

# HOME PRAYER

## MORNING PRAYER FOR FAMILIES DEPARTING FOR THE DAY

*Gather the household in one room (breakfast is an ideal opportunity or at the door, just as everyone is ready to depart). This prayer may be led by a parent or other adult.*

**LEADER:**

Zechariah spoke these words over his newborn son, Saint John the Baptist:

Luke 1:76

“And you, child, will be called the prophet  
of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare  
his ways.”

- ✦ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the  
Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**LEADER:**

God Most High,  
we ask your protection and care  
over us all as we begin our day.

- ◆ Lightly touch the ears of each person present.

May we listen to your voice  
with our whole selves,  
just as John the Baptist heard and answered  
your call,  
and may we help to prepare the world  
for your Light and Life  
to fill the entire universe.  
We also pray, along with your servant,  
Zechariah:

Luke 1:78–79

“By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”  
May God open our eyes to greet the dawn  
of peace.

- ◆ Lightly touch the eyes of each person present as you continue this prayer.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who is all  
light and peace.

**ALL: Amen.**

- ◆ As each person departs for the day, exchange a kiss of peace and trace a small cross on each forehead.

# HOME PRAYER

## CELEBRATING THE SAINTS, REMEMBERING THE DEAD

*Find the reading (1 John 3:1–3) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice. Then gather the household in one room. If you have a candle, bring it out for prayer time and light it. You may wish to begin with a simple song, such as “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.” Then an older child or adult reads the leader parts:*

**LEADER:**

The saints are living people who spend their eternity walking next to us and praying for us, while at the same time they bask in the marvelous light of God’s presence. Truly they are with us, urging us to goodness. In this life, each saint had special interests and strengths. We use their names when we turn to them for help, and we can draw strength from their special talents.

- ✦ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LEADER:**

Psalm 24:1, 5a

Let us pray the Psalm Response:  
They will receive blessing from the LORD.

**ALL:** They will receive blessing from the LORD.

**LEADER:**

The earth is the LORD’s, as is all that is in it and those who live in it.

**ALL:** They will receive blessing from the LORD.

- ◆ All stand and sing Alleluia

1 John 3:1–3

**LEADER:**

A reading from the First Letter of John

- ✦ Read the scripture passage from the Bible.

The word of the Lord.

- ◆ All observe a brief silence.

**LEADER:**

And now let us remember family members and friends who have died:

- ◆ The leader begins, then pauses so others may add names too.

**LEADER:**

O Lord God, almighty,  
we ask you to bring these  
and all your departed children  
into the glorious light of your presence.

- ◆ Leader pauses, then continues:

Lord, what tender care you have for all  
your creatures!

You are higher than our minds can wonder,  
deeper than we can imagine,  
but you care for each of us as your own  
dear children!

Help us to see one another through  
your eyes

so that one day, with all the saints in heaven,  
we, and all those we love, may see your face.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

- ✦ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# HOME PRAYER

## MEAL PRAYER FOR THANKSGIVING

*Find the reading (John 15:12–17) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read the scripture passage, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice. If practical, light candles for your Thanksgiving table. You may wish to begin with a simple song of thanksgiving or a favorite “Alleluia.” Then an older child or an adult reads the leader parts.*

**LEADER:**

How good it is to be here! We can smell the delicious food, and as we look around the table, we see the people we love so much! Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross:

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LEADER:**

Psalm 138:1a and 2a

Let us pray the Psalm Response:  
I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart.

**ALL:** I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart.

**LEADER:**

I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

**ALL:** I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart.

◆ All stand and sing **Alleluia**.

**READER:**

John 15:12–17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

◆ Read the scripture passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All sit and observe silence.

**LEADER:**

We come together at this table to thank God for sending us his Son and for loving us as his own sons and daughters.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father,  
send your blessing on us  
and on the food before us.

We thank you for feeding our hungers  
and giving us peace beyond all understanding.  
We thank you especially for the love  
around this table today.

May your love continue to grow in our hearts,  
making us generous to all who are in need.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God,  
for ever and ever.

**ALL:** Amen.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# HOME PRAYER

## GATHERING AROUND AN ADVENT WREATH FOR PRAYER

*Saturday evening before the First Sunday of Advent, gather the household around the wreath. Point out that the wreath is circular, with no beginning or end, like God's love. Explain that there are four candles, one for each Sunday of Advent. The third candle is rose because on the third Sunday we celebrate the joy of waiting for Christmas.*

*Use this service the first time you light your wreath and then on the following three Sundays when you light each new candle after the Psalm Response.*

*During the first week of Advent, light the first purple candle. During the second week of Advent, light two purple candles. For the third week, light two purple candles and one rose candle. During the final week of Advent, light all four candles! For your weekday celebration, simply light the candle(s), read one verse from Isaiah 40:1–5 and 9–11 (choose a different verse each time), and then say grace.*

*Before you begin, find the reading (Luke 1:39–45) in your Bible, ask a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice.*

*You may wish to begin with a simple Advent song, such as "Soon and Very Soon." Then an older child or adult reads the leader parts.*

### LEADER:

In this holy season of Advent, let us turn our hearts to God, who showers blessings on all those who hope and wait for him to come again in glory.

For thousands of years, people had been waiting for a Great Light to dawn. God promised that one day that Light would be ours. Soon, we will celebrate Christmas, that wonderful day when the Great Light was born in Bethlehem and shed his peaceful joy on all humanity. God keeps his promises! We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross:

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### LEADER:

Psalm 25:1, 21

Let us pray the Psalm Response:  
To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**ALL:** To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

### LEADER:

May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait for you.

**ALL:** To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

◆ Light the candle(s). Then all stand and sing Alleluia.

### READER:

Luke 1:39–45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

◆ Read the scripture passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All sit and observe silence.

### LEADER:

Lord God, as we gather around this Advent wreath to celebrate the coming of your Son, fill our hearts with your light. We ask for this blessing through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# HOME PRAYER

## GATHERING AROUND A NATIVITY SCENE FOR PRAYER

*Throughout Advent, keep a votive candle beside your Christmas nativity scene. Place the figures of Mary and Joseph inside the stable, but leave the manger empty (if you can't separate the infant Jesus from the manger, then remove them both). Leave the nativity scene like that throughout Advent; keep it near your Advent wreath, if possible. Use this prayer service on Christmas Eve. You may want to use it again on Christmas Day, but at that time begin with the baby Jesus in the stable; then replace the Gospel reading with Luke 2:8–20 and, at the end of verse 16, pause and add the figures of the shepherds to your stable. Conclude as before. You might be wondering what to do with those wise men! Place them on a shelf a good distance from the stable. Each day of the Christmas season, have the children move them a little closer to your little “Bethlehem” so that they will arrive on January 4, the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, when we celebrate their discovery of the baby Jesus.*

*Before you begin, locate the reading (Luke 2:1–7) in your Bible; ask for a volunteer to read the scripture, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice.*

*Light the candle. You may wish to begin with a simple Christmas song like “Silent Night.” Then an older child or an adult reads the leader parts.*

### LEADER:

Throughout Advent, we have waited for this moment to celebrate the glorious Good News that God gave us the greatest gift imaginable—himself! Jesus Christ is born, and now the world will never be the same! Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross:

- ✝ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### LEADER:

Psalm 96:1a, 10ab

Please repeat the Psalm Response:  
O sing to the LORD a new song.

**ALL:** O sing to the LORD a new song.

### LEADER:

Say among the nations, “The LORD is king!  
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

**ALL:** O sing to the LORD a new song.

- ◆ All stand and sing **Alleluia**.

### READER:

Luke 2:1–7

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

- ◆ Read the scripture passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- ◆ All sit and observe silence. Keep the silence as you place the infant Jesus figure in the nativity scene.

### LEADER:

Let us stand and pray: **Our Father . . . Amen.**

Heavenly Father,  
we rejoice in the gift of your only Son,  
made flesh in this child  
and offered to all peoples.

Open our eyes to see  
your power and glory in your Son,  
and may the wonder of his saving peace  
be on us and on all those we love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

# HOME PRAYER

## KEEPING LENT

*Before you begin, place a candle, an empty bowl, and a jar with a slit cut into the lid (for coins to give to the poor) where the household will gather in prayer. Find the reading (Luke 10:25–37) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice. You may wish to begin with a simple song, such as “Jesus, Remember Me,” or “Amen” (but not “Alleluia” during Lent). An older child or adult reads the leader parts.*

### LEADER:

Lent is a season of turning to God in simplicity and sincerity as we prepare to celebrate the joy of Easter. Our hearts feel heavy as we remember our sins, but we are also confident in God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The three great Lenten practices are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (almsgiving means giving money or other help to the needy). Doing these three things will help us to keep Lent as a holy time. In our prayer today, let’s be open to God’s kindness as we promise to pray with more love, avoid treats, and collect our coins to give to the poor.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### LEADER:

Psalm 51:1a and 6

Let us repeat the Psalm Response:  
Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love.

**ALL: Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love.**

### LEADER:

You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my  
secret heart.

**ALL: Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love.**

◆ All stand and sing **Praise to you,  
Lord Jesus Christ . . .**

### READER:

Luke 10:25–37

A reading from the holy Gospel according  
to Luke

◆ The reader reads the scripture passage from  
the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All sit and observe silence. An adult lights  
the candle.

### LEADER:

Merciful and loving Father,  
just as the warmth from this candle rises  
up to heaven,  
receive and bless our Lenten prayers.  
In our Lenten fast,  
may our hearts be as open and ready  
to be filled with your love as this bowl.  
And may the coins we gather for the poor  
during this holy season  
help us to love God and love our neighbor,  
just as the Good Samaritan did.

We ask for this blessing through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.

**ALL: Amen.**

### LEADER:

Let us pray as Jesus taught us: **Our Father . . .  
Amen.**

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# HOME PRAYER

## LEARNING FROM SAINT JOSEPH

*Unpack your Christmas nativity scene and bring out the figure of Saint Joseph for this prayer service. Before you begin, find the reading (Matthew 1: 18–24) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice.*

*You may wish to begin with a simple song, such as “God Is So Good,” or “Amen” (Remember, we don’t sing “Alleluia” during Lent). Then an older child or an adult reads the leader parts.*

### LEADER:

Saint Joseph worked with his hands. He helped Mary to raise Jesus. And with love, he followed the law of the Lord. His life was marked by listening and following God, even when God took him places he never could have imagined or planned for! When he learned that Mary would have a baby before he had married her, he planned to “divorce her quietly,” but God sent an angel in a dream to tell Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Good Saint Joseph! He had several dreams, and he always did what the angel told him to do.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### LEADER:

Psalm 89:5a and 6

Let us repeat the psalm response:

Let the heavens praise your wonders,

O LORD!

**ALL: Let the heavens praise your wonders,**

**O LORD!**

### LEADER:

For who in the skies can be compared  
to the LORD?

Who among the heavenly beings is like  
the LORD?

**ALL: Let the heavens praise your wonders,  
O LORD!**

### LEADER:

Matthew 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew

The reader reads the scripture passage from  
the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All observe silence.

### LEADER:

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father . . . Amen.**

Amen.

Loving and Eternal Father,

Saint Joseph recognized the voice of your  
angel in his dream, a

and he followed you in everything.

Like Mary, Joseph said, “yes” to you with a  
willing heart.

Help us to follow his example of trust

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**ALL: Amen.**

# HOME PRAYER

## HOLY THURSDAY

*Before you begin, find the reading (John 13:3–5) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and help the reader to practice reading it twice. You could begin with a simple song, such as “Jesus, Remember Me,” or “Amen.” (Remember, we don’t sing “Alleluia” until the Easter Vigil.) An older child or an adult reads the leader parts.*

**LEADER:**

Today is Holy Thursday, and this evening we remember how Jesus first gave us himself in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. It is the beginning of the continuous, three-day liturgy called the *Triduum* [TRID-oo-uhm], or “Three Days.” Tomorrow, on Good Friday, we remember the Lord’s Passion. On Holy Saturday night, we watch and pray as Jesus passes from death to life, and on Easter Sunday we rejoice all day. It takes us three days to ponder and celebrate the mystery of Christ’s dying and rising.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**LEADER:**

Psalm 116:12–13

Let us repeat the Psalm Response:  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD.

**ALL:** I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD.

**LEADER:**

What shall I return to the LORD  
for all his bounty to me?

**ALL:** I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD.

◆ All stand and sing **Praise to you,  
Lord Jesus Christ . . .**

**LEADER:**

John 13:3–5

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

◆ Read the Gospel passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All sit and observe silence.

**LEADER:**

Let us think about these questions together, in the silence of our hearts: Why would Jesus, who is the Lord and Teacher of all, wash his followers’ feet? How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus washed their feet?

◆ All observe silence.

**LEADER:**

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**ALL:** Our Father . . . Amen.

**LEADER:**

O Lord God, almighty,  
what tender care you have  
for all your creatures!  
You are higher than our minds can wonder,  
deeper than we can imagine,  
but you care for each of us  
as your own dear children!  
Help us to see one another through your eyes.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.



# HOME PRAYER

## GOOD FRIDAY

*Before you begin, find the reading (John 18:17–20) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice. You may wish to begin with a simple song, such as “Jesus, Remember Me,” or “Amen.” (Remember, we don’t sing “Alleluia” until the Easter Vigil.) Then an older child or adult reads the leader parts:*

**LEADER:**

Good Friday is a day when we remember great love. Jesus loves us in a way we can hardly imagine. Because of his love, death is not an end but the beginning of life without end. Because of his love, the cross has become the sign of a love that joins heaven to earth and brings all the ends of the earth together. And so we love the cross, we are grateful for the cross, and we make the Sign of the Cross on our bodies as a sign that we belong to Jesus.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**LEADER:**

Psalm 31:5

Let us repeat the Psalm Response:  
Into your hand I commit my spirit.

**ALL:** Into your hand I commit my spirit.

**LEADER:**

You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

**ALL:** Into your hand I commit my spirit.

◆ All stand and sing **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ...**

**LEADER:**

John 18:17–20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

◆ Read the Gospel passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

◆ All sit and observe silence

**LEADER:**

Let us think about this together in the silence of our hearts: How much Jesus loves us!  
Can we ever repay him?

◆ All observe silence.

**LEADER:**

Let us pray:

**ALL:** Our Father . . . Amen.

**LEADER:**

God, our Father,  
let us never forget how much you love us!  
Whenever we feel pain or sadness,  
let us remember that you sent your Son to  
live among us.  
So you are not a God far off in the heavens  
who is too high to know  
what suffering can be.  
Help us to remember your unimaginable love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

✙ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# HOME PRAYER

## HOLY SATURDAY

*Wait until later in the day to use this prayer service. Have a candle ready and, before you begin, find the reading (Luke 24:1–5) in your Bible, ask for a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice. You may begin with a simple song, such as “Jesus, Remember Me,” or “Amen.” (We will wait to sing “Alleluia” tonight, during the Easter Vigil!) Then an older child or an adult reads the leader parts.*

**LEADER:**

On this most sacred night, the Easter Vigil, we stand in awe and wonder and immense gratitude in front of Jesus’ empty tomb. Though Jesus shared the Father’s ways with his disciples, nothing could have prepared them for the beautiful thing God the Father did when he brought his only Son, Jesus, back to life. Finally, we cannot miss the truth that our God is an awesome God!

- ◆ An adult lights the candle.

We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross:

- ✝ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**LEADER:**

Psalm 118:17a and 24

Let us repeat the Psalm Response:  
I shall not die, but I shall live.

**ALL:** I shall not die, but I shall live.

**LEADER:**

This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**ALL:** I shall not die, but I shall live.

- ◆ All stand and sing **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ . . .**

**LEADER:**

Luke 24:1–5

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

- ◆ read the Gospel passage from the Bible.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- ◆ All sit and observe silence.

**LEADER:**

Let us think about these questions together in the silence of our hearts: Why did the women go to the tomb to look for Jesus’ body? Didn’t they think—after all the amazing miracles that Jesus did and all his words of wisdom—that God would bring him back to life?

**LEADER:**

Let us pray:

**ALL:** Our Father . . . Amen.

**LEADER:**

Eternal and ever-living God and Father, you raised your Son Jesus from the dead, and now your love and forgiveness are known throughout the world. Make us worthy of the life you offer through the same risen Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

- ✝ All make the Sign of the Cross.

# ALSO ON THIS DAY: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

## INTRODUCTION

In this supplemental resource for *Children's Daily Prayer*, you will find additional information about the religious holidays in the "Also on this Day" notations at the bottom of many of the Prayer for the Day pages in the book.

Classroom prayer always takes place in the context of life around us. Jesus was firmly rooted in his Hebrew tradition, but also respected a Roman centurion who built the Capernaum synagogue (Luke 7: 1–10), had a spirited conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), and engaged in banter with a Gentile woman of Syro-phoenician origin (Mark 7:24–30). He was open to people from many different backgrounds, and welcomed variety in his wide circle. In that spirit, we want to be sensitive to our neighbors, friends, relatives, and coworkers, who may be celebrating events within other faith traditions.

Following Jesus' model, we too stand grounded in our Catholic faith, respectful of our brothers and sisters in other traditions. We pray in company with people around the world and within our own country. As Pope Paul VI proclaimed, in *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, the world's peoples are being drawn closer together. It states: "Other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing 'ways,' comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (2).

Find the full document, *Nostra Aetate*, on the Vatican Web site: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html).

For general resources on world religions, go to <http://www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/edthe.htm#index> (Theology/Religion/Catholic Education Resources). Browse through the "site index."

## PRONUNCIATION KEY

bait = bayt

cat = kat

sang = sang

father = FAH-ther

care = kair

paw = paw

jar = jahr

easy = EE-zee

her = her

let = let

queen = kween

delude = deh-LOOD

when = hwen

ice = īs

if = if

finesse = fh-NES

thin = thin

vision = VIZH\*n

ship = ship

sir = ser

gloat = gloht

cot = kot

noise = noyz

poison = POY-z\*n

plow = plow

although = ahl-THOH

church = cherch

fun = fun

fur = fer

flute = floot

foot = foot

## BUDDHISM

**Ullambana** (oo-lahm-BAH-nuh) festivals focus on honoring ancestors and grow out of the story of a disciple of Buddha who discovered through meditation that his dead mother had been reborn as a hungry ghost. Buddha taught him how to relieve her suffering with food offerings. The festivals feature offerings of food, candles, incense, and entertainment on behalf of the ancestors.

**Bodhi Day** (BOH-dee) celebrates the day that the Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi tree. In Japan, it is observed on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. Zen monasteries usually schedule a week-long "sesshin" or retreat that culminates on this date.

**Nirvana Day** (nuhr-VAHN-uh) commemorates the death of the historical Buddha and his entry into Nirvana, or bliss. It's a time for contemplating the Buddha's teachings. Some monasteries and temples hold meditation retreats. Others open their doors to laypeople, who bring gifts of money and household goods to support monks and nuns. It is celebrated on February 15.

**Magha Puja Day** (MAHG-huh POO-juh) commemorates a time when 1,250 enlightened monks spontaneously came together to pay respect to the Buddha. The monks, all ordained by the Buddha, came without any planning. On this occasion, the Buddha delivered a sermon in which he asked the monks to do good, abstain from bad action, and purify the mind. This is celebrated on March 15.

**Vesak** (vih-SAK), Buddha's birthday, is celebrated on various dates in the Theravada tradition. In the Mahayana tradition in Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam, it is observed on April 8. For this "Flower Festival," people bring fresh flowers to temples in remembrance of the Buddha's birth in a grove of blossoming trees. Some combine the observance of Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death into one holiday, called Vesakha. This day is observed on the full moon day of the sixth lunar month. Whatever the date, it is celebrated with lanterns, communal meals, music, dance, floats, and dragons.

## HINDUISM

**Krishna Janmashtami** (KRISH-na jahn-MASH-tah-mee) is the birthday of Lord Krishna, who is revered by all Hindus as a god on earth in human form, a savior of humans who appears when there is a need to fight evil powers. He gave humanity the Bhagavad Gita (BAH-guh-vahd GEE-tuh), one of the sacred texts of Hinduism that records its teachings. Lord Krishna is one of the earthly forms of Lord Vishnu, who is one of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity (Brahma, creator of the universe; Vishnu, preserver of the universe; and Shiva, destroyer of the universe). Lord Krishna is often depicted as a youthful figure playing a flute, with his pet cow nearby. On this day, Hindus fast, tell stories, and sing songs about the Lord Krishna. Some plays recount his love for the human Radha and his life experiences. One festival center is Mumbai, site of numerous celebrations.

**Navaratri** (nah-vah-RAH-tree) honors God's energy as universal mother, creating and protecting. The festival is divided into three sets of three days each, to worship the divine mother's different aspects, as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. On Vijayadashami (VEE-ja-ya-DASH-a-mee), at the end of the festival, people visit each other's homes, hug each other, and exchange sweets.

**Diwali** (dih-WAHL-ee), the four-day Festival of Lights, is a celebration of life, of good triumphing over evil. During this joyous time of the year, Hindus around the world celebrate, shop, feast, gamble, explode firecrackers, and display beautiful little diyas or lights in clay pots. The lights and incense fill all of India.

**Holi** (HOH-lee) is a high-spirited spring festival when people squirt colored water and throw colored powders on each other as they shout "Holi-ho!" It's a time to relax, enjoy bonfires, and to appreciate the beginning of spring and the fertile land. The holiday originated with mythic stories, especially one in which Lord Krishna throws colored powder over Radha, his beloved, who was fair in complexion while he was dark.

Find more resources about Hindu observances at:

<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduindex.asp>;

<http://www.hindunet.org/>;

<http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/religionet/er/hinduism/index.htm>;

<http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/index.htm>

## ISLAM

**A note about the Islamic calendar:** The Islamic calendar (also known as the *Hijri* calendar) is based on a lunar calendar of 12 months. Because a lunar year is about ten days shorter than the solar calendar, Islamic dates corresponding to the Gregorian calendar shift back by ten days each year. The first year of the Islamic calendar was declared to be the year Prophet Muhammad migrated from Makkah to Madinah. We are currently in the year 1432 of the Islamic Calendar. In this calendar, the dates change at sunset and not at the midnight hour.

**Ramadan** (RAHM-uh-dahn), the name of the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is for Muslims an entire month devoted to fasting from all food and drink during the hours from dawn to sunset. Long prayers are offered every night during this month. This is the month during which the first revelation came to Prophet Muhammad. Its main purpose is to achieve spiritual and moral strength through devotion and discipline.

**Lailat-ul-Qadr** (LAY-luh-ahl-KAHD-\*r), the Night of Power, is the specific night in the month of Ramadan when Prophet Muhammad received the very first revelation of the Qur'an. The exact date is not known, and Muslims are encouraged to commemorate it during the last ten days of Ramadan and especially during the twenty-seventh night of this month. During this time, Muslims around the world study the Qur'an in the mosque, pray, and meditate.

**Eid-ul-Fitr** (ĪD-al-fit-\*r), meaning the "festival of fast-breaking," marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting from dawn until sunset. It is a joyous feast of generosity and gratitude, and the major holiday of Islam.

**Day of Hajj** (hahj) is also known as the day of *Arafa*; it is the second day of the three day pilgrimage to Makkah called "The Hajj." The pilgrimage commemorates Prophet Abraham's life and his journey to Makkah.

**Eid-ul-Adha** (ĪD-al-AHD-hah) (the Festival of Sacrifice) is the second of the two major Islamic celebrations. It occurs on the third day of the pilgrimage in Makkah, called "The Hajj," and commemorates Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Some families kill a sheep, camel, or goat, saying the name of Allah, and remembering how Abraham almost sacrificed his son. (Read the story in Genesis 22:1–2, 9–13, 15–18, where the son is named Isaac.) The family eats some of the meat, and shares the rest, especially with the poor.

**Muharram** (muh-HAHR-uhm) or **Al Hijra** (al-HIJ-ruh) is the first month of the Islamic calendar, and so the first of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic year.

**Mawlid al-Nabim** (MAH-lid-al-NAH-bim) is the anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's birth in 570. Some Muslims attend special functions during this day.

**Ashura** (uh-SHOOR-uh) occurs during on the tenth day of Muharram (the first month in the Islamic Calendar) and is considered an Important day for voluntary fasting and worship. It also marks the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, in 680. Shia Muslims especially observe this day, remembering the death of Imam Hussain.

Find more resources about the observances of Islam at:

<http://www.when-is.com/muslim-holidays.asp>;  
<http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/holidays.htm>;  
<http://islam.about.com/od/holidays/u/holidays.htm>;  
<http://www.submission.org/teachers/>

## JUDAISM

**Rosh Hashanah** (ROHSH hah-shah-NAH) (New Year) begins a new calendar year with the sounding of the shofar (shoh-FAHR) (ram's horn). During this time Jews reflect on their actions, reconciling with each other and God if they've caused hurt or gone away from God's teachings. Traditional foods are round and sweet—apples dipped in honey and round challah bread—reflecting the cycle of a new year on the Jewish calendar and the hope that the year will be sweet.

**Yom Kippur** (yohm kee-POOR) (Day of Atonement) is the most solemn day of the year. Jewish people try to separate themselves from the ordinary world, often by fasting, so that they can look at their lives, recognize the wrongs of the past year, regain balance, and heal. During the liturgy in the synagogue, people wear a "tallit," or prayer shawl, representing divine enfolding love and a reminder of the commandments God has given them. The day ends with a blast on the shofar (shoh-FAHR), symbolizing God's response to repentance.

**Sukkot** (soo-KOHT) (Booths), five days later, two weeks after the Jewish New Year, comes a week-long fall festival named after the temporary shelters once set up in the fields during harvest. Now, the family builds their sukkah (soo-KAH) ("booth" or "tent") with branches, leaving the roof open to the elements: wind, rain, stars. They try to spend time in the sukkah and eat meals there. These booths surrounded by creation also represent the places where the Israelites lived in the desert after their escape from Egypt. The psalms prayed at this time praise God for agricultural bounty in the "season of our joy."

**Shemini Atzeret** (SH'MEE-nee ah-TZUHR-et) ("Eighth Day of Assembly"—after Sukkot) and **Simchat Torah** (sim-CHAT toh-RAH) ("Rejoicing in the Torah")  
A note about pronouncing the "ch" sound: When you see the "ch" in the anglicized form of a Hebrew word, it doesn't stand for the English ch sound found in "chat." Rather, it represents a sound we don't have in English—an "h" sound made in the back of the throat.

It is similar to the German "ch" sound in the word *buch* ("book") or *Achtung* ("attention").

These two celebrations are sometimes observed as one holiday after Sukkot. Simchat Torah is the day Jews conclude their annual reading of the Torah and immediately start reading at the beginning again. On Simchat Torah the end of Deuteronomy is read, followed by the opening chapters of Genesis. After the Torah has been read, all Torahs are taken from the ark, and those present may dance with one amidst much singing and celebration.

The Torah contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (known to Christians as the Old Testament)—the story of the people of Israel, from Creation through slavery in Egypt, escape from Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, and receiving the Ten Commandments from God at Mount Sinai, up to the gathering of the people at the border of the promised land. It also contains the laws by which the people of Israel live. Simchat Torah expresses great love and reverence for the Torah which is central to Jewish identity and contains the laws that guide Jewish life.

**Chanukah** (CHAH-noo-kah) (the Festival of Lights)  
Note: Here is that tricky "h" sound again, represented by "ch" and made at the back of the throat.

This holiday commemorates the victory in 165 BCE of the Jewish people over the Hellenistic Syrians who oppressed the Jewish people and desecrated their temple. When the temple was rededicated, there was only enough oil for the menorah (mih-noh-RAH) candles to last one day, but it miraculously burned eight days, the time needed to make more oil. Today people light the menorah candles in memory of this event, and may eat foods fried in oil, such as latkes (LAHT-kuhs) (potato pancakes). Children receive gifts and play the dreidel (DRAY-d'l) game.

**TuB'Shevat** (too b'ish-VAHT) (the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Shevat) has become a day for appreciating trees. (In the Bible, trees represent God's abundance.) On this day, people plant trees and eat special meals with fruits and nuts from Israel.

**Purim** (POO-rim), a month before Passover, has a carnival tone. It commemorates the story of Queen Esther, (found in the third part of the Hebrew Bible in the book of Esther), who revealed the plot of the king's evil advisor, Haman, to destroy the Jewish people. She had hidden her Jewish identity, but Mordecai her mentor asked her to risk her life by revealing it. Students might enjoy reading this beloved story, which gives hope to a minority living in an often hostile culture. During Purim celebrations, when the scroll of Esther is read, the audience hoots, stomps, boos and makes noise at Haman's name. Some dress in costume; people enter into the drama enthusiastically, knowing that in the end, God brings about redemption.

**Pesach** (PEH-sach) (Passover).

Note: “ch” represents the “h” made at the back of the throat.

The story may be found in Exodus 12–14 in which the Jewish people celebrate their freedom from bondage in Egypt. Because God instructed them to mark their doorposts with the blood of a lamb, their firstborn were spared from death by a plague that killed the Egyptians’ firstborn. Then God helped them escape from the Egyptians through the Reed Sea, and guided them in their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. The Passover ritual meal, the Seder (SAY-der), helps Jews remember the story and God’s love for them. Each food has symbolic importance. For example, because the Israelites left Egypt hurriedly, without time for bread to rise, Jews eat unleavened bread at this time. Bitter herbs represent the bitterness of slavery.

**Yom Hashoah** (YOHM hah-SHOH-uh) (Holocaust Remembrance Day) was created by the Israeli Parliament in 1951 to remember the approximately six million Jews who died during the Nazi holocaust in Europe. In Israel, everyone stands still for two minutes of silence when a siren sounds. Christians can share in this mourning and reverence for people killed in this terrible human tragedy.

**Yom Haatzmaut** (yohm hah-ahtz-mah-OOT) (Israel’s Independence Day). This day celebrates Israel’s independence in May of 1948. Yom Hashoah and Yom Haatzmaut are recent additions to the Jewish calendar. Jewish tradition says that mourning and celebration each have a place in people’s lives. Therefore, eight days after mourning for those who died in the Holocaust, Jews celebrate the establishment of the State of Israel.

**Shavuot** (shah-VOO-OHT) (Weeks), 50 days after Passover, celebrates God’s giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and God’s covenant with the Israelites. Many Jews stay up all night studying the Torah. Other customs include eating dairy foods and reading the book of Ruth. This day coincides with the Christian celebration of Pentecost.

Find more resources on Jewish observances at [www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com) and [www.hebcal.com](http://www.hebcal.com).

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# HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND CATECHISTS

## ESSENTIAL TOOLS

*Blessings and Prayers through the Year: A Resource for School and Parish.* Elizabeth McMahon Jeep. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004. A collection of prayers, brief prayer services, music, and information, which can serve as a helpful supplement to *Children's Daily Prayer*.

*School Year, Church Year, Customs and Decorations for the Classroom.* Peter Mazar. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001. Learn how to create sacred space and form your students in the Catholic traditions of the liturgical year with this treasury of ideas and information.

*The Year of Grace: A Liturgical Calendar.* Every year Liturgy Training Publications produces the calendar for the current liturgical year in a large wheel shape that shows at a glance the seasons and days we celebrate. Every year a new artist provides lively images for the center and corners of this beautiful and informative 26" square poster. It belongs on the wall of every Catholic classroom. Also available in a notebook size.

## FOR REFERENCE

*Book of Blessings.* Study Edition. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989. The official book of blessings for use in the United States. Most are to be given by the ordained, but some may be given by the laity.

*Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.* Revised Edition. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007. A classic resource recommended for every home and classroom.

*Lectionary for Mass: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints and Weekdays, Saints,* Study Edition. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

*Lectionary for Mass: Weekdays, Saints, Ritual and Votive Masses, Various Needs and Masses for the Dead.* Study Edition. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002.

*The Liturgy of the Hours* (four volumes). New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975. The official prayer of the Church, prayed by clergy, religious, and many laypeople throughout the day. Consisting mainly of psalms and other short scripture passages. An ancient prayer pattern of our tradition.

*Pronunciation Guide for the Lectionary.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2010.

## FOR PREPARATION, AND FOR ONGOING FORMATION IN LITURGY AND SCRIPTURE

*At Home with the Word.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. An annual publication containing Sunday scriptures with discussion and ideas for living as a Christian.

*Companion to the Calendar.* Mary Ellen Hynes. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1993. Information about every season and day of the Christian year.

*Foundations in Teaching and Preaching.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. An annual publication providing short background pieces on the Sunday scriptures plus references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

*History's Golden Thread.* Sofia Cavalletti. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1999. Catholic Bible study based upon the way that our liturgy "reads" sacred scripture and illuminating a "path" to take with children.

*Keeping the Seasons: Reproducibles for Advent-Christmas/Celebremos los tiempos litúrgicos: Reproducibles para Adviento-Navidad.* CD-ROM. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Published annually, these family friendly handouts offer catechesis and art for the seasons of Advent and Christmas, new each year, printable in black and white or full color, in English or in Spanish. A colorful seasonal poster is sold separately.

*Keeping the Seasons: Reproducibles for Lent-Triduum-Easter / Celebremos los tiempos litúrgicos: Reproducibles para Cuaresma-Triduo Pascual-Pascua.* CD-ROM. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Published annually, these family friendly handouts offer catechesis and art for Lent, Triduum, and Easter, new each year, printable in black and white or full color, in English or in Spanish. A colorful seasonal poster is sold separately.

*Living Liturgy.* Sofia Cavalletti. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 2007. Elementary reflections on the Eucharist and sacraments highlighting themes that most inspire children.

*Prayers for Catechists.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001. Small prayer book to accompany catechists in their sacred work.

*The Religious Potential of the Child.* Sofia Cavalletti. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992. A classic.

*The Religious Potential of the Child Age 6 to 12.* Sofia Cavalletti, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002. An invaluable resource for anyone who prays with, teaches, or lives with children.

*To Crown the Year: Decorating the Church through the Seasons.* Peter Mazar. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995. Information about the liturgical year and tips about decorating geared to the church. (See *School Year, Church Year* for a classroom focus.)

*We Learn about Mary and Her Feast Days, Teaching Edition.* Ann Therese Chaput, BVM. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011. Advice on using *We Learn about Mary and Her Feast Days* with specific age groups.

*We Learn about Mass, Teaching Edition.* Gerard Moore, with additional material by Jean Marie Hiesberger. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2009. Advice on using *We Learn about Mass* with specific age groups.

*We Learn about Our Parish Church, Teaching Edition.* Teresa Marshall. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011. Advice on using *We Learn about Our Parish Church* with specific age groups.

## **TO SHARE WITH CHILDREN**

*A Is for Altar, B Is for Bible.* Judy Main. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002. Exquisite alphabet book that draws from the Bible and the liturgy.

*Bible Stories for the Forty Days.* Melissa Musick Nussbaum. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997. Stories bring to life characters from both testaments whom we all should know.

*Fling Wide the Doors!* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992. An Advent calendar that runs till Epiphany. Big and small versions.

*Forty Days and Forty Nights.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995. A Lenten calendar with doors to open from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

*An Illustrated Catechism.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007 (Co-published with Gracewing, U.K.). Text by Inos Biffi introduces the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, and prayer. Vibrant art by Franco Vignazia is reminiscent of medieval illuminations.

*Illustrated Psalms of Praise/Salmos de Alabanza Ilustrados.* Amy Ribordy Reese. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2005. This bilingual, vibrantly illustrated selection of psalms may be shared with the class as a whole or made available for a child's individual prayer and meditation.

*An Introduction to the Liturgical Year.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2009 (Co-published with Gracewing, U.K.). Text by Inos Biffi and illustrations by Franco Vignazia introduce the celebrations of each season of the year, showing their scriptural roots and rich symbolism.

*The Life of Mary.* Edited by Inos Biffi, illustrations by Franco Vignazia. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007 (Co-published with Gracewing, U.K.). The life of Mary is told in beautiful pictures with quotations from scripture.

*Patrons and Protectors: Occupations.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001. Fresh interpretations that enchant the imagination.

*Patrons and Protectors: More Occupations.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002. Delightful and instructive guide to saints.

*Patrons and Protectors: In Times of Need.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002. A must-have for any spiritual library.

*Remember the Lord Your God: A History of the Jewish People.* Sofia Cavalletti. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004. An illustrated timeline that traces the history of the Chosen People.

*Sunday Morning.* Gail Ramshaw and Judy Jarrett. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1993. Introduce your early elementary students to Sunday worship with this colorful book.

*Take Me Home: Notes on the Church Year for Children.* Christine KennySheputis. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991. Useful weekly reproducible takehome notes.

*We Learn about Mary and Her Feast Days.* Ann Therese Chaput, BVM. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011. A work booklet for second-through fifth-graders that introduces the major feast days of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Teacher's edition also available.

*We Learn about Our Parish Church.* Teresa Marshall. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011. A work booklet for second-through fifth-graders that introduces children to sacred space, furniture, and objects in the church building. Teacher's edition also available.

*We Learn about Mass.* Gerard Moore. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2009. A work booklet for second-through fifth-graders that helps them learn to participate in the Mass. Teacher's edition also available.

*What Do We Do at Mass?* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999. In this video, children narrate what happens at Mass in their own exuberant words.