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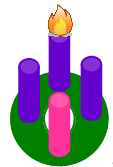
I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem. I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small. I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today. I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts. I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible: I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God. I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold. I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world. Amen

December 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
 Ottawa Catholic School Board						Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation 6 a: The graduate is expected to be a caring family member who relates to family members in a loving, compassionate, and respectful manner.	1 "All of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; be tenderhearted." <i>1 Peter 3:8</i>
2 First Sunday of Advent 	3 Holy Father's Intention 	4 Family Chat 	5 Prayer Power 	6 St. Nicholas 	7 Pray the Sorrowful Mysteries or say 1 Hail Mary 	8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception 	
9 Second Sunday of Advent 	10 Story of the Candy Cane Maker 	11 Prayer Power 	12 Our Lady of Guadalupe 	13 Pray the Luminous Mysteries or say 1 Hail Mary 	14 Catechism Byte 	15 "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation." <i>Mark 16:15</i>	
16 Third Sunday of Advent 	17 Prayer Power 	18 Online Resource 	19 Pray the Glorious Mysteries or say 1 Hail Mary 	20 The Virtue of Hope 	21 Family Chat 	22 "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." <i>Matthew 1:21</i>	
23 Fourth Sunday of Advent 	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas Day 	26 Christ is our Hope 	27 Family Activity 	28 Feast of the Holy Innocents 	29 "Then the man bowed down and worshipped the Lord." <i>Genesis 24:26</i>	
30 Feast of the Holy Family 	31 Pray the Joyful Mysteries or say 1 Hail Mary 	<h2>Faith and Fun Calendar</h2> <p>© 2012 W. Crepeault and M. Kellaway Visit our website at www.faithandfun.ca Contact us at info@faithandfun.ca</p>				 <p>= check out the back for more fun stuff</p>	

December 2: First Sunday of Advent

Week 1: Waiting – light one purple candle: *God, when we get too busy, when we are impatient, may this first candle of Advent remind us of the strength and hope you promise. Amen.*



Today is the 1st Sunday of Advent. The theme for this first Sunday is waiting which goes perfectly with today's gospel from Luke (21:25-28, 34-36). The story speaks about our waiting for the day when we will see the 'Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. We can easily be discouraged by fear of this day because we don't feel "ready". We can have these same feelings about Christmas day - that everything needs to be perfect; the baking, the tree, the house, the presents, the cards mailed, etc. But, if we can listen to the gospel, "Be on guard so that your hearts aren't weighed down with....the worries of this life", we can truly enter into the true meaning and beauty of Christmas. Take some time together today to prepare for Christmas. It could be card making or baking for someone or decorating. Be sure to make it a family activity.

December 3: Holy Father's Intention

Please pray 1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and 1 Glory Be for Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI's intentions for December:



General Intention: *That migrants throughout the world may be welcomed with generosity and authentic love, especially by Christian communities.*
Missionary Intention: *Christ, light for all humanity. That Christ may reveal himself to all humanity with the light that shines forth from Bethlehem and is reflected in the face of his Church.*

December 4: Family Chat

Please read together the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation for this month. This is a great month to practice being loving, compassionate and respectful. An idea to encourage this is to choose "Secret Santas." Put all your family's names into a hat and then take turns choosing a name. (If you pick your own, put it back and choose again) Make sure to keep the names hidden or "secret". From now until Christmas, be as loving and kind as you can to this family member without them knowing that it's you! If you are more kind and loving to each person, it is harder to guess who is Secret Santa for whom. You can end this activity on Christmas Eve with a small gift or card revealing the names of the Santas.

December 5: Prayer Power

Please pray together the Christmas Creed found on the front of the calendar.



December 6: St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas was a bishop from the 4th Century. He is the true inspiration for Santa Claus. He had a real spirit for giving; especially to the poor. Task: Plan a time this month for your family to "give" what you can. Gifts can be money (buying food for your local food bank), time (helping an elderly neighbour prepare for winter) or talents (baking cookies for someone) or prayer (pray for someone in need). Be creative in thinking of ways you can give of yourselves as a family.

December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

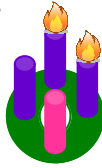
Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This is the day Mary was conceived, free from original sin.

Prayer: *Father, Mary had a faith that your Spirit prepared and a love that never knew sin, for you kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Trace in our actions the lines of her love, in our hearts her readiness of faith. Amen.*

December 9: Second Sunday of Advent

This is the 2nd Sunday in advent. The theme for this week is "hoping". We hear in the gospel today from Luke 3: 1-6, "Prepare the way of the Lord." How are your preparations for the Lord coming along? Is your family feeling stressed and rushed to get things done? We aren't supposed to feel this way and we must make the time to truly prepare our hearts for the gift of Jesus. Make some quiet time today, amongst the busyness, to write a letter or make a card for Jesus. Remember that it is His birthday we are celebrating and that we need to keep Him as our focus.

Light two candles and pray: *O God, when we don't take time to listen to your Word, when we find other things to distract us, we are likely to miss the most important thing of all, your love for us, and your word of salvation. Help us listen for your Word. Amen.*



December 10: Story of the Candy Cane Maker

How can a candy treat be a birth announcement? Many years ago a candy maker had an idea. He wanted to show, through the candy he made, that Jesus Christ was born among us, lived and died to save us all. So, through the use of colour and shape, he created a piece of candy that told the story of Jesus from Christmas to Easter. He created the candy cane! Colour: The white stripe on the candy cane stands for the fact that Jesus was sinless and pure. The three small red stripes stand for the scourging Jesus endured before he died. The large stripe stands for Jesus' blood shed on the cross. Shape: the candy cane is shaped like a shepherd's staff reminding us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Turn it upside down, and it is a letter "J", the first letter of Jesus' name. We can learn a lot from the candy cane-both to look at it and see Jesus and, like the candy maker, to share the story of Jesus in whatever we do.



December 11: Prayer Power

Take some time today to sit down together and each think of a different ending for this prayer: "This Christmas I pray for"



December 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe

In 1531 a "lady from heaven" appeared to a poor native Mexican named Juan Diego. She asked him to build a church on the hill where they were. When the bishop asked for a sign, an imprinted image of Our Lady was found, with out-of-season roses, in Juan's cloak. Celebrate this feast with tacos, quesadillas or other Mexican food for dinner tonight!

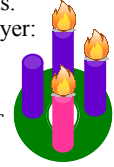


December 14: Catechism Byte

Read together CCC 2658: Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Prayer, formed by the liturgical life, draws everything into the love by which we are loved in Christ and which enables us to respond to him by loving as he has loved us. Love is the source of prayer; whoever draws from it reaches the summit of prayer. In the words of the Cure of Ars: *I love you, O my God, and my only desire is to love you until the last breath of my life. I love you, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving you, than live without loving you. I love you, Lord, and the only grace I ask is to love you eternally. . . . My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love you, I want my heart to repeat it to you as often as I draw breath.*

December 16: Third Sunday of Advent

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Advent. It is known as "Gaudet" or rejoicing Sunday. There are a few messages in the gospel (Luke 3: 10-18) but let's reflect on just one. John the Baptist said, "whoever has two coats should share with the person who has none; and whoever has food should do likewise." If your family is able to give something (whether it is food, clothing or gifts) to others this month, plan to make some time to do this. If you are in need, pray that God fill your needs this Christmas. Light two purple and one pink candle. Prayer: *O God, we thank you for the joy you have brought to our hearts by sending us a Saviour. Help us focus on you and what this means for our lives, our acceptance of your judgment, your acceptance of our repentance, and the promise of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*



December 17: Prayer Power

Please pray together again the Christmas Creed found on the front of the calendar.

December 18: Online Resource

Visit www.faihandfun.ca and click on the Advent Activities page for puzzles, stories, crafts and more. Tell us which was your favourite activity by writing us at info@faihandfun.ca.



December 20: The Virtue of Hope

Hope is one of the three theological virtues. Together with faith and love, hope helps to prepare us to share in God's plan for us—eternal life. Christmas is often seen as the season of hope because of the great gift given to all mankind in the birth of Jesus. When Jesus was born that first Christmas in Bethlehem, he started on his earthly journey to bring salvation to the world. What do you hope for this Christmas?

December 21: Family Chat

Did you know that your family plays a very unique role in society? There is no other family exactly like yours out there, so you are special! Talk about traditions that you have. Maybe you aren't even aware that you have some! (ex. every Friday night you have pizza and watch a movie, or you make all your Christmas cards by hand or for birthdays you make a special dessert) Maybe you want to start a new tradition this Christmas. Be creative!

December 23: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today is the 4th Sunday in advent, and we focus on "celebrating". In the gospel (Luke 1: 39-45) we hear the story of the Visitation, which is the second joyful mystery of the rosary. Think of how excited Mary and Elizabeth must have been to see each other. Maybe you will also be seeing family in a few days that you haven't seen in awhile. Spend some time together today finishing up any last minute preparations you have before family arrives or before you leave to be with family. Maybe a special card or picture could be made for the relatives you will soon see. Light all the candles today.



Prayer: *Dear God, even in our excitement over the parties, the food and all the preparations for the festivities, help us to remember why we are celebrating. Help us have peace in our hearts towards all, both friends and enemies. Please help us to be your instruments to bring peace on earth. Amen.*

December 24: Christmas Eve

Celebrate your family traditions and help with last minute preparations. If you haven't already done so, visit www.faihandfun.ca Advent Activities page for the "The Night Before Jesus" to read together.

December 25: Christmas Day

Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. When we pray the Rosary we meditate on this event in the third Joyful mystery. Sing Happy Birthday to Jesus and attend mass together.



December 26: Christ is our Hope

In Paul's first letter to Timothy 1:1, he refers to Christ as "our hope" and tells Timothy how to conduct himself in order to "fight the good fight for the faith." (6:12). The Catechism of the Catholic Church, in verses 1817-1821, tells us more about the virtue of hope. Take some quiet time today, to read these verses and think about what role hope plays in your life. If you don't have a Catechism, you can read it online at www.scboromeo.org/ccc.htm

December 27: Family Activity

Plan some time together to make thank you cards for gifts you have received. They could be store bought, made on the computer or with crayons and paper. Be creative and have fun! Think of the joy your cards will bring to others.

December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents

King Herod knew that a Saviour had been born in Bethlehem. He was afraid that he would lose his kingdom, so he ordered that all boy children under the age of 2 to be killed. (Matthew 3:16). Joseph had been warned by God in a dream and had fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

December 30: Feast of the Holy Family

Joseph, Mary and Jesus faced many difficulties but their faith in God, love for one another and respect for each other helped them through hard times. They are a great example for all families. Prayer: *Father, help us to live as the Holy family, united in respect and love. Bring us to the joy and peace of your eternal home. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, on God forever and ever. Amen.* (New Saint Joseph Sunday missal)