

Family Faith Activity #2 for December, 2020

Creating and blessing of your family's Nativity scene.

The very first nativity scene dates back to 1223 – almost 800 years ago! That year, at the Christmas Mass, Francis of Assisi presented a live representation of the Nativity in a small cave in Greccio, Italy. He hoped that people who saw this moving, creative way of remembering the story of Jesus' birth would come to understand the great divine love that brought God's own Son into our world. Since that time, nativity sets have become a tradition in our homes during the Christmas season. Our own Nativity scenes which rest under our Christmas trees, or wherever we place them in our home are a visible reminder of that night when our Savior was born and that began our journey to salvation.

A good way to begin the celebration of Christmas is with a blessing of the figures in your family's nativity set. If you don't have a nativity set, you could make the paper one that is a document in this folder. You can color and cut out the paper figures and set them up in your home.

When you are blessing the figures, take time to hold each one and bless them with the prayers below. If you have more figures than the ones mentioned here, create your own blessing. Remember to bless the people in your family, too. Like the figures in the scene created by St. Francis, the people in your family are living reminders of God's great gift of love.

Blessings for a Nativity Set

✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for the Infant Jesus. He came to be one of us and show us how to live. *Fill us with generosity.*

✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for Mary, the mother of Jesus and our Blessed Mother. She loved Jesus with all her heart. *Fill us with love.*

✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for Joseph. He was always a faithful and loving protector of Jesus. *Fill us with goodness and help us to be faithful like him.*



✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for the shepherds. They listened to the angels, your messengers, and found their way to the Christ child. *Fill us with your light and guide us on our way.*

✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for the animals that shared their home with people who were poor. *Fill us with the desire to help those in need.*

✝ Blessed are you, O Lord, for the magi – the 3 kings who followed the star that pointed the way to Jesus and adored him. *Fill us with your light and guide us to proclaim your kingdom and adore you with our lives. Amen.*

The Giving Manger ~ Good deeds and kindness make a soft bed for Jesus

Materials needed:

- yellow paper or color white paper yellow and make small strips
- manger or something you can use as a manger such as a small plate or small bowl
- a figure of Jesus. You can make a paper one if you don't have one.

Advent is a time of waiting. We are waiting for the coming of our Savior! A fun way to incorporate this concept with kids is the "giving manger." The manger begins empty at the beginning of Advent. This year, Advent begins on November 29th.

Each time someone in the family does a good deed or makes a sacrifice, he or she can write it on a small strip of paper and put in the empty manger. Explain that good deeds and sacrifices are the best present we can give to Jesus for his birthday! With each piece of paper added to the manger, Jesus has a softer place to lay for Christmas morning. On Christmas, you add Jesus to the manger while singing "Away in a Manger." This can be a meaningful Christmas tradition to start with your family!

"What so ever you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me."
~ *Matthew 25:40*

Example

