



TO TEACH AS JESUS DID

DECEMBER 2014

Sacred Space

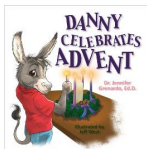
Find a quiet place and prayerfully reflect:



In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while [a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." Luke 1:1-14

From the Resource Center



Danny Celebrates Advent

by Jennifer Grenardo, Ed.D.

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Danny the Donkey and his family

introduce Catholic traditions celebrated throughout the season of Advent. Young children will be introduced to the Advent wreath and to the traditions of waiting and preparing that dominate the Catholic home during this season of anticipation. Ideas for simple crafts made out of paper plates are also included.

To reserve this resource, ask for BK #201269

Nativity Tree ©2013 by Nippert and Co. Artworks

This Nativity tree is in the shape of a triangle, and is made up of several small triangles. Each small triangle illustrates one piece of the Nativity of Jesus. When put together the tree illustrates the entire Nativity story. Use the triangles to tell the stories of the Biblical characters or ask older students to look up the Bible stories associated with each of the characters. Tell the story of the Nativity in a new and unique way. Each triangle measure approx. 8" high by 8" wide and when finished the whole tree measures 32" wide by 40" high. To reserve this resource, ask for PO #01311



Ideas for the Classroom and the Home

<http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com/2011/11/christmas.html>

For more ideas than you will ever need go to the Catholic Toolbox. Here you will find activities, games, puzzles, worksheets, lesson plans and tips for both the classroom and the home. Be sure to include this website in your December newsletter to families.

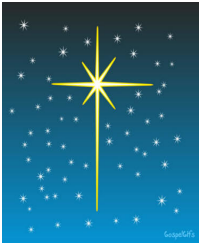
The Classroom:

School and Faith Formation Partnership

During Advent and Christmas, here is a special idea if you share a classroom where school meets during the day and religious education meets after school or in the evening. Leave a kind note from your class or a message on the board, or even draw a large Christmas card that the class can sign. Maybe even leave a candy cane for each student or some other holiday treat.

Remember that it is much easier to share a space when we treat others with respect. So this year, encourage your students to become elves and think of something nice they can do for the "other kids" who use the room. Lots of teachers and catechists did this last year so it is offered as an idea once again!





Fun for Middle School and High School Grades

The song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality, which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that are similar: the fruit in each parentheses is the one that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because only Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its young by feigning injury to draw always predators.

- The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testament.
- The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love for God in sending a Savior.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit – Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit - Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience (Forebearance), Goodness (Kindness), Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Self-Restraint (Chastity).
- The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

Discuss the meaning of the 12 Days of Christmas with middle schoolers and teens. Rewrite the song using new words that reflect the Christian meaning.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/advent/customs-and-traditions/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmas/>

SERVICE PROJECT FOR ALL AGES

Leave sweet notes of kindness and encouragement as Christmas gifts. It is as simple as that. See the websites below that list the words or phrases of encouragement. Print off messages on slips of paper. Have kids hand them out to each other and even on a field trip to a nursing home. A simple word of encouragement in print is a wonderful Christmas gift. Make several packets of words of encouragement and have them available for your faculty or catechists to give to one another. Suggest after giving the slip of paper to pray silently for that person. Teens may be awkward about giving others a slip of paper but it is Christmas and they can get into this project as well. Your words matter! Words in print are powerful. How you treat others matters. Unexpected acts of kindness bless both the giver and receiver. Your wishes may be Bible quotes or lines from familiar Christmas hymns. Just make a pile of words or phrases and cut them into individual pieces.



Try these Christmas wishes:

- May Jesus shower His abundant blessing on you!
- Here's wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season and a New Year filled with Peace and Happiness. May your Christmas be Happy and Bright!!
- May you experience lots of love, laughter and joy this Christmas and beyond and a very Happy New Year too.
- May this Christmas be so special that you never ever feel lonely again and be surrounded by loved ones throughout!
- Let the love of the Christ Child come into your heart.
- Merry Christmas! May your life be filled with love, compassion, tolerance, peace and happiness.
- May the Blessings of Peace, the Beauty of Hope, the Spirit of Love, and the Comfort of Faith be your gifts this Christmas Season.
- The love of the Holy Family be with you this Christmas!
- May you and your family experience God's loving embrace. Merry Christmas to all!
- May this Christmas mark the beginning of a wonderful year. Have a joyous Christmas!
- I am dreaming of white Christmas, with every Christmas card I write. May your days be merry and bright, and May all your Christmases be white. Happy Christmas to you all dear!!
- Wishing you an abundance of friends, happiness, and fun this holiday season.

