

ABSOLUTELY ADVENT!

A TEEN'S JOURNEY
TO CHRISTMAS
2020 ★

For Teens



THE ADVENT WREATH

Let's face it—the days are very dark in November and December.

In fact, until December 21, the world moves through the darkest days of the year. It is no coincidence that during these days, the Church celebrates the coming birth of Jesus, the Light of the World, with the light from the candles of the Advent wreath.

The Advent wreath actually has its roots outside of Christianity. Both Germanic and Scandinavian peoples would take branches from evergreen trees and decorate them with candles, providing light in the darkness. By the year 1600, Christians brought this ritual into religious practice. So what do the candles and greens mean?

A GREEN CHRISTMAS

ACTIVITY: If your family has a tradition of mailing Christmas cards to family and friends, send a green Christmas card this year. With your family, design an electronic Christmas card. Be creative! Use family photos and clip art. Gather email addresses of family and friends. Then, with a click, you can email your card to all of the people who are important in your life. You can also post your family's card on social media sites. Think of all the trees you can save with this one small step!

Evergreens = Life. The greens can signify different aspects of life; for example, pine has symbolized immortality, whereas cedar represents strength.

Circle = Everlasting life. The circle has no beginning and no end. God has no beginning and no end. Eternal life has no beginning and no end. Life goes on, no matter what!

Candles = Light. There are four candles on an Advent wreath—three violet and one pink or rose colored. The three violet candles symbolize prayer and penance, which prepare us to celebrate the birth of Christ. The pink candle, lit on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, represents a turning point. We have reached the halfway point of Advent when this candle is lit. And, of course, all light reminds us of the light of Christ!





First Monday of Advent

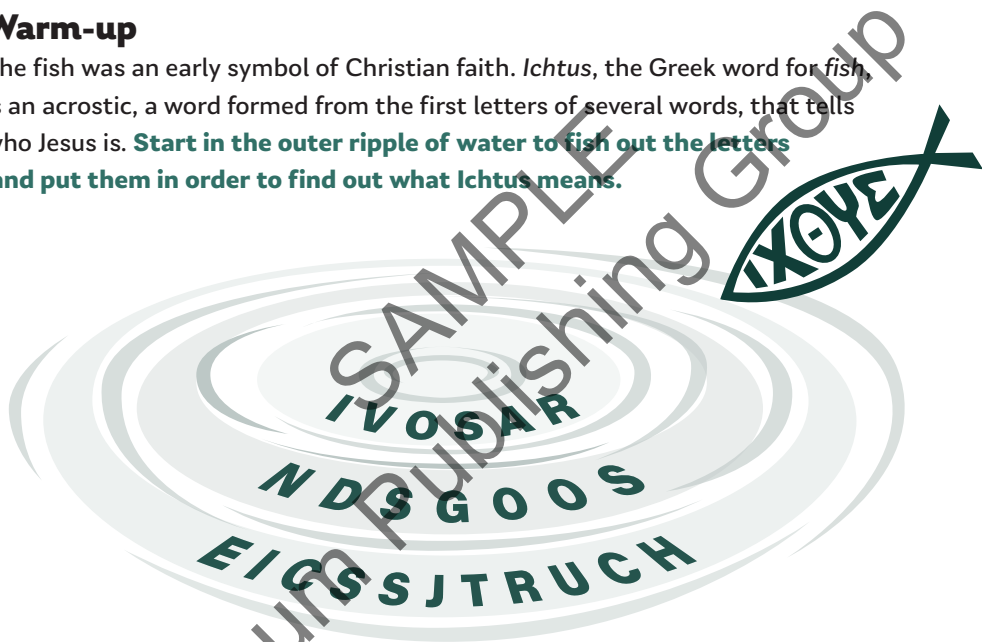
NOVEMBER 30 ★ SAINT ANDREW

★ Today's Scripture Reading >> Matthew 4:18-20 ★

As [Jesus] walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Warm-up

The fish was an early symbol of Christian faith. *Ichthus*, the Greek word for fish, is an acrostic, a word formed from the first letters of several words, that tells who Jesus is. **Start in the outer ripple of water to fish out the letters and put them in order to find out what *Ichthus* means.**



ICHTUS means

_____,
_____,

Whether or not Jesus meant for the fishermen to leave their occupation and literally follow him wherever he went is not as important as the fact that the fishermen were invited to learn Jesus' ways. Then their "catch" would be greater!

Reflection: How do you show that you follow Jesus?



First Thursday of Advent

DECEMBER 3 ★ SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

★ Today's Scripture Reading >> Matthew 7:24-27 ★

[Jesus said,] "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"

Warm-up

While on earth, by word and example Jesus taught his followers the requirements of a Christian life. **List in the building blocks below those characteristics a "rock solid" Christian will possess. An example is given.**

HONESTY	

Reflection: Which one of these characteristics—building blocks—are you most proud to possess? How would others recognize this characteristic in you?



Second Saturday of Advent

DECEMBER 12 ★ OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

★ Today's Scripture Reading >> Luke 1:34-35, 37 ★

God is always and everywhere in your life. That's what makes life possible! Mary was wrestling with that reality when she asked, "How can this be?" She received no earthly answer, just the assurance that all things are possible with God!

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God....For nothing will be impossible with God."

Warm-up: All things are possible with God! That means that you AND God do the problem solving. Here are some seemingly impossible things that really happen. **Use the letters in the highlighted spaces to complete the word in the sentence below.**

- 1 People can fly—in _____.
- 2 Music can be broadcast over great distances on _____ waves.
- 3 _____ can glide through the air with parachutes.
- 4 With solar panels the _____ can power our appliances.
- 5 Water becomes a solid—_____—in our freezers.
- 6 Mountain _____ can reach unbelievable heights.
- 7 You can learn to speak a different _____.
- 8 By grafting, two different fruits can grow on one _____.

All of these things are _____ !

Reflection: Describe a time when something seemed to be "impossible."
How was a solution worked out?



Third Friday of Advent

DECEMBER 18

★ Today's Scripture Reading >> Jeremiah 23:5-6 ★

The prophet Jeremiah was a messenger. He brought a message of hope to the people of his time. Through Jeremiah, God told the people that they would have a wise, just, and honorable king. Five hundred years after Jeremiah, that King, the Messiah Jesus, was born.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness."

Jeremiah's message of hope was a vision or expectation that held the people together. That long, constant commitment to a shared vision or a common good is called solidarity.

Solidarity may be understood in this way. A sports team goes out on the playing field hoping for a victory. When this does not happen, the players renew their hope and expectation for a win in the next game. It's a shared goal, a shared vision. Win or lose, they're in it together!

Warm-up: If the goal is protecting God's creation, list attitudes and actions you think are necessary to achieve that goal.



Reflection: How do you see yourself contributing to caring for creation?
