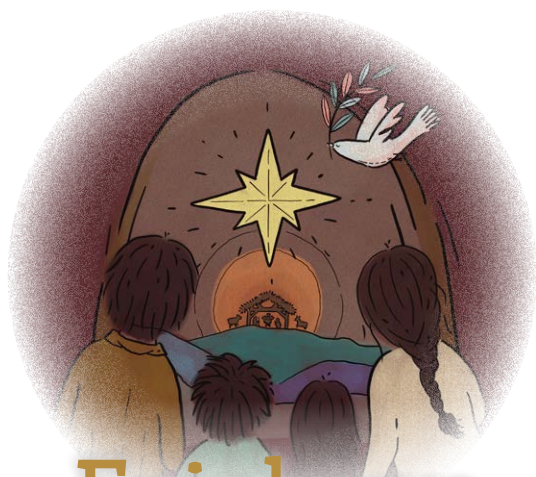
You reassure us on our pilgrimage on earth that You are near and dwell among us. St. Paul reminds us of the freedom and closeness we share in our new relationship with You. With courage from his testimony, we continue our journey to the promised land. Just as Mother Mary and St. Joseph watched over Jesus, we are confident that You are watching over us. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS

Reflection Booklet



Epiphany of the Lord

OPENING PRAYER

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

Heavenly Father,

as we are about to read and reflect on this Sunday's readings, we thank You for revealing Yourself to us. Thank You for the gift of faith, the grace to know Your love, and the opportunity to spend eternity with You. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

READINGS

The three Scripture readings and their accompanying commentaries must be read out loud, allowing some time for a silent reflection.

Next, the readings are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given commentaries. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior to the meeting.

Commentaries for:

1st Reading:

ISAIAH 60:1-6

In His wisdom, God our Father first revealed Himself to Israel. In turn, they were to make Him known to all peoples, Jews and non-Jews alike. In this passage, Isaiah prophesies the fulfilment of that plan. The "*glory of the Lord*" is God our Father's very presence, ultimately made visible in His Son, Jesus Christ. His light is rising upon Jerusalem (a prefigurement of the Church), and the nations of the world gather in Jerusalem to walk in this light, that is, to follow the ways of the Lord. They bring gifts of gold and frankincense, pointing towards the Magi in their worship of the child Jesus.

2nd Reading:

EPHESIANS 3:2-3A, 5-6

St. Paul was writing to the Church in Ephesus, made up of both Jews and gentiles (non-Jews). The Jews were creating a distinction between themselves and the gentiles, calling them "*the uncircumcision*" while referring to themselves as "*the circumcision*" (Eph 2:11). In this

passage, St. Paul reminds them that the Jews and gentiles alike share the same inheritance as children of God. All are members of the one Body of Christ, and the promise of eternal life is for everyone. In Christ, there are no more divisions.

Gospel:

MATTHEW 2:1-12

The Epiphany account shows God our Father revealing Himself through Jesus Christ. This revelation was for the whole world, not only for Israel and the Jews. The Wise Men were gentile astrologers who noticed an extraordinary star. The star echoes Balaam's oracle of a king who would rule over many nations (Num 24:17). Herod's council quotes prophecies about a leader who would come out of Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), the city of King David. This king is Jesus, and by paying Him homage, the Magi accept Jesus Christ as their King.

REFLECTIONS

Another person reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

Today's feast is called the "Epiphany", a term derived from the Greek word for "reveal". We celebrate God our Father's self-revelation to all peoples in Jesus Christ. Although the Gospel event took place more than 2,000 years ago, God our Father's revelation to humanity continues. Today, we no longer have literal Wise Men

from the East looking for the child Jesus. Instead, Jesus commands us Christians to be "stars" who bring the Good News to all (Matt 28:19). Therefore, the Church is "missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son ... that she draws her origin" (*Ad Gentes* 2).

Let us then ask ourselves: How well are our ministries, families, and communities living out this missionary reality?

- Our parishes are responsible for the evangelisation of all souls (Christian or otherwise) within their boundaries. All parish ministries should support this purpose. Let us prioritise mission over mere operations or comfort with the status quo operations.
- Families must proclaim the Gospel explicitly. Parents, be living examples of faith: create moments to pray and read Scripture together. Strive to practise hospitality and live peaceably with one another (Rom 12:18).
- Communities, be intentional in service of others. Seek opportunities to serve together whether volunteering in a social outreach or accompanying the elderly. Additionally, always be open to enquiries; small groups offer a gentle entry point for those curious about Jesus Christ.

We pray to God our Father for grace to be a truly missionary Church our own modern-day "star" leading others to Christ. We pray that, as His missionaries, we continue to reveal His love to everyone we encounter. As Isaiah prophesied in our 1st Reading, may the nations of the world gather to walk in the light of Jesus Christ.

SHARING QUESTIONS:

This section is divided into Personal and Group Contextual sharing. The latter is meant to prompt sharing based on the specific context, i.e. Small Christian Communities, Ministry or Family. Allow time to reflect on these questions and time for everyone to respond.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Everyone to reflect silently on the question(s) below. You may wish to share your reflections if you are in a group.

We talk about what struck us in the passages of scripture and how we can share the Word of God as a community / ministry / family.

- Who has been a “guiding star” in your life recently—someone who helped you encounter Jesus more deeply? What did they do or say that left an impact on you?
- How have you learned from this encounter and became a “guiding star” to someone else?

GROUP CONTEXTUAL SHARING QUESTIONS

You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.

For Small Christian Communities

In what ways can our group reflect the light of Christ more intentionally, in our relationships, outreach, and witness as a community?

For Ministry

Do we see our work contributing to the missionary purpose of our parish? How should we ensure that we keep this intentionality forefront in our work?

For Family

As a family, what is one faith-practice that will be a “guiding star” to the rest of our extended family, especially to those who have yet to come to know Jesus Christ?



DOING YOUR BIT

Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

Invite these three persons whom you gave the artwork of the symbols to go for the Eucharistic Celebration with you. Share with them that no one is excluded from the celebrations.

CLOSING PRAYER

The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group. Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.

Gracious Father,

in today's celebration You remind us that there is no distinction when You call people into Your Kingdom. We are grateful for this invitation that is open to all. In our gratitude, we too desire to invite others, knowing that You will not reject anyone we bring to You. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

My Reflections

2025-26 ADVENT TO CHRISTMAS
Reflection Booklet



Appendix

COMMON SYMBOLS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

From the early days of the Church, imagery was used during Advent and Christmas to help Christians understand the meaning and significance of the season. Today, we may be so used to seeing these signs and symbols that they just become a part of the decoration. We hope that this short list will help you come to a greater understanding and appreciation of them!



**ADVENT
CANDLES**

The colours of the four candles follow the liturgical colours: purple which symbolises penance and anticipation during the season of Advent, and rose for joy on Gaudete Sunday. These candles mark the passing of time as we look towards Christmas, reminding us that the night is far gone and the day is near.



**ADVENT
WREATH**

Traditionally made of evergreen branches, it symbolises hope and life. The branches are formed in a circle, an unbroken shape symbolising eternal life. It reminds us that God our Father's love has no end and His promise is sure.



**CHRISTMAS
TREE**

Pine is an evergreen tree that lasts throughout winter, a time when many plants in cold climates lose their leaves. The pine tree thus symbolises Christ's promise of everlasting life, even amidst an environment of sin and death. It reminds us that His life within us is constant and unfading.



POINSETTIAS

Native to Mexico, these flowers typically bloom during the Christmas season. The star-shaped leaf pattern symbolises the Star of Bethlehem, while the red flowers represent the blood shed by Jesus at His Crucifixion. Even at His birth, we remember the sacrifice by which He would save us.



**SANTA
CLAUS**

The name "Santa Claus" is a transliteration of *Sinterklass*, the Dutch name for St. Nicholas of Myra. His feast day on 6 December is celebrated in the Netherlands by people dressing as an old man with long white hair and beard with a red cape. Immigrants brought this tradition to the United States, where it merged with the Christmas celebration in pop culture. St. Nicholas is remembered for his generosity and care for the poor, showing us how love for Christ overflows in self-giving.



**STAR OF
BETHLEHEM**

Often seen at the top of a Christmas tree, we recall the star that led the wise men of the East to the child Jesus. It is a reminder of the reason for celebration: God Himself took on flesh and dwelt among us. We are invited to be the star to lead others to Christ.



Praying with the Advent Wreath

The symbolism of the Advent wreath lies in the tension between light and darkness, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the light of the world. The progressive lighting of the candles each week symbolises the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead. As the candle is lit each week, light increases and darkness decreases as we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world and has overcome darkness.

(4 weeks of Advent wreath prayers are adapted from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayer (NCCB, 1988))

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

LEADER: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Who made heaven and earth.

Scripture is read

Isaiah 9:1-2

'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at harvest, as they exult when dividing the spoils.'

READER: The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer.

Then the leader invites:

LEADER: Let us now pray for God's blessing upon us and this wreath.

All place their palms face-down over the Advent Wreath and the leader prays:

LEADER: Lord our God, we praise You for your Son, Jesus Christ: He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, He is the Saviour of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May He come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

RESPONSE: Amen.

The first purple candle is then lighted.

LEADER: Let us bless the Lord.

RESPONSE: Thanks be to God.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

ALL: O come, desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind; bid every sad division cease and be thyself our Prince of peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

First and Second purple candles are lighted as the leader says:

LEADER: Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation: in the darkness and in the light

Blessed are You as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

LEADER: Come, Lord Jesus!

RESPONSE: Come quickly!

LEADER: Let us live soberly, justly, and devoutly in this world as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

First and Second purple candles and the pink candle are lighted as the leader says:

LEADER: Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation: in the darkness and in the light

Blessed are You as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

LEADER: Come, Lord Jesus!

RESPONSE: Come quickly!

LEADER: Let us live soberly, justly, and devoutly in this world as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

First, Second and the Third purple candles and the pink candle are lighted as the leader says:

LEADER: Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation: in the darkness and in the light

Blessed are You as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

LEADER: Come, Lord Jesus!

RESPONSE: Come quickly!

LEADER: Let us live soberly, justly, and devoutly in this world as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.

CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY

LEADER: We have come to the eve of our Christmas celebration, Jesus' birthday. (Or: Today, we celebrate Jesus' birthday.) We have spent a long time preparing for His coming. Let us listen to the words of the prophets who foretold His coming.

READER 1: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.

READER 2: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon His shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

READER 3: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of My people, Israel.

LEADER: Today, we celebrate the great fulfilment of all these promises. Scripture proclaims that "to You is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord." And so, we light all the candles of the Advent Wreath.

First,

we light the candle for HOPE because Jesus is our hope. (1st purple candle lighted)

Second,

we light the candle for PEACE because Jesus is our hope and peace. (2nd purple candle lighted)

Third,

we light the candle for JOY because Jesus brings joy. (Pink candle lighted)

Fourth,

we light the candle for LOVE because Jesus is love. (3rd purple candle lighted)

Finally,

we light the centre candle. This is the CHRIST candle. We light this candle to celebrate that Jesus is born. He has come into our lives forever. (White candle lighted)

LEADER:

Loving Father,

we thank You for Your great gift of Jesus Christ, Your Son. God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of Your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to Your Word that we may bring Your life to the waiting world.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

RESPONSE:

Amen.



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This resource is intended for families, RCIA groups, parish organisations and ministries, small Christian communities and neighbourhood Christian communities. It may also be used for individual reflection.

To promote the Christian community in the neighbourhood as a place where we can hear the word of God and put it into practice.

To give participants an experience of community and a sense of their mission by reaching out to neighbours and those in need.

To gather parish organisations / ministries to pray together as one and put Christ back in the centre.

To increase communication between family members. Love should be the main message in all communication, so the sessions are aimed at families sharing stories, doing meaningful activities together, sharing faith, and being reconciled with each other.

