

Small steps in faith make a holy day



Advent 1

Read

Lk 21:25-28,34-36

Signs and sounds of salvation.

Think

Advent! A new church year begins and we focus on the coming of the Lord. Christ has come, and *Christ will come again*. We look long for that great day when all will be completely transformed in Christ's love. We have no idea of the day or the hour. What we do know through faith is that our hearts must be ready and open.

Talk

Share an experience of longing, hoping, waiting in your own life. *For what were you yearning? Was that great day fulfilled, or are you still waiting, longing, hoping?* This Advent, surrender all these reflections to God. Stay awake to the Lord's response!

Pray

Instead of coffee breaks, take 'prayer-breaks' during Advent.

Act

Plan to receive the sacrament of reconciliation in your local parish before Christmas.

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Advent 2

Read

Luke 3:1-6

The voice of a prophet.

Think

Through his bold witness and message, John the Baptist prepared people for the coming of Christ. In today's world, Christians are called to prepare people for the final coming of Christ. We must be just as dedicated and bold in preparing the way for the Lord, even if at times we feel we are a voice crying in the wilderness.

Talk

How bold and fearless am I when it comes to sharing my Catholic faith with others?

Pray

Pray for generosity of heart and a touch of imagination in celebrating Christmas with loved ones this year.

Act

Think of three people you might invite to join you at Christmas Mass. (Think especially of a child – a relative or godchild - who may not otherwise have the opportunity.)

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Advent 3

Read

Luke 3:10-18

The Lord is near!

Think

'What must we do?' ask the people who responded to John the Baptist's message. John answers with specific demands: share your goods, be honest at work, don't cheat or intimidate others. Repentance must translate into action.

Talk

Ask yourself: 'What must I do?' if my inner life of faith is to find expression in my exterior actions. Share your thoughts with a close friend.

Pray

Pray for peace - within hearts and between nations.

Act

Make a 'pact' with a friend to support each other in the practicalities of being Catholic - like Sunday Mass and daily prayer/scripture. If you are strong in these areas, turn your attentions to other practices like sharing family meals or regular contributions to a missionary work of the church.

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Advent 4

Read

Luke 1:39-44

The child John leaps for joy.

Think

The movement of a child within the womb is a familiar sensation to pregnant women. In Luke's Gospel the description of this sensation conveys unusual power: Elizabeth's child does not simply stir but 'leaps' (dances, bounces) for joy. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. She is aware that in greeting Mary, the one who bears the Christ-child, she stands in the presence of an extraordinary mystery.

Talk . Pray

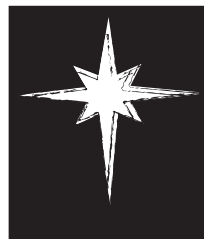
Try this simple reflection with friends and loved ones on Christmas eve.

Share a time when you became aware that you were in the presence of a sacred mystery.

With Mary, mother of our Saviour, conclude with a prayer of praise or song of thanksgiving.

Act

Take a child to see the large nativity crib in your local parish church. Tell the Christmas story to this child. Really bring it alive!



Christmas Mass times



The Advent season

Holy seasons, like Advent, reflect the Church's sense of time. They punctuate the yearly routine with special themes, celebrations and challenges that help us grow in Christian faith.

During Advent we prepare our hearts for Christmas, the celebration of God-made-flesh in the birth of Jesus.

It is a time to unburden ourselves of unhealthy habits, sinfulness and regrets.

It is a time to get in touch with our loved ones, our true self, our church family, our God.

One way to celebrate this holy season is to take small, achievable steps in faith. This leaflet offers suggestions for doing just that.

Keep it handy - perhaps on the 'fridge door, or in the glove-box of the car - as a way to prompt you in your Advent journey.

Come Christmas, you will be reaping the fruits of your journey in grace.