

Brackenstown Parish

ADVENT FOR FAMILIES



Advent marks the start of the Christian year. It is the four weeks before Christmas beginning on November 30 or the nearest Sunday to it. This is the Church's New Year's Day.

The word Advent comes from the Latin 'adventus' which means 'arrival' or 'coming'. This is the time for Christians to prepare for celebration of the birth of Jesus and look forward to the time that Jesus will come again.

Advent is all about waiting and preparing. It's not easy to wait for something as exciting as Christmas! We have to practice being patient as we wait. There are LOADS of things we do to get ready for Christmas. We put up a tree, send cards, get presents for people we love. We also need to get our hearts ready for when Jesus comes at Christmas. There are some suggestions in this booklet on how you can do that as home as a family. We hope that you will find it useful

Wishing you a Blessed Advent!

An Advent Family Prayer at Bedtime

Loving God, on this Advent night
we turn to you in prayer.
As we wait for the coming of your Son,
we ask you to bless our family.
Free us from any worry or distress
that we may have
and help us to welcome your light into our lives,
a light that gives us your gift of hope.
May your hope fill our hearts, our minds and our
home. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Together we pray: Come, Lord Jesus.

TIPS ON CELEBRATING ADVENT

- Have a Advent Wreath at home. There is a video on the Parish Website, Facebook and Instagram showing you how to make one
- Use the Advent Calendar at the back of this Booklet which has ideas you can do everyday
- Read/watch the Christmas story
- Look up about the Jesse Tree and see what your favourite symbol is
- Decide that you will say a prayer together everyday as a family. Pick a time that suits you all. It could be in the car on the way to School, before a meal or at bedtime
- If you don't have one already, get a Family Crib and put it somewhere you can see it every day. Put Mary and Joseph in a different place in the house and move them a little closer to the Crib each day.
- Visit the Church to see the Advent Wreath and Jesse Tree. Notice how much purple there is everywhere! Purple is the colour of Advent
- Go to Mass on Sunday or join in on the webcam at www.brackenstown-parish.com
- Keep an eye on the Parish Social Media pages for other ideas and things that are happening

THE ADVENT WREATH



Light has always been a symbol of hope in the darkness. Long before Jesus was born, we know that the people of Eastern Europe made wreaths of evergreen branches and added lighted candles as a sign of hope in the dark days of winter. This was a reminder to them that spring was on its way. In the northern European countries, lights were placed on wheels and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn the wheel of the earth back towards the sun. By the 1500s, Christians had adapted this tradition and were using Advent Wreaths as part of their preparation for Christmas. In the 17th century, the Advent Wreath was used throughout Germany to mark the time spent waiting for the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. From Germany, this tradition spread to the rest of the world.

A CIRCLE OF EVERGREEN

The wreath is circular in shape to show the everlasting love of God, a love that has no beginning or end. Evergreen leaves such as holly, laurel, ivy, spruce or pine are used. The evergreen helps us to remember that God loves us always.

FIVE CANDLES- THREE PURPLE, ONE PINK AND ONE WHITE

There is a candle for each of the four weeks of Advent.

The purple candles remind us that Advent is a time when we are asked to pray, ask for forgiveness from God and help others who are not as lucky as we are.

The pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent which is also called Gaudete Sunday.

This means Joyful Sunday or the Sunday of Rejoicing. We rejoice because we are more than half way through our preparation for Christmas.

As we light the candles each week, we are made aware of our journey through this season. We light the White Candle on Christmas Day to symbolise the Birth of Jesus – the Light of the World

A BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH IN THE HOME

This blessing might accompany the lighting
of the Advent Wreath at home

All make the Sign of the Cross

*A member of the family recites the blessing
while another member lights the first candle.*

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

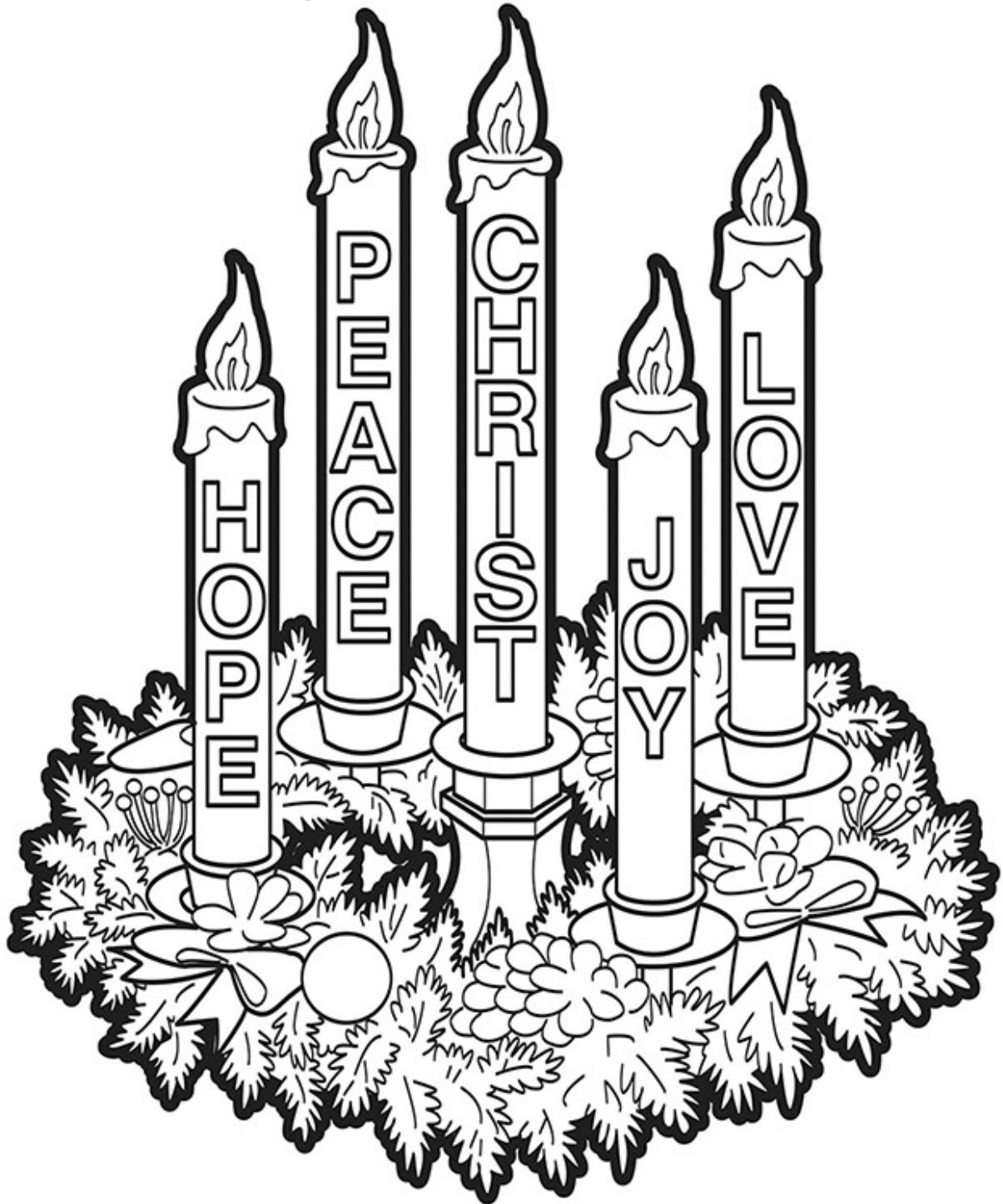
May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son...

MY ADVENT WREATH



COLOUR IN YOUR ADVENT WREATH.

HOPE - PURPLE

JOY - PINK

CHRIST - WHITE/GOLD

PEACE - PURPLE

LOVE - PURPLE



WHAT IS A JESSE TREE?

The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories on Jesus's family tree. Each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you'll see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations. All the information on the different symbols with printable ornaments are available on

<https://www.faithward.org/jesse-tree/jesse-tree-symbols-and-bible-stories/>

WHERE DOES JESSE TREE COME FROM?

The Jesse Tree tradition is rooted in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. And Jesus is descended from the line of David. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Each symbol represents a story from within this family tree and a step toward the birth of Jesus.

Here are some ideas on how to make the 'Tree' for your Symbols

Branches of Life and Light

Create a dedicated Jesse Tree with some fresh foliage or fallen branches from your garden or a nearby park. Alternatively, purchase some commercial 'fairy-light' branches. Arrange them in a vase or bucket.

Wall Hanging

If space is at a premium, consider drawing a tree on some poster page and hanging it on a wall

Garland

Discard the tinsel and make a garland with your Jesse Tree symbols. String some satin cord across your mantelpiece, bookcase or cupboard. Add your symbols one by one with clips or ribbon.



ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND THE CRIB

The first Christmas Crib dates back to St. Francis of Assisi whose Feast Day we celebrate on October 4. In 1293 Francis had an idea. He wanted to show the people of Greccio, near Assisi, what it was like when Jesus was born. He wanted to tell them the story of the first Christmas in a different way.

Francis has a very good friend called John who lived in the town of Greccio. About two weeks before Christmas he went to visit him and asked for his help. Francis told John that he wanted him to get hay, a donkey and an ox and to bring them to a place in the woods that he had chosen. John did what Francis asked. Lots of people helped John get ready and the news about what Francis was doing spread all around the neighbourhood. On Christmas Eve all Francis' Brothers and the people of the neighbourhood gathered around the crib. They bought candles and torches to brighten the night. St. Francis arrived and saw that everything had been prepared. The crib was ready, the hay, the ox and the donkey were put in place. It was just like they were in Bethlehem. The crowds prayed and Mass was celebrated. St. Francis' idea of bringing Bethlehem to every town spread quickly all over the world and soon there were Christmas cribs in churches and homes.

(Sincere thanks to the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin for the Story of St. Francis and the Crib & Information on the Advent Wreath)

A BLESSING OF THE CRIB IN THE HOME

*This blessing can be prayed when the crib is being put in place in the home. When the final figures are ready to be put into the crib, the family might gather around it and recite the following blessing:
All make the sign of the cross*

We listen to the story of how Jesus was born from the Gospel according to St. Luke

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census should be taken of the whole empire. And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, since he was from the house and line of David.

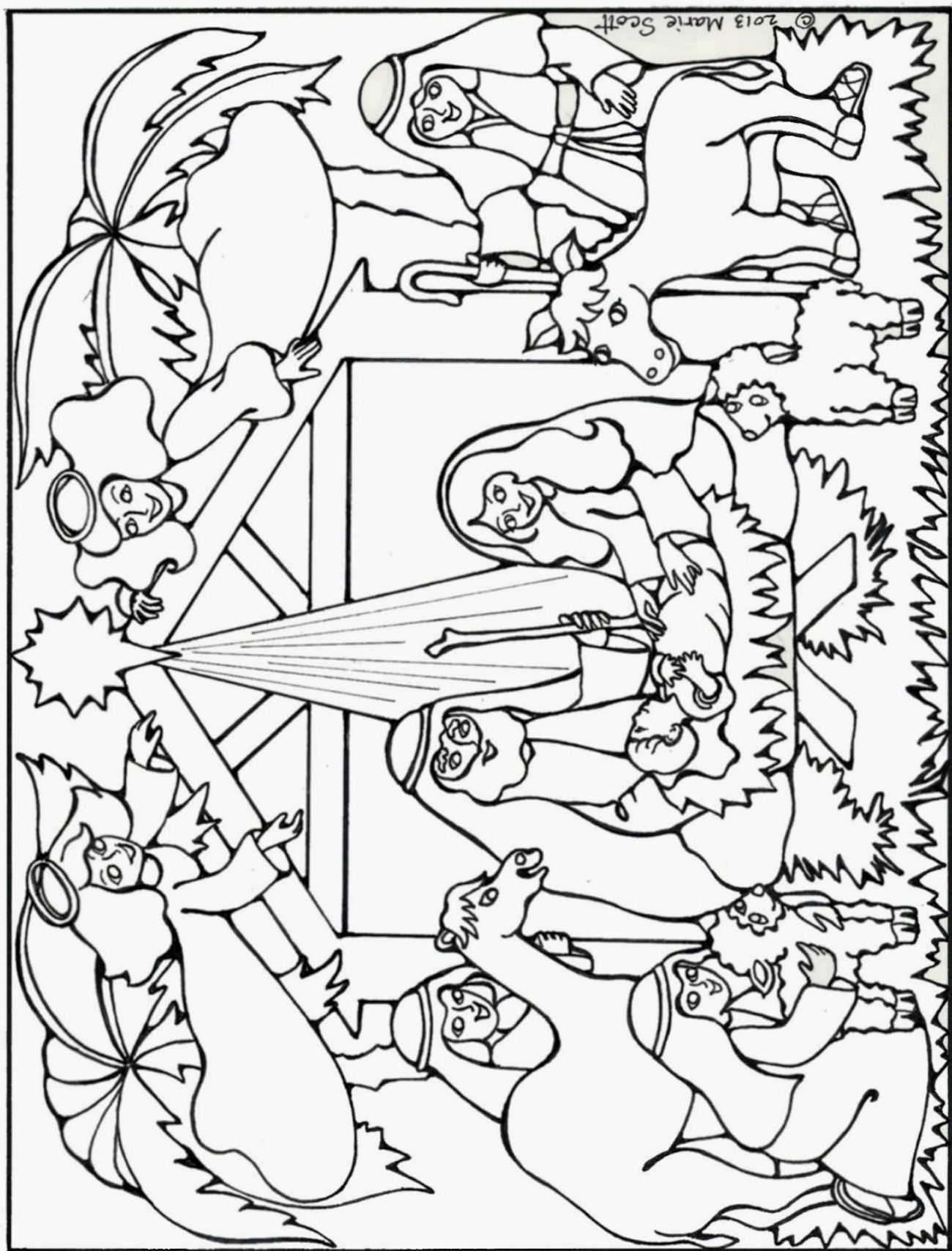
He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her Child to be born. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Let us pray

As we bless this crib, we pray that it will be a place where people will come to know God's love for them through this child in the manger. May they know that God comes to welcome and embrace us.

We pray a blessing on all in our home and on our families, near and far.

May we know the peace that the angels announced to the shepherds and may the joy of God's coming among us in Jesus, fill your hearts, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen



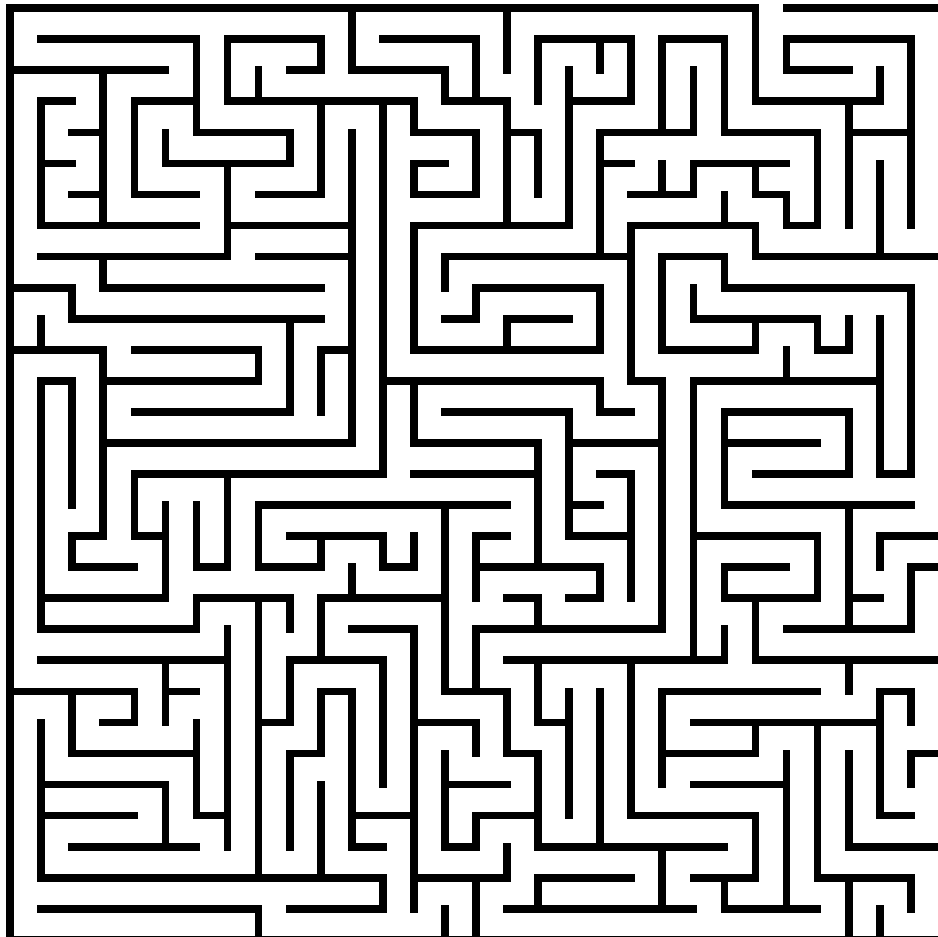
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NAZARETH
 JOSEPH
 WREATH
 CANDLE
 ADVENT
 EMMANUEL
 PINK
 JESUS
 JOY
 PREPARE
 PEACE
 MARY
 HOPE
 ANGEL
 PURPLE
 STAR
 CHRISTMAS
 LOVE
 BETHLEHEM

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1688894/>

HELP MARY AND JOSEPH
FIND THEIR WAY TO BETHLEHEM!



CHRISTMAS MOVIES AND MUSIC!



The Star (2017) is a funny and entertaining telling of the Christmas Story. Join Bo the Donkey and the other animals as they help Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem. Everyone will enjoy this one! *The Star* is available on Sky OnDemand or to rent from Google

HERE COME SANTA CLAUS!

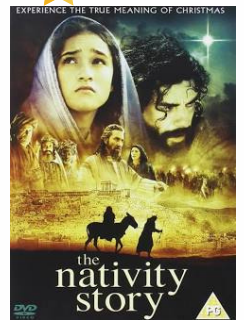
This great Christmas song from the 1940's doesn't get a lot of Radio play but is worth adding to your playlist. We all know that Santa brings us presents to celebrate Jesus' birthday and this song reminds us of this!

*'Peace on earth will come to all if we just follow the light,
So let's give thanks to the Lord above
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight'*

In Dulce Jubilo

Did you know that *In Dulce Jubilo* is one of the oldest Christmas hymns? It was written around 1328 in Germany. It was originally written in German and Latin. The most famous English version is *Good Christians All Rejoice*. Why not have a listen to it on Youtube?

For older children, teenagers and adults, the *Nativity Story* is a beautiful drama that focuses on the period in Mary and Joseph's life where they journeyed to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. *The Nativity Story* is available to watch on Youtube



BLESSING OF CHRISTMAS TREE

When the tree has been prepared, the household gathers around it. All make the Sign of the Cross.

This tree is a blessing to our home.
It reminds us of all that is beautiful,
all that is filled with the gentleness and the promise of God.
It stands in our midst as a tree of light,
that we might promise such beauty to one another and to our world.
It stands like that tree of paradise that God made into the tree of life, the cross of Jesus.
God of all creation, we praise you for this tree
which brings beauty and memories and the promise of life to our home.
May your blessing be upon all who gather around this tree,
all who keep the Christmas festival by its lights.
We wait for the coming of the Christ,
the days of everlasting justice and of peace.
You are our God, living and reigning, for ever and ever. R. Amen.

Pray together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

The lights of the tree are then turned on



MY ADVENT CALENDAR



MY ADVENT CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 First Sunday of Advent I will spend a few extra minutes in prayer today.	30 I will do my work well today and with joy for God.	1 I will be kind in a special way to someone I do not like much.	2 I will obey my parents, my teachers, and others in charge of me.	3 <u>St. Francis Xavier</u> I will secretly do a kind act for someone.	4 I will try to show special love for someone who seems unhappy or lonely.	5 I will keep calm and not lose my temper when I am pushed or treated rudely.
6 <u>St. Nicholas</u> Second Sunday of Advent I will donate like-new toys and books I've outgrown to needy families.	7 <u>St. Ambrose</u> I will work hard today and do my best.	8 <u>Immaculate Conception of Mary</u> I will honor Mary in a very special way today by being cheerful.	9 I will do some work for my parents to help them rest after a day of work.	10 I will eat more of what is good for me today and less of what is not.	11 I will be satisfied with the things I have instead of asking my family for more.	12 <u>Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe</u> I will ask Mary to help me make room for Jesus in my heart.
13 <u>St. Lucy</u> Third Sunday of Advent I will find a quiet place and sit for a few minutes, just letting God love me.	14 <u>St. John of the Cross</u> I will try to be more thoughtful of others.	15 I will try to be patient today.	16 I will make a special effort to be kind to those I find it hard to like.	17 I will speak kindly to all I meet today.	18 I will be helpful at home these last days before Jesus' birthday.	19 I will not complain today, even if I must do things I do not want to do.
20 Fourth Sunday of Advent I will thank God for all he gives to me.	21 <u>St. Peter Canisius</u> I will give a smile to all I meet today.	22 I will be grateful and thank God today for all the food I have.	23 I will do a kind act for each member of my family.	24 I welcome Jesus with great love and offer him all the good acts I have performed and the prayers I have said during Advent.	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!	
ADVENT 2020 <i>May Christ our Savior bring light into the darkness of this world, and to us, as we wait for his coming.</i>						LOYOLA PRESS. A JESUIT MINISTRY Copyright © LOYOLA PRESS.