ST. FRANCIS
DE SALES
West Philadelphia

2026-2027

RELIGIOUS Education

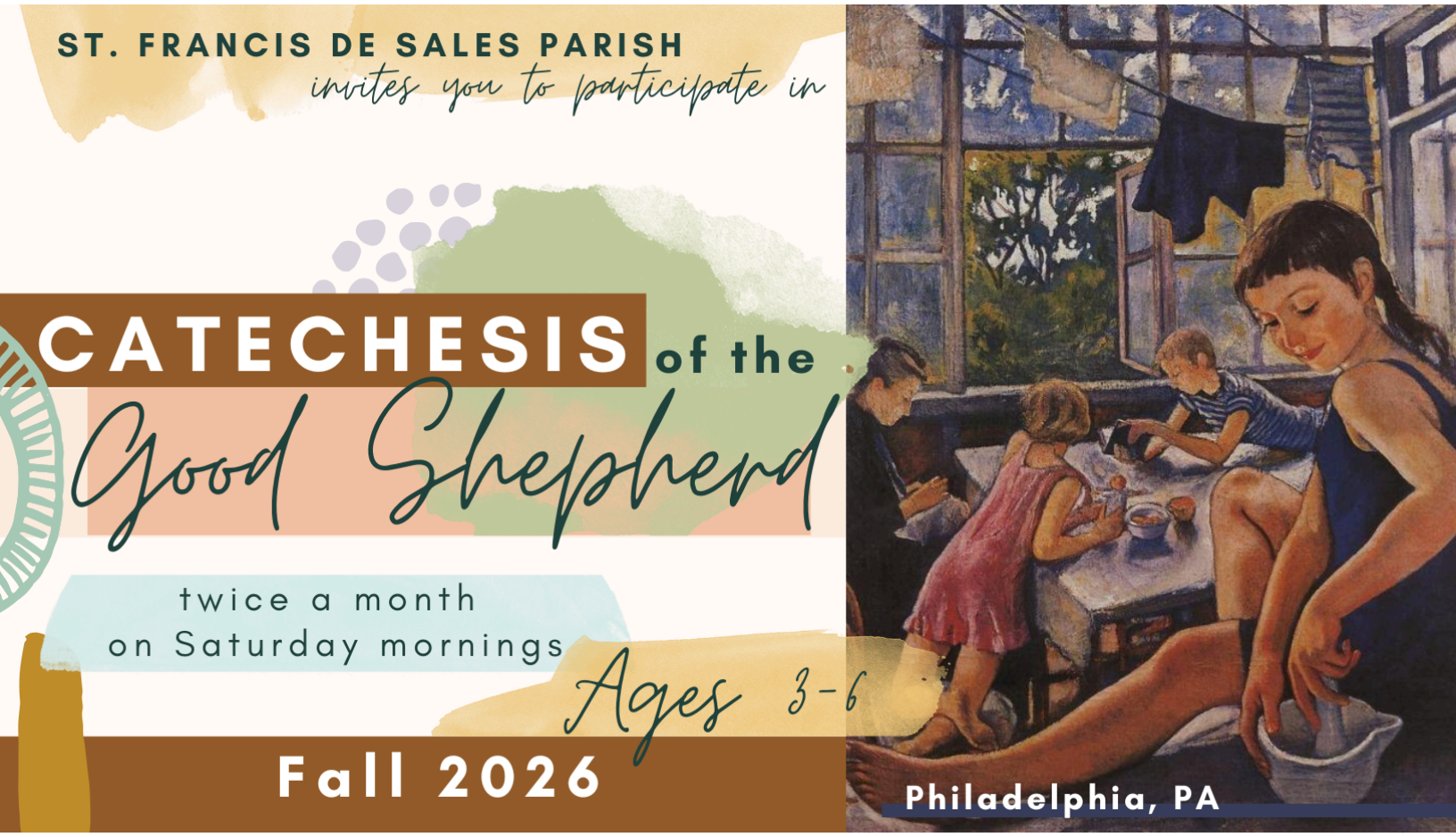
CGS, First Communion,
Bosco Group,
Confirmation,
Faith Family Formation
(Parent Formation)



Interested in registering your child for their sacraments, First Communion or Confirmation, this coming year? Click the button below for details and to register and don't hesitate to be in touch with our Religious Education coordinators, Jess & Terence Sweeney at religioused.sfds@gmail.com. This link also has details for parent formation opportunities:

Registration Form

Are you specifically looking to register for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Level 1? This is a rich and beautiful Montessori-style approach to catechesis for 3-6 year olds, scroll down for the details:



St. Francis de Sales Parish offers a Level 1 CGS atrium for children ages 3-6. Registration is currently open for new children to join, as well as welcoming returning children. Space is limited so please register soon and don't hesitate to be in touch with our Religious Education coordinator, Jess Sweeney at religioused.sfds@gmail.com .

For more details & to register visit:

Registration Form

Are you specifically looking for information on the Bosco Group? This is a group for post First Communion to 12 years old, scroll down for the details:

Parent Powered Catechesis at SFDS Parish:



Bosco Group (post first communion-12y)

Group Description*:* Join us Sunday mornings starting September 20 between 9-10am in the parish garden or church hall depending on the weather. We will examine the weekly readings, sing, pray, and play together before the 10:15 mass. Curious to see more details: Bosco group activity structure.

Registration Form



For details on this NEW resource, check out the tab at the left here in the Google Doc. Keep scrolling for details on Reading Group:





on Pope Leo's Encyclical

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

MAGNIFICA Humanitas

A READING GROUP FOR PARENTS

Parents are invited to a reading group held after the 10:15 Mass once a month during 1st Communion and Confirmation Class (11:30-12:30).

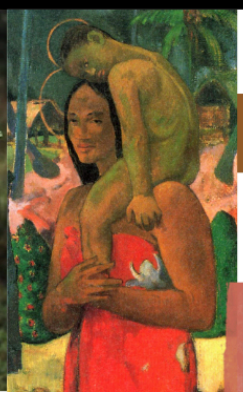
We ask all parents with children registered to attend and those who don't currently have children in a specific program are also very much invited to join too!

This year, we will be reading: Pope Leo XIV's encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas." Our aim will be to learn as parents about Catholic Social Teaching and how the vision of the text might inspire our families and communities to live according to the social ethic of the Church, from our homes and out into the world, from safeguarding our humanity to building a civilization of love.

Please bring a snack or lunch for your family. We are exploring childcare options for children in attendance, or as a back up, an activity for children to enjoy while parents discuss. More details & registration below and you can find a digital copy of the reading here.

Registration Form





ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

LITURGICAL LIVING *Leaflets*

Dear All,

Last Fall, Pope Leo spoke to a group of representatives from the Latin American Church as part of a Jubilee Year reflecting on "the future of life and the family" in Latin America. During his remarks, Pope Leo spoke about the ways in which the family is called:

"to be a domestic church and a home where the fire of the Holy Spirit burns, spreading its warmth, bringing its gifts and experiences for the common good, and calling everyone to live in hope."

How can we as a community here at SFDS live out this calling, to bring hope and goodness into the world? How can we strengthen and enrich the thread that ties together our sacramental life within the walls of our parish Church and the domestic church that lives within the walls of our homes?

One way the Church has done this globally and through the ages is through a variety of traditions & customs that help bring to life the various feasts. From processions to special prayers, to making specific handcrafts or singing particular hymns and making special meals, from Mexico to Ireland to Nigeria and Lithuania and beyond, Catholics have found ways to celebrate and to strengthen the bond between church and home, and to do so in community with others.

This is particularly important for the youngest, as they are so immersed in the life of the senses, so attuned to their bodies, to making, and to the spiritual life in such a unique way. And so throughout the year I'll be putting together handouts with suggestions on ways to live this out and enrich these connections, both at home and other times in community together. I would love to hear of ways your families are already living this out and can add those things as suggestions to share with the whole community. Please find the first one attached here for the month of October.

Jess Sweeney

Director of Religious Education

LITURGICAL LIVING

ORDINARY TIME

October

ST. FRANCIS

DE SALES

West Philadelphia

"Be not afraid." -JPII

The colors are shifting all around us, the air is changing, we are moving to the end of the liturgical year just as the natural world around us is shifting to the end of its various lifecycles too, purple coneflowers, zinnias, acorns, small creatures are gathering and preparing for the cold weather ahead, the sound of the wind in the trees with their drying leaves.

We are in the month of the Holy Rosary, a time where we try and shift our focus to meditating on the life of Jesus and Mary, even in the small quiet moments in our day. With our minds and bodies, we can do little things to turn our hearts towards our heavenly home and also pour out that love into our world here to help those closest to us but also those most forgotten.

Each month these leaflets will offer prayers, ideas, activities, customs, and traditions that you might consider incorporating into your family's home culture, a way to enrich our domestic churches and sustain us through the seasons ahead.





FEASTS

Oct 1: St. Therese of Lisieux - patron Saint of: Florists, missionaries, pilots, priests
Oct. 4: St. Francis of Assisi - patron Saint of: Animals, archaeologists, ecology, Italy, merchants, messengers, metal workers
Oct. 22: St. John Paul II - patron saint of World Youth Day, young Catholics, and families



PRAY, MAKE, ACT

- **Make a "nature rosary"**: go on a walk and collect natural objects: twigs, acorns, leaves, flower heads, pine cones, etc. You can then build a rosary out of them, and pray as you make it. St. Francis taught us many things, but one was too look for hints of God's glory in his creation.
- **Pray the rosary:** You might consider doing this together as a family, or as a special time between a parent and child, anything from a little modified prayer of say the creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, a decade, to the whole rosary.
- **Make your own rosary:** You can use string and beads or a kit like those sold from Be A Heart. You could also make a sacrifice bead to live out St. Therese of Lisiuex's idea of the Little Way of Love.
- **Practice Visio Divina:** You can do this together as a family or encourage your child to do it on their own. Visio Divina (Divine Seeing) is a slow, prayerful examination of a work of art as a tool for lifting the heart and mind to God and his mysteries. For young children it might look like sitting and looking at the painting for 1-2 minutes and then asking them what they saw, slightly older children might consider trying to draw it, those who are writing could try and write down words to capture things that caught their attention, or you can just sit and do some "slow looking". Here are some very simple instructions for how to do this together:
  - Questions to ask: Start with a simple prayer, then look and gaze together, ask a few questions, and then close with a prayer. Some questions: What do you see? Where does your eye look first? What colors do you notice? Can you trace any lines in the art, where do they lead? Focus on the senses and see where your child takes you. (See email attachment for some paintings to start with)







LITURGICAL LIVING

ORDINARY TIME

November

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
West Philadelphia

still green until the end of the month!

and then purple!









This month, at least in the Northern Hemisphere, we continue to shift towards winter which is coming, more colors are starting to fade, animals are preparing, the briskness of fall is here.
This month the church calls on us to focus on All Souls, offering prayers and acts of mercy for those who have died and are journeying to God. There seems to be something fitting in the way, we move from reflecting on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus via the Holy Rosary to praying for those who have made their earthly journey and our returning to God.

This month is also a time to reflect on a phrase that has impacted traditions of prayer as well as music and the visual arts, that phrase is: "Momento Mori," Remember your death, as well as remember you are dust. Children have a natural fascination, and sometimes a surprising comfort with thinking about death and confronting it. Perhaps we would do well to take example of the brightness of their hope even in the face of death.

Don't forget to start thinking ahead to Advent which begins on the final Sunday of the month. Take a little time to prepare and think through how you'd like to approach Advent this year. Additional ideas coming in the December leaflet! Keep your eyes open to see the shift in color on the final Sunday of the month.

there are SO many saints days this month!

some of them Martin de Porres, Martin of Tours, Mother Cabrini, Elizabeth of Hungary, Cecilia, Andrew & more!

FEASTS

Nov 1: All Saints Day
Nov. 2: All Souls Day
Nov. 21: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Nov. 22: Feast of Christ the King - a note from Erica Tighe Campbell's "Living the Seasons":

"The Feast of Christ the King is the last Sunday of the liturgical year before Advent begins. It's a feast to remind us that Jesus is the true King of Peace we long for, who came "to reconcile to himself all things" (Col 1:20), who came "not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28). He reigns victorious over all of our sufferings, all war, all governments and authorities. Even more, the kingdom of Christ isn't some far-off reality. We are living in and have access to his kingdom now.

Nov. 29: First Sunday of Advent, a new liturgical year begins

PRAY, MAKE, ACT

- **Prayer Corner:** Start exploring an area in your home that you might want to have as a node of prayer, it doesn't need to be large, it can even be a little corner or spot on a wall that you can look to during your day to remember to pray always, every act we do can be joined to God in prayer. In Latin America, particularly Mexico, marigolds are a special flower to remind us to offer prayers for the dead; consider some in your home this November.
- **Pray without Ceasing:** Place a crucifix, image of a saint or prayer card in places where we can forget to pray but easily could: the kitchen sink, above the washer or dryer, at the entrance to your bedroom or on your nightstand or near your front door
- **Pray for the Dead:** Pray for those who have died, particularly family and friends; If you'd like you can make prayer cards to remind you of those who have died.
- **Pray for those who are forgotten:** Pray to for those who are suffering and have died not just close to home but far away and in forgotten corners. Pray for those who don't have anyone to pray for them.
- **Visit a Cemetery:** See prayer supplement sheet for ideas.
- **Collect some Flora:** Find some flowers or foliage that are lingering, drying out, and at the end of their cycle. Arrange them in a vase, in your prayer corner, on a mantle or surface, or on your dining table to help remind you to pray for the dead. Isn't it amazing the way the Church's rhythms of prayer, feasting and fasting often mirror the changes happening in the world around us in nature?

While the following litany is sung or recited, the minister sprinkles the graves with holy water, and may also incense them.

Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy; Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for them
Saint Michael, pray for them
Saint John the Baptist, pray for them
Saint Joseph, pray for them
Saint Peter, pray for them
Saint Paul, pray for them
Saint Andrew, pray for them
Saint Stephen, pray for them
Saint Ann, pray for them
Saint Teresa, pray for them
Saint Catherine, pray for them
Saint Frances Cabrini, pray for them
Saint Elizabeth Seton, pray for them
(The names of other saints may be added.)

All holy men and women, Saints of God, pray for them

Christ, pardon all their faults: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer
Christ, remember the good they have done: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer
Christ, receive them into eternal life: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer
Christ, comfort all those who mourn: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer

Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy; Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy

The minister then invites those present to pray the Lord's Prayer, in these or similar words:
With Christ there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father . . .

The minister then says the following prayer or another taken from the Order of Christian Funerals, no. 398.

Almighty God and Father,
by the mystery of the cross, you have made us strong;
by the sacrament of the resurrection
you have sealed us as your own.
Look kindly upon your servant(s),
now freed from the bonds of mortality,
and count them among your saints in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE
The minister says:

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.
R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
R. Amen.
May their souls and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
R. Amen.

The service may be concluded by a suitable psalm or other song. (examples of hymns: Be Still, My Soul, Lead, Kindly Light)

Note: there are many beautiful and historical cemeteries to consider visiting in Philly and particularly in West Philly including: Mt. Moriah Cemetery & Arboretum and The Woodlands.

November links:

Simple ways to celebrate some of the main feast days this month:
-Nov. 1: All Saints Day
-Nov. 3: St. Martin de Porres (here's a lovely book, the rest of the series is great too!)
-Nov. 11: St. Martin of Tours
-Nov. 13: St. Francis Xavier Cabrini
-Nov. 22: Feast of Christ the King
-Nov. 29: Advent Begins (stay tuned for the next Liturgical Living Leaflet which will have resources for Advent
-Nov. 30: St. Andrew (Consider praying the St. Andrew's Christmas Novena)

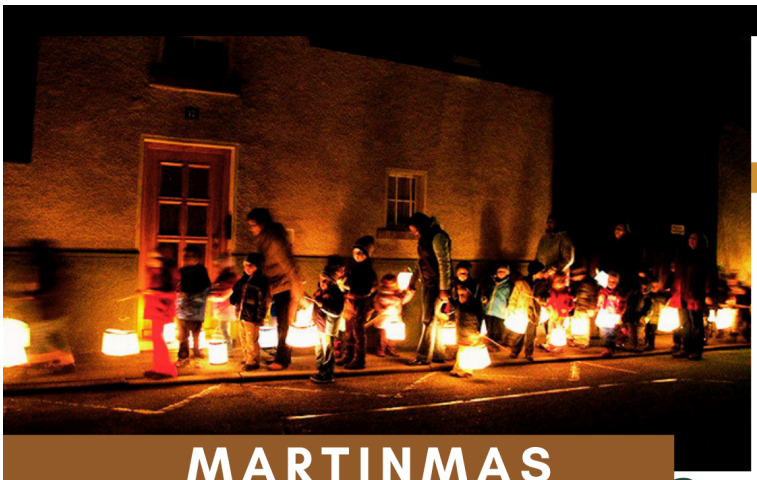
Here is a suggested image for you and your child(ren) to use this month for Visio Divina:



Saturnino Herran, *La Ofrenda/ The Offering*, 1913, Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City.

A Short Reflection for Visio Divina with the above image: Stay

still, let your eyes move around and on this painting. It pulls you into its rhythm, we are still but we are also moving with the water, with the people, we are all one Body. Who do you notice? Where do your eyes move? To the mother carrying her child? The father standing over them? The little child who looks directly at us? The rich orange marigold flowers? Or the man who looks like he's enveloped in shadows? The way the people in this painting are shown might bring to mind several moments from Christ's life, his birth, swaddled and held by his mother in the bottom right figures, his walking on water, his crucifixion in the way that the central figure in the white shirt carries his load, it almost looks like he's carrying a cross, with the man in shadows solemnly at his feet, and one of the marigold bunches even resembles a skull, which is often shown in paintings of the cross. And in this painting we are both part of the scene, the immediate scene, but we soon notice this boat is not alone, it is part of a procession, a community. Our actions in the boat have effects, they ripple out beyond us, just as the water ripples out from the boat. How can we try and have our ripples bear good fruit, in the boat of the Church, our community, helping bring kindness, mercy, peace, joy, love, into the world and to those around us, instead of rippling out the opposite?



Religious Education @
ST. FRANCIS
DE SALES
West Philadelphia

"...Our lights shine bright on St. Martin's night!..."

sponsored by the Stewardship Committee

MARTINMAS Pancake Social

Join us in the Parish Hall after Mass TODAY for a Pancake Social to celebrate Martinmas! Traditionally this is celebrated on Nov. 11th , the feast day of St. Martin of Tours, but we'd like to expand our celebration to celebrate another great Martin, St. Martin de Porres whose feast falls on Nov. 3rd .

"For centuries, Christians from Estonia to Spain, Sweden to Italy, have commemorated the soldier who shared his wealth with the poor. In Germany, children make lanterns and parade through the streets, singing songs. The lanterns shining in the dark are often interpreted as symbolizing the light of Christ, a particularly appropriate image for the beginning of the Nativity Fast. Traditionally the lanterns were carved out of newly harvested squash gourds, and illuminated with a candle—the origin of our jack-o-lantern—but can also be made of paper or jars. St Martin is a beloved Saint celebrated throughout the world and is known for his merciful compassion on the needy." **

A little bit about St. Martin de Porres from a book by Eva Betz: "a man who entrusted his service to God by caring for all the sick, children, and animals he could—even mice! Remarkable in the way he cared for the suffering people of Peru, Saint Martin's great care for even the smallest of God's creatures changed hearts and souls."

Come enjoy food, festivity and community! There will be handicrafts to honor the two St. Martins for children to make, a lantern jar and a clay mouse!

St. Martin de Porres is the patron saint of social justice, racial harmony, and people of mixed-race heritage. St. Martin of Tous is the patron saint of soldiers, conscientious objectors beggars and the poor, tailors and wool-weavers, winemakers (vintners) and innkeepers, and horses and geese.

**to read more visit this website: https://www.asceticlifeofmotherhood.com/blog/martinmas





MARTINMAS

Thanks to all for joined for last week's Martinmas festivities and Pancake Social sponsored by the Stewardship Committee!

See the Religious Ed page for ways to continue enriching your November. The December/Advent Liturgical Living Leaflet will be coming soon!





ST. FRANCIS
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West Philadelphia

ANNUAL

ST. LUCY'S DAY Party!

Sunday
Dec. 13th
after the 10:15 Mass**

all children
invited to join!

lesson, handcraft,
Lucia sweetbuns, &
Swedish meatballs

** same time as parent reading group

Please RSVP so that we can have a sense of headcount for materials and food. Scan at the left or visit: https://forms.gle/PLZzyi26q9FRq1rTA

Optional: if you'd like to make a small donation to contribute towards the costs of this Feast Day party you are welcome to Venmo (@SFDSPhiladelphia) or write a check.

LITURGICAL LIVING

ADVENT

December

from green to purple. But keep an eye out for Rose/Pink on Gaudete Sunday, 3rd Sunday.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

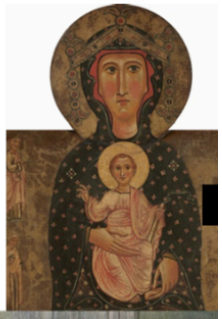
West Philadelphia

Darkness is falling early these days, we are entering a fallow time. A time for waiting, for anticipating, for attuning ourselves to what is before us. To a kind of seasonal rhythm. The Church and the world around us remind us that "all creation is groaning" as it awaits what is to come. And we await too.

The season of Advent marks the start of the Church Year and it is a call to be drawn into the wilderness, into mysterious silence, into the darkness of the womb, into the expanse of waiting and wondering, into the vastness of hope and expectation. And yet it can feel like the world is buzzing with a false restlessness fed by consumerism, visual noise, a pressure to do more, be more, and buy more. Because then we will be truly happy.

So how can we give ourselves, our children, our neighbors, the space to enter into the Spirit of Advent, one that pulls us back into the journey of the Holy Family, Mary's pregancy & birth, but also pulls us forward cosmically to Christ's Second Coming in power and glory? Below are some ideas to enrich you and your family's Advent journey this year.

"The Word was made flesh..."



FEASTS

Dec 6: St. Nicholas - patron Saint of: children, sailors, and merchants
Dec. 9: St. Juan Diego - Indigenous peoples of the Americas
Dec. 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe - Mexico, Americas, Unborn
Dec. 13: St. Lucy - the blind, eye disorders, and sight
Dec. 17 - 23: The Golden Nights, or O Antiphons begin
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
Dec. 25: Christmas (Octave of Christmas & the Season of Christmas, the next Leaflet will include more)



don't forget to bring a bell to Mass on Christmas Day!

PRAY, MAKE, ACT

- **Put out your Advent wreath:** even if you don't have an official wreath, you can make one by putting four candlestick holders in a circle, you could add pine branches to form the wreath, and then ideally three purple candles and one rose pink. A few local to Philly stores carry beeswax tapers (this shop & this shop). Some incorporate the themes of: 1. Hope, 2. Peace, 3. Joy (Gaudete Sunday!), & 4. Love into their prayer rhythms with their wreath.



- **Pine Cone Bird Feeder:** Find a large-ish pine cone, tie twine or yarn to create a loop to hang it, or it can sit on a plate. Roll it in nutbutter, then roll it in bird feed or a variety of seeds. Hang it on your porch, or near a window and watch for birds snacking on this wintertime treat.

- **Put out your shoes:** On the feast of St. Nicholas leave your shoes out to see if St. Nicholas visits and leaves behind a special treat. Read about St. Nicholas's life. (see online version of the leaflet for specific book recommendations)



- **Practice Visio Divina as a Family:** Families registered for religious education programs will receice an Advent Bundle which includes a Visio Divina kit with images for each week of Advent and a whole guide on how to use it. If you're interested, inquire with Jess Sweeney, Director of Religious Education, on purchasing one (just to cover cost of printing).

- **Anticipatory Making:** a lovely practice during Advent can be to take up different handcrafts and ways of making decorations to prepare for the Christmas season. Some ideas: metal embossing for ornaments & garlands, button garland, homemade paper chains, homemade wrapping paper, salt dough or air dry clay ornaments, cardboard ornaments, embroidery, simple sewing for ornaments & gifts, paper garland, Pajaki, dried oranges to hang up (see online version of the leaflet for specific links).



- **Don't forget Gaudete Sunday**, the 3rd Sunday of Advent. A punctuation of Christmas joy in the midst of Advent, Gaudete means Rejoice. Wear rose/pink to Mass and think about what festive aspect you might add to your home in anticipation of the Christmas joy to come

- **Celebrate the "Golden Nights" or "O Antiphons":** see attached supplement.

- **Give to those in need:** in the spirit of St. Nicholas, and MANY of the saints, think about ways you might give to those in need, donate to a place like Catholic Charities or Annie's House, consider "adopting" a family for Christmas, prepare winter kits to help the homeless, are just a few ideas. Also consider hosting a "Baby Shower" for Mary Party to gather items for mothers in need.

HOW TO PRAY & CELEBRATE

THE GOLDEN NIGHTS

a guide for the final days of Advent

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
West Philadelphia

Advent is a time of preparation, traditionally it is even meant to be a bit like a "little Lent." This is not in order to be burdensome or dour, it is meant to be a way of reorienting us and preparing our hearts in order to more fully celebrate the wonder and gloriousness of Christmas. The simplicity and quiet of Advent, the rhythms and rituals of prayer and intentionality help prepare us to truly feast!

And an old monastic custom offered a way to deepen this, particularly in the final 7 days of Advent, something called The Golden Nights, or O Antiphons serve as this magical, ethereal, mystical transition from the darkness of Advent, from the tired pregnant body of Mary, to the full color and cosmic glory of the Birth of Christ, of Christmas.

The O Antiphon prayers begin on December 17th and end on the 23rd, which is the last Vespers of Advent, since the evening prayer on the 24th is the Vigil of Christmas. Antiphons are a special component of Vespers prayer, which is the Evening Prayer component of the Liturgy of the Hours (a unique form of daily prayer that the Church offers to its global body to partake in together). Antiphons are sung before the Magnificat at Vespers.

Each of these antiphon prayers focuses on a name/image/title for Jesus. These antiphons prayers are a sort of hinge allowing us to hold in tension what we look back to, the birth of Christ, and what we look ahead to, His second coming.

During the Golden Nights, these antiphons go in a certain order, each night has specific word that is the focus (see below). Amazingly, in the original Latin, if you take the first letter of each word starting with the last title so - Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia - the Latin words "ERO CRAS" are formed, meaning, "Tomorrow, I will come." So through this ancient, mystical prayer, Christ Himself speaks promising His arrival.

The Titles:

- December 17: O Sapientia (O Wisdom)
- December 18: O Adonai (O Leader of House of Israel)
- December 19: O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)
- December 20: O Clavis David (O Key of David)
- December 21: O Oriens (O Dayspring/Rising Sun)
- December 22: O Rex Gentium (O King of Nations)
- December 23: O Emmanuel (O God-With-Us)

SOME HANDS-ON IDEAS

(incarnated/embodied ways to bring this all to life for children)

-some make an "O Antiphon House"; this is almost like a mini Advent calendar but focuses on these final days before Christmas begins. You can make it out of cardstock or cardboard and each window would have one of the images at the right.

-some purchase or make little round ornaments with the word and symbol of each night and hang it up, either on the tree, in a sort of garland, on a small Jesse Tree, staircase bannister, or elsewhere. They hang one up each night as they pray the Antiphon.

-some give small gifts/treats connected to each night's theme; but something our family has done is have an item connected to each day that we bring out each year, for example an actual key for the Key of David day, for O Dayspring we make dried oranges to remind us of the sun; if you make a gingerbread house perhaps save it for the O Adonai/Leader of the House of Israel. If I have the bandwidth I put the item in a tiny box each day to open to give it some magic. We then hang these up on our banister adding one each day.

-we also try to keep decoration pretty simple for most of Advent, adding little bits at a time building towards Christmas. Traditionally many families purchased their Christmas Trees on Christmas Eve, which seems wild in contrast to how soon many get their trees today. But during the Golden Nights I try and add as many touches of gold throughout our house, and we sort of shift from winter greenery to adding more gold and hints of Christmas.

-finally, during these seven nights if you'd like you can replace your wreath with a candlestick each night, natural beeswax tapers are ideal, and you can use an eclectic mix of candlestick holders. Each night you light one more, until December 23 where you'll have 7 candles lit. It really builds the anticipation. You can also make holders out of airdry clay if you don't have 7.

-And don't forget to put out an empty manger on Christmas Eve! You can grab the one from your nativity creche (covering the baby as needed) or make your own!





O HOUSE OF ISRAEL















December/Advent links:

Simple ways to celebrate some of the main feast days this month:
December 3: St. Francis Xavier - patron saint of Roman Catholic missions, Goa (India), Japan, jewelers, and sailors.
Dec 6: St. Nicholas - patron saint of: children, sailors, and merchants
Dec 7: St. Ambrose - patron saint of learning and beekeepers
Dec 8: Immaculate Conception, holy day of obligation
Dec. 9: St. Juan Diego - Indigenous peoples of the Americas (make rose ink!)
Dec. 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe - Mexico, Americas, Unborn
Dec. 13: St. Lucy - the blind, eye disorders, and sight (ideas here and here)
December 14: St. John of the Cross - patron saint of mystics, contemplatives and of Spanish poets
Dec. 17 - 23: The Golden Nights, or O Antiphons begin (see the supplement above for lots of ideas)
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
Dec. 25: Christmas (Octave of Christmas & the Season of Christmas, the next Leaflet will include more)

Advent Resource Links:

Advent Candles from local shops:

- https://ruby-mountain.com
- https://shoppebodie.com

Consider hosting a Baby Shower for Mary to gather supplies for mothers in need this season:https://beaheart.com/blogs/recent/how-to-throw-a-baby-shower-for-mary-a-catholic-advent-tradition

Anticipatory Making: a lovely practice during Advent can be to take up different handcrafts and ways of making decorations to prepare for the Christmas season. Some ideas: metal embossing for ornaments & garlands, button garland, homemade paper chains, homemade wrapping paper, salt dough or air dry clay ornaments, cardboard ornaments, embroidery, simple sewing for ornaments & gifts, paper garland, Pajaki, dried oranges to hang up

Some more ideas:

- Mary on the Mantle: a fun alternative to Elf on the Shelf, and just has some lovely practices for the family. An article about it and the kit itself.
- Jesse Tree Ornaments to color in and background info here.
- Make your own cardboard creche. Fun idea for kids rooms!
-

Book Recommendations for Advent:*

Picture Books:

-Cobweb Christmas by Shirley Climo
-The Clown of God by Tomie dePaola
-The Night of Las Posadas by Tomie dePaola
-The Friendly Beasts: an old English Christmas Carol by Tomie dePaola
-The Legend of the Poinsettia by Tomie dePaola
-Country Angel Christmas by Tomie dePaola
-The Lady of Guadalupe by Tomie dePaola
-Trees of the Dancing Goats by Patricia Polacco
-Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914 by·John Hendrix
-The Night Before Christmas by Clement Moore, illus. by Mary Englebreit
-Christmas Is Coming!: Celebrate the Holiday with Art, Stories, Poems, Songs, and Recipes from the Metropolitan
-Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas by Russell Hoban
-A Christmas Carol by Dickens (there's an edition with illustrations from Trina Schart Hyman which are delightful)
-Jan Brett Christmas Books
-The Nutcracker illus by Maurice Sendak
-A Gift from Saint Francis by Joanna Cole
-Holly & Ivy by Rumer Godden, illus by Barbara Cooney
-A Home in the Barn by Margaret Wise Brown
-The Baker's Dozen by Aaron Shepherd
-The Miracle of Saint Nicholas by Gloria Whelan
-The Little Drummer Boy by Ezra Jack Keats

Devotional Books:

-Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas, an anthology from Plough
-Advent of the Heart: Seasonal Sermons and Prison Writings (1941–1944) by Fr. Alfred Delp, S.J.
-Behold the Wonder: The Coming of Christ Through Mary's Eyes | Meditations for Advent and Christmas by Catherine Cavadini, illus. by Anastassia Cassady
-Mary's Way of Advent: Prayers & Practices to Slow Down & Seek God by Laura Kelly Fanucci, illus. by Erica Tighe Campbell
-All Creation Waits by Gayle Boss (she also has a children's edition)

*Email me your favorites (religioused.sfds@gmail.com) and I can add them to the list for others to enjoy! I will also keep adding to this list as I remember or find new ones.