

## FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

### PREPARING FOR ADVENT

**TOPIC:** PREPARING FOR ADVENT & THE SPIRITUAL & CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

#### SACRED SCRIPTURE

IS 7:14, 9:1-2  
LK 1:26-56, 6:36  
REV 22:17, 20

#### REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
nos. 524, 2447

#### CREED

nos.  
436,  
522-24,  
668-77,  
783, 786

#### LITURGY

nos.  
1274,  
1344,  
1397,  
1402-05,  
1427-33,  
1470

#### LIFE

nos.  
1812-32,  
1846-48,  
2105,  
2443-49

#### PRAYER

nos.  
2648-49,  
2674,  
2838-45

#### Goal(s):

- Families will make a plan for Advent by considering how Mary experienced the first Advent and how she prepared for the birth of Jesus.
- Families will reflect on the Second Joyful Mystery of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth.
- Families will make a plan to practice the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy during Advent.

### OPENING PRAYER

Come, Spirit of Knowledge, bless us and grant us the grace of loving the Church and finding in her a sure guide for truth and service to God's will, especially in our relationships at home and in our extended families.

Hail Mary...

*(adapted from Catholics For Family Peace)*



### ICE BREAKER

#### Fact or Fiction?

- Ask each family to brainstorm three statements about themselves. Two of these statements must be facts, or truths, and one must be something made up (fiction).
- After a few minutes, begin inviting families to share.
- One by one, the families take turns saying their three statements, while the other families try to guess which statement is not true (fiction).



# TEACH

## 1. Hook/Question

When you think of the term “Advent”, what two words come to mind?

(families discuss among themselves, and then invite them to share with the larger group)

## 2. Introduce Topic

Advent is a time when we prepare our hearts to celebrate our Lord and Savior Jesus’ first coming in the mystery of His Incarnation and in His birth at Christmas and to renew our hope in Jesus’ second coming. We look to the first Advent to learn from Mary how to prepare ourselves by doing loving works of mercy for one another.

## 3. FAMILY CONVERSATION

(First have families discuss questions together.  
Then invite large group sharing.)

- (For Parents) When you were growing up, how did your family prepare for Christmas during Advent?
- (For whole family) What are your favorite things to do during Advent?

## 4. CONTENT

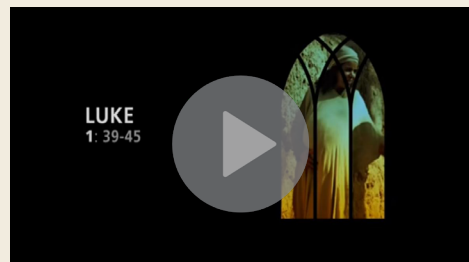
- a) Invite families to open their Bibles and read Luke 1:26-56 aloud, explaining that “In the sixth month” refers to the sixth month of St. Elizabeth’s pregnancy with St. John the Baptist. The preceding story tells how the angel visited Zechariah to tell him that he and Elizabeth would have a son in their old age.

And/or choose from the video options below to introduce the Joyful Mystery of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

For Younger Children:



For Teens & Tweens:



# CONTENT

- b) Who was the first person to know that God's Son was coming to earth to save us and to prepare for His coming? (Mary)
- c) How did Mary prepare? (Answers will vary)
- d) After Mary learned from the angel Gabriel that she and Elizabeth were both going to give birth, Mary traveled for several days (possibly a whole week) "in haste" to get to her cousin Elizabeth's house. As Luke's Gospel relates, there was great joy in the greeting of Mary and Elizabeth, and Mary's haste in visiting her cousin was surely inspired by the good news shared by the angel Gabriel, who confirmed that "nothing will be impossible for God" (Lk 1:37). We also know that Elizabeth was already six months pregnant, and a lot older than Mary. Physically, her pregnancy would make it more difficult for Elizabeth to be able to take care of her husband Zechariah, herself and her home. So, Mary went to help care for her cousin Elizabeth and "remained with her about three months" before returning home (Lk 1:56). Together the two women rejoiced about how loving God is and meditated on the mysteries they were experiencing. Surely they prayed for their unborn babies, for themselves and for many others in need of prayer. We can imagine that Mary, in a spirit of great joy, did many works of mercy to prepare for the coming of the Savior during that first Advent, when they were waiting for Jesus' birth. We can all learn from what she did and follow her example, because there is no other human being who knows more about how to create a place in one's heart for Jesus than His Mother and our Mother, Mary. Let's make a plan for preparing our own hearts for Jesus this Advent.

- e. Show video



## 5. MISSION

### Step 1: Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3

### Step 2: Explain Activity:

- i. Watch the two videos and/or read the USCCB explanations about the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy (links provided in week 2's handout).
- ii. Decide which Works of Mercy your family will do this Advent and make a Family Advent Plan.

- iii. Reach out to a grandparent(s) or senior adult(s) in your family/community and ask them about their favorite memories of Advent when they were growing up. Consider sharing about the experience through social media ([#sendyourhug](#)).
- iv. Be prepared to share about your Family Advent Plan and your Senior Sharing at the next gathering.

### **Step 3: Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy**

Use the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy to model for the families by sharing your own Family Advent Plan, explaining that Works of Mercy first begin at home within our family. Works of Mercy give us opportunities to love one another with God's love, and then to share that love by serving our neighbors.

Tell families not to feel as if they have to do all of the Works of Mercy, because that's not practical. Some works they may already do, like praying for the living and the dead. That's great! Encourage them to keep doing those works and pick one or two more that will fit naturally into their family life to do for Advent.

Next, tell the families about your Senior Sharing experience, explaining who was the senior adult that you interviewed, and what he/she shared about their favorite memories of Advent when they were growing up.

## **6. REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER**

Review briefly the goals of the lesson and remind everyone of the expectations for week 2 and 3.

Option 1: Pray together the [Our Father](#).

Option 2: Lord Jesus, may You bless each of the families gathered together today. Help us to continually grow closer to You. This we pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

## **SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS**

Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus* (2015), no. 15:

It is my burning desire that ... the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.