

# **Our Lady of the Valley Religious Education**

## **December 2024 Activity Packet**

**Grades 3-6**



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**December 2024 Table of Contents**

<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2024-25 Calendar for the Seasons of Advent &amp; Christmas.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Learning Standards.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Lesson Pacing Guide.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Activities.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Grade 3.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Week 1.....	16
Week 2.....	17
Week 3.....	20
<b>Grade 4.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Week 1.....	21
Week 2.....	23
Week 3.....	24
<b>Grade 5.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Week 1.....	25
Week 2.....	27
Week 3.....	28
<b>Grade 6.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Week 1.....	29
Week 2.....	30
Week 3.....	31
<b>Review.....</b>	<b>32</b>

## December 2024 Overview: Grades 3-6

**Theme:** Month of the Immaculate Conception

- ♥ We celebrate our love for Mother Mary, who was made by God to be a person without any sins: a person with a soul completely pure and clean. Mary's pure soul meant that She could bring the pure and sinless Christ Child into the world
- ♥ At Christmastime, we can all bring the light of Christ to the people around us, showing the world God's love with joyful hearts like the Heart of the Christ Child

**Marian Titles:** Mary, Mother of Hope; Mary, Mother of Christ; Our Lady of Expectation; the Immaculate Conception

**Monthly Prayer/Invocation:** Our Lady of Expectation, pray for us. Mary, Mother of Hope, pray for us. Mary, Mother of Christ, pray for us. Mater Christi, ora pro nobis.

**Thematic Guiding Questions, 3-6:**

- ✝ When we pray to the "Immaculate Conception", who do we pray to?
- ✝ Why is it important that we honor Mother Mary, especially during Advent, as we await Christmas? Why do you think we celebrate Our Lady's Immaculate Conception?
- ✝ How does Mother Mary help you to love Jesus more?
- ✝ What does Mother Mary teach you about following God?

**Saint of the Month: St. Juan Diego** was visited by Mother Mary in his home country of Mexico in 1531. Our Lady asked him to build a chapel in the area, called "Guadalupe." The chapel dedicated to Our Lady helped people to become closer to her. Through Our Lady of Guadalupe's prayers, many people who had not known Jesus became followers of Christ, and her faithful friends.

**Monthly Challenge:** Await the coming of Our Lord with Our Lady by honoring her in a special way during Advent. Pray the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary together as a family. Light a Marian devotional candle and ask Our Lady to help you welcome Christ this Christmas as joyfully as she did when He was born. Ask Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the unborn, to watch over the unborn, and offer your prayers for all of the children to be born in this holy season. Celebrate the beauty and joy of life. Read the Sunday Mass Advent readings each week together as a family, before or after Mass, and light the corresponding candles on your Advent wreath.

**Overall Learning Goals:** Our goal this month is to learn about how we can practice the virtues of Advent, cultivating pure hearts like Mary, the Immaculate Conception, so that we may experience joy in its fullness through realizing true hope, peace, and love in Christ. Through our activities, our goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how all of our Advent traditions are connected, and how our celebrations of Christmas as families, parish communities, and within the global Church are interlinked, drawing us closer together in God.

**Summary of Activities:** This month, we will celebrate the joy of Advent through learning about traditions to practice in preparation for Christmas, drawing upon their Scriptural (biblical) roots

to appreciate the richness of God's Word, the living expression of which we see in Jesus. We will learn more about the layers of meaning in the Advent wreath and liturgical colors, listen to Christmas carols to further appreciate how they witness to the themes of joy, hope, peace, and love that characterize Advent, read the Nativity story, use visual art to discover the beauty of the Advent season, and learn about the saints who embody the Christmas spirit. In the midst of our preparations for this most wonderful season of seasons, we will take time to reflect and pray, opening our hearts to what blessings God has in store for us.

**Additional Enrichment Ideas:**

- ♥ Please see the enclosed 2024-25 liturgical calendar for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. You can use this to track your Advent resolution (what you choose for a spiritual practice to complete in the Advent season, as you prepare to welcome Christ on Christmas). Each day that you live out what you have dedicated yourself to doing for God can be colored in purple (the liturgical color for penitential seasons like Advent), and pink on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent. You could set Advent goals to work on together as a family rather than individually.
- ♥ Take part in the Advent wreath tradition. Pray the Advent wreath blessing before you light the candles each Sunday.
- ♥ Reading aloud the Nativity story as a family can bring the Christmas story alive. To access the Gospel accounts of Luke and Matthew online, you can follow these links:  
Luke 2:1-20 (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/2>): Nativity  
Matthew 2:1-12 (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/2>): Three Wisemen
- ♥ Many of our activities this month relate to Christmas carols. The Lessons and Carols that take place at our parish dovetails perfectly with our activities. See the livestreamed OLV Lessons and Carols event from December 2022 here: <https://vimeo.com/780375207>. Advent is an excellent time to experience liturgical devotions such as Eucharistic Adoration as a family. In the busyness of Advent, time spent with Jesus in Adoration offers peace. As a penitential season, Advent also provides opportunities to prepare the heart for the birth of Jesus through Confession. Advent Penance services are offered at the parish.

May God bless you this Advent!

## 2024/25 Liturgical Calendar: Seasons of Advent and Christmas\*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 1 First Sunday of Advent	December 2	December 3	December 4	December 5	December 6 First Friday; Feast of St. Nicholas***	December 7 First Saturday
December 8 Second Sunday of Advent	December 9 Feast of the Immaculate Conception (transferred)	December 10	December 11 Feast of the Humility of Mary	December 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe	December 13 Feast of St. Lucy	December 14
December 15 Third Sunday of Advent: Gaudete Sunday****	December 16	December 17	December 18 Feast of Our Lady of Expectation; Ember Day**	December 19	December 20 Ember Day**	December 21 Ember Day**
December 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent	December 23	December 24 The Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord	December 25 Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas)	December 26 Feast of St. Stephen	December 27 Feast of St. John the Apostle	December 28 Feast of the Holy Innocents
December 29 Sunday within the Octave	December 30	December 31	January 1 Octave Day of the Nativity	January 2	January 3 First Friday***	January 4 First Saturday
January 5 Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus	January 6 Feast of the Epiphany	January 7	January 8	January 9	January 10	January 11
January 12 Feast of the Holy Family	January 13 Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord	January 14	January 15	January 16	January 17	January 18
January 19	January 20	January 21 Feast of St. Agnes	January 22 Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Unborn	January 23 Feast of the Espousals of Mary	January 24 Feast of Our Lady of Peace	January 25 Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
January 26	January 27	January 28	January 29 Feast of St. Francis de Sales	January 30	January 31 Feast of St. John Bosco	February 1 First Saturday; Feast of St. Brigid
February 2 Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord (Candlemas)						





\*The octave of Christmas is celebrated until January 1. Christmas, and the 7 days following, comprise an “octave,” a mini-season of eight days, in which we joyfully honor Our Lord, treating not only Christmas Day itself, but the days immediately after, as feast days. Epiphany is considered to be the twelfth day of Christmas, when the Three Kings visited Our Lord. This feast day is also joyfully celebrated. The season after Epiphany continues until Candlemas (the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, also known as the Feast of the Purification of Our Lady), which is celebrated on February 2, marking the official end of Christmas. In the weeks following Candlemas, we begin to prepare our souls for Lent.

\*\*Though no longer required by the Church in the new rite/liturgical calendar, Ember Days were traditionally penitential days of fasting and abstinence from meat (partial on the Wednesday and Saturday Ember Days), which continue to be observed by a number of Catholics today. Ember Days take place during the spring, summer, fall, and winter. Winter Ember Days are those on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the Feast of St. Lucy (December 13). This year, the Winter Ember Days are December 18, 20, and 21. On these days, it is recommended that one attend Confession and pray prayers of reparation to atone for sins, an excellent spiritual practice in this penitential season

\*\*\*First Fridays during each month are dedicated to the Sacred Heart. It is traditionally a day to go to Mass and pray to make reparations, petitioning God for His mercy

\*\*\*\*Gaudete Sunday: pink vestments are worn as a celebration of joy. “Gaudete,” meaning “rejoice,” comes from the first word of the Latin Introit (the first Proper, or changing reading, of the Mass said on this day), chanted when the priest approaches the altar at the beginning of the Mass

## Learning Standards

Grade Level	Week	Activities	Learning Standards
Grade 3	1	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Acrostic Poem”</b>	<b>3.2</b> God is at the center of life.
	2	<b>“Joy Among Us: The Nativity Story”</b>	<b>3.8</b> Jesus is priest, prophet, and king. We similarly have a threefold call to holiness- three overlapping pathways to holiness.
	3	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>	<b>3.1</b> The theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity (love). Love is the greatest of these virtues. They are known as the “theological virtues” because they come from God.
Grade 4	1	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Bringing Light to the World”</b>	<b>4.4</b> The Church year is called the liturgical year, because it organizes our celebration of the liturgy, public worship of God (the Mass). Liturgical seasons reflect Christ’s life.
	2	<b>“Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”</b>	<b>4.5</b> There are eight Beatitudes (blessings) Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth; Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted; Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled; Blessed



			are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God; Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God; Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
	3	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>	<b>4.8</b> Doing good works is an essential part of the Christian life, as Christ was Himself a servant who lived to care for others.
<b>Grade 5</b>	1	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Liturgical Colors and the Art of Advent”</b>	<b>5.7</b> When we celebrate the Mass, we are in communion with all the Catholic faithful; we are one Church, on Earth and in Heaven. At the Mass are outward symbols reminding us of its deeper meanings, including vestments worn by the priest, which reflect Christ's life and ministry. Sacred vestments and objects are used to celebrate the Mass with reverence, glorifying God.
	2	<b>“Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”</b>	<b>5.4</b> We each have a different calling, something that God is asking us to do, by using the special talents and personalities He gave us. We are all made in

			God's image, but are completely unique.
	<b>3</b>	<b>"December Monthly Challenge Reflection"</b>	<b>5.5</b> Though we all have unique callings to live out our love for God, we all can be part of celebrating the traditions of the Church. <b>5.7</b> Masses are celebrated at local churches, but when we celebrate the Mass, we are in communion with all of the Catholic faithful; we are one Church, on Earth and in Heaven.
<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>"The Advent Wreath: The Spirit of the Season"</b>	<b>6.7</b> Jesus' life is the focus of the New Testament. Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels of the New Testament;
	<b>2</b>	<b>"Joy Among Us: Our Lady of Guadalupe"</b>	<b>6.9</b> Mary, Mother of Jesus, has played an essential role in salvation history, guiding us through change with Her steadfast love.
	<b>3</b>	<b>"December Monthly Challenge Reflection"</b>	<b>6.1</b> Catholics throughout history have used their talents to glorify God, pursuing virtue to make a positive impact on the world, attesting to God's greatness.

## December 2024 Lesson Pacing Guide (Suggested Schedule)

## Grades 3-6

Week Number/Date	Grade Level	Activities
<b>Week 1</b> (December 2, 2024 - December 6, 2024)	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Acrostic Poem”</b>
	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Bringing Light to the World”</b>
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>“The Advent Wreath: Liturgical Colors and the Art of Advent”</b>
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>“The Advent Wreath: The Spirit of the Season”</b>
<b>Week 2</b> (December 9, 2024 – December 13, 2024)	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>“Joy Among Us: The Nativity Story”</b>
	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>“Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”</b>
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>“Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”</b>
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>“Joy Among Us: Our Lady of Guadalupe”</b>
<b>Week 3</b> (December 16, 2024 – December 20, 2024)	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>
	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>“December Monthly Challenge Reflection”</b>

Week Number/Date	Grade Level	Words to Practice	Definitions
<b>Week 1</b> (December 2, 2024 - December 6, 2024)	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Charity</b>	Love. Being “charitable” means being loving, kind, and forgiving to someone.
	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Liturgical seasons</b>	Special times celebrated during the Church year, such as Advent, when we remember the events of Jesus’ life.
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Vestments</b>	The sacred garments (clothes) worn by the priest saying the Mass.
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Testament</b>	A testimony, a story one affirms to be true. The Old and New Testaments are witnesses to major events that happened before, during, and shortly after the life of Christ.
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Faith</b>	Believing in God. Having faith means not giving up, not letting go of belief, even in hard times.

<b>(December 9, 2024 – December 13, 2024)</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Corporal works of mercy</b>	Kind things we do to help people in need, such as giving food to people who are hungry. These are good works that care for the body (“corporal” has the Latin root word “corpus,” which means “body”), helping to physically strengthen other people.
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Universal</b>	The whole Church. The word “Catholic” means universal- global. The Church is one family in Christ, made up of baptized Catholics all over the world. Those in Heaven and in Purgatory are also part of the Church.
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Mediatrix</b>	Mother Mary “mediates” graces between God and humans. She is a channel of grace, because She intercedes for us to receive grace from God, the source of all graces.
<b>Week 3 (December 16, 2024 – December 20, 2024)</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Hope</b>	Trusting that God will carry out His promises, being with us through all that we go through.
	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Spiritual works of mercy</b>	Kind things we can do to care for other souls, like praying for people.
	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Parish</b>	A local church within a diocese.
	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Sacred Scripture</b>	The Bible; the inspired word of God.
		<b>Synoptic/Non-synoptic</b>	Lenses of seeing. Synoptic is “seen the same” whereas “non-synoptic” is “not seen the same.” Three of the New Testament evangelists (Mark, Matthew, and Luke) have similar accounts, writing about events in a way that shows they were “seen the same,” but John’s Gospel is “non-synoptic,” not seen exactly the same, because it is written in a slightly different style, covering a slightly different timeline.

<b>Week Number/Date</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Prayers to Practice</b>	<b>Text of Prayers</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives</b>

(December 2, 2024 - December 6, 2024)			<p>with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</p> <p>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</p>
	Grade 4	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</p> <p>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</p>
	Grade 5	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</p> <p>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</p>
	Grade 6	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</p> <p>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</p>
Week 2 (December 9, 2024 – December 13, 2024)	Grade 3	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</p> <p>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</p>

	<b>Grade 4</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p><b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</b></p> <p><b>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b></p>
	<b>Grade 5</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p><b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</b></p> <p><b>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b></p>
	<b>Grade 6</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p><b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</b></p> <p><b>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b></p>
<b>Week 3</b> <b>(December 16, 2024 – December 20, 2024)</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p><b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</b></p> <p><b>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b></p>
	<b>Grade 4</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<p><b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do.</b></p> <p><b>Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b></p>



	<b>Grade 5</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do. Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b>
	<b>Grade 6</b>	Advent Wreath Blessing	<b>Dear Jesus, we ask for Your hope, peace, joy, and love to live our lives with these gifts in our hearts and in everything we do. Please bless us and all those in need in this season. As we light the candles of this Advent wreath, we pray that You, Jesus, will always be our light. Amen.</b>

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 1****Grade 3- "The Advent Wreath: Acrostic Poem"**

It's the most wonderful time of the year: Advent! We will spend four weeks getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, but as we wait, we do things to honor God. We help others, giving from our hearts to share our joy for Jesus' birth. We spend time getting to know and love God more, by praying, going to Church, and reading or listening to the story of Jesus' birth, the Nativity story.

One way we can celebrate Advent is with an Advent wreath (evergreen shaped in a circle), with four candles placed on it. Each candle represents a week of Advent. The First Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit, representing hope. On the Second Sunday, another purple candle is lit, symbolizing peace. A pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday, standing for joy. Finally, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit to represent love. Sometimes white candles are used instead, with pink and purple ribbons tied around them. A white candle may also be lit on Christmas. If you don't have a wreath, you can draw your own Advent wreath on a poster.

When we look at the Advent wreath, its circular shape reminds us that, like a circle that goes on forever, God is with us always, His love lasting forever. Advent wreaths are sometimes used as centerpieces, just as God is at the center of life. Advent candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World, bringing us hope, and showing us the way, just as light helps us to see in the dark.

**Reflecting on what you learned about the meaning of Advent, and its signs and symbols like the Advent wreath, create your own Advent acrostic poem (rhyming or non-rhyming). Think of a word that starts with each of the letters in Advent, or write a short sentence for each letter, that has to do with the spirit of Advent. What words can you think of to use in your poem that tell what Advent is all about?**

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**D** \_\_\_\_\_

**V** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

**N** \_\_\_\_\_

**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 2**  
**Grade 3- “Joy Among Us: The Nativity Story”**

We each have special talents given to us by God. Every person is uniquely made in God’s image, which means that we are all called to be loving and kind like God, using our unique talents to teach others about Him. When we use our talents for God, we can bring God and others great joy. There are three ways in which we are all called to be like Jesus: priest, prophet, and king.

The common priesthood is not the same as the ordained priesthood (receiving the sacrament of Holy Orders and making vows to God to serve as a priest). It has to do with how we all can bring other people to know Jesus through practicing our **faith**, and welcoming people into our church community. Like “prophets,” people who share messages from God about what we need to do to become closer to Him, we can tell about God’s greatness and show others Jesus’ love. Like kings, we can be leaders who bring **hope**, encouraging others to use their talents to honor God.

Jesus was born for a very special purpose: to save us from sin. When He was born, there were many who came to celebrate His birth, including the three wisemen, kings from the East. They brought Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh to show Him reverence (respect).

The gold was a gift for royalty, because Jesus is King, the leader Who would bring people out of sin, and guide them to Heaven. Frankincense is used in incense, and smells very sweet. Incense is used at Mass to remind us to lift up our prayers to God, just as the smoke from the burning incense rises up. This gift was given to Jesus, because as prophet, He tells us how to open our hearts to love God more, especially by praying. Myrrh is a holy oil used to anoint people- to set them apart, blessing them as they prepare to use their talents to honor God, and journey out to share their gifts with other people. Jesus, as priest, was given myrrh as a gift, because He is the “Anointed One” Who was set apart by God the Father to save people, and bring them into His Church family.

**Create your own Nativity scene. You can read or listen to the Nativity story, and then draw the Holy Family (Jesus, Mother Mary, and St. Joseph), along with the people who came to visit Jesus when He was born: the shepherds and three wisemen.**

**Think about how these groups of people each showed love for Jesus in their own way, and answer these questions:**

**1. How can you use your talents to joyfully show your love for Jesus this Advent?**

- **Priest: How can I help my church community?**

---



---



---

- **Prophet: How can you share the good news of Jesus’ birth with others?**

---



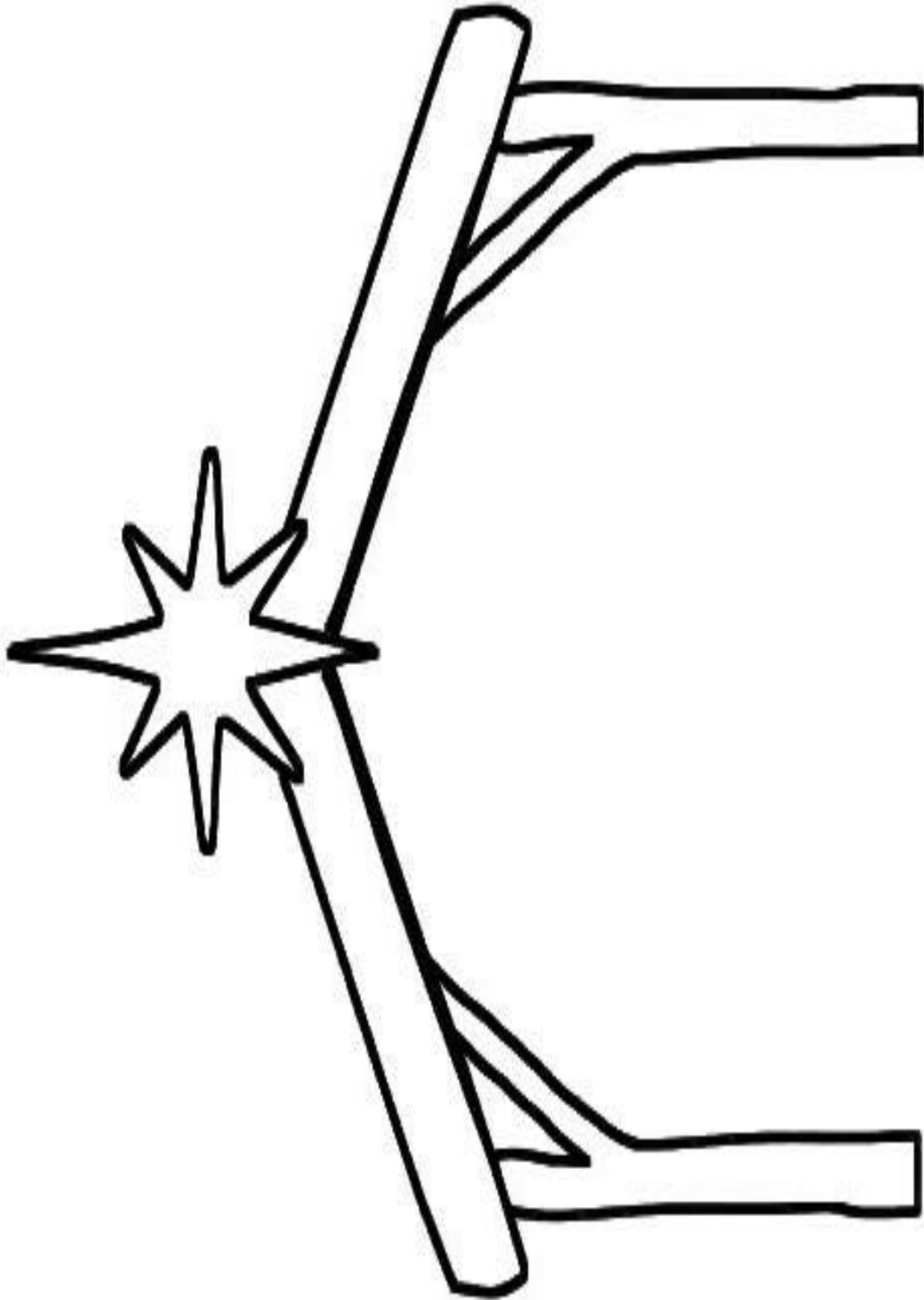
---

- **King: How can you be a leader?**

**2. What gifts did the three wisemen bring to honor baby Jesus?**

**3. Why were these gifts special?**

**4. What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? Did they follow their callings as priests, prophets, kings, or all three?**



**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 3**  
**Grade 3- “December Monthly Challenge Reflection”**

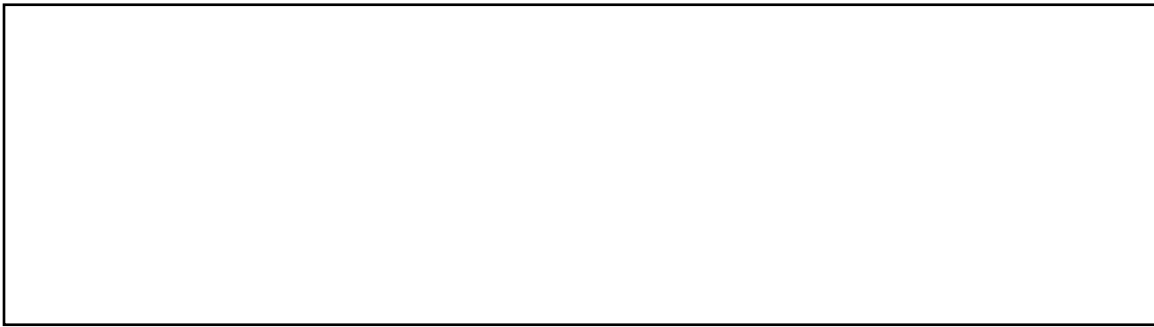
This month, our challenge was to spread Christmas joy by doing something kind. In your reflection question responses, write about what you learned from doing the monthly challenge.

1. To complete your monthly challenge, what did you decide to do to bring joy? You may also draw a picture below.

---

---

---



2. How did making someone else happy bring you joy?

---

---

3. What did you learn about God’s love (**charity**) from living out the joy of the Advent season?

---

---

---

4. After Advent, what can you do to keep the joy of Jesus in your heart, and keep sharing it with those around you?

---

---

---

---



**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 1****Grade 4- "The Advent Wreath: Bringing Light to the World"**

It's the most wonderful time of the year: Advent! We will spend four weeks getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, but as we wait, we do things to honor God. We help others, giving from our hearts to share our joy for Jesus' birth. We spend time getting to know and love God more, by praying, going to Church, and reading or listening to the story of Jesus' birth, the Nativity story.

One way we can celebrate Advent is with an Advent wreath (evergreen shaped in a circle), with four candles placed on it. Each candle represents a week of Advent. The First Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit, representing hope. On the Second Sunday, another purple candle is lit, symbolizing peace. A pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday, standing for joy. Finally, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit to represent love. Sometimes white candles are used instead, with pink and purple ribbons tied around them. A white candle may also be lit on Christmas. If you don't have a wreath, you can draw your own Advent wreath on a poster.

Advent is one season in the **liturgical** (Church) year, but it reminds us of important qualities that help us to become more like Jesus throughout the entire year, even after the season ends. We remember that to be more like Jesus means to have hope, peace, joy, and love. The shepherds and wisemen traveled to see the baby Jesus. They didn't worry about finding the way, because they trusted in God. They came to honor and celebrate Jesus, because they had hope in Him, knowing that He would bring joy to the world, since He came to save us from sin, and lead people into the light of God's love. The lit Advent candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World, Who helps us find our way to God, just like candles help us to see in the dark.

**Think about how you can bring light to the world like Jesus, using your talents to live out the spirit of Advent, represented by each of the candles in the Advent wreath. Write your ideas on the lines below, answering the questions for each Advent theme.**



**Hope: What can I do to bring hope to other people during Advent? What can I do to stay hopeful after Advent?**

---



---



---



**Peace: What can I do to bring peace to other people during Advent? What can I do to stay peaceful after Advent?**



**Joy: What can I do to bring joy to other people during Advent? What can I do to stay joyful after Advent?**



**Love: What can I do to show my love for God during Advent? How can I keep learning about and loving God more after Advent?**

**Why do you think we can feel most joyful when we have hope, peace, and love? Why are all of these important?**

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 2**  
**Grade 4- “Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”**

St. Lucy's Feast Day is celebrated on December 13. St. Lucy is the patron saint of the eyes. Her name means “light.” She is a light who helps us to see God with her own example of a holy life. St. Lucy was born to a wealthy family in Sicily, Italy, in the third century (200s A.D.). She decided to dedicate her life to God, and did charitable (loving) things for others to express her love for God, such as giving her wealth to the poor. St. Lucy lived among non-Christian Romans who persecuted her for her faith. She faced pressure to pursue worldly things, but St. Lucy stayed true to God, and stood up for her beliefs. St. Lucy is a blessing, because she is an example of bravery and faith in God to inspire us. She could be joyful, because she hoped in God.

There are eight Beatitudes (blessings) that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. He tells us what we need to do to one day go to Heaven. The Beatitudes are:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven
2. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth
3. Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy
6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God
8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven

The Beatitudes remind us not to give up, but to have a good attitude, keeping hope (trust) in God's promises. To be poor in spirit means to know that we need God to help us, rather than relying only on ourselves to succeed. To be meek is to be humble. Anyone who is mourning (sad) can have hope that God will make them happy again, because they are not alone; He is always with them. Those being treated unfairly will be blessed by God (He has not forgotten them, and will reward them in Heaven). People who treat others kindly, with forgiveness, will be treated with mercy by God. People who open up their hearts to loving God, focusing on Him, will be able to see His goodness everywhere, instead of getting distracted by worldly things. People who bring peace, making sure that people are treating each other kindly, will be blessed.

**Which Beatitude (#1-8) do you think is the best example of how St. Lucy lived her life as a follower of Christ? Why?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 3****Grade 4- "December Monthly Challenge Reflection"**

This month, our challenge was to spread Christmas joy by doing something kind. In your reflection question responses, write about what you learned from doing the monthly challenge.

1. To complete your monthly challenge, what did you decide to do to bring joy? How did this make you feel? You may also draw a picture in the space at the bottom of the page.

---

---

---

2. How does doing good things to bring joy to others help us be more like Jesus?

---

---

---

3. Why is it important to do kind and helpful things, not only at Advent, but always? How does this honor God?

---

---

---

4. Jesus did **corporal** and **spiritual** works of mercy to help people. He cared for their bodies, such as by feeding the hungry (corporal works of mercy), and cared for their souls, such as by praying for people (spiritual works of mercy). Do you think your kind action to spread joy was a spiritual or corporal work of mercy- or both? Why?

---

---

---



**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 1****Grade 5- “The Advent Wreath: Liturgical Colors and the Art of Advent”**

It's the most wonderful time of the year: Advent! We will spend four weeks getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, but as we wait, we do things to honor God. We help others, giving from our hearts to share our joy for Jesus' birth. We spend time getting to know and love God more, by praying, going to Church, and reading or listening to the story of Jesus' birth, the Nativity story.

One way we can celebrate Advent is with an Advent wreath (evergreen shaped in a circle), with four candles placed on it. Each candle represents a week of Advent. The First Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit, representing hope. On the Second Sunday, another purple candle is lit, symbolizing peace. A pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday, standing for joy. Finally, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit to represent love. Sometimes white candles are used instead, with pink and purple ribbons tied around them. A white candle may also be lit on Christmas. If you don't have a wreath, you can draw your own Advent wreath on a poster.

The liturgical **vestments**, clothing worn by the priest celebrating Mass (the liturgy, or public worship, of God), also tell the story of the season, of Jesus' life. During Advent, we see that the colors of the Advent candles each week are the same as the colors worn by the priest at Mass, because these are the colors that represent the spirit of the season, showing what it is all about. Hope, peace, joy, and love are what we feel and practice living out in this season, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth. The liturgical colors remind us of this, and are recognizable to everyone in the Church, linking us all together in our celebration.

Purple is the color of penance, which we also see in the vestments at Lent. “Confession” is also called “Penance,” when we communicate our sorrow for our sins, asking God to forgive us. When we complete the penance the priest gives us at Confession, we make up for our sins, promising to work to avoid sin in the future. Pink is the color of triumph, victory (winning). It represents the joy we feel when we overcome challenges.

- 1. We think of Lent as being the season of penance, but why do you think Advent is also a penitential season? How are Lent and Advent similar- how are Christmas and Easter connected?**

---



---



---

- 2. Why do you think the color pink is used at Advent to stand for joy? When we say it is the color of “triumph,” what victory do you think it symbolizes (think of what Jesus was born to do- what did He overcome)?**

---



---



---

- 3. We learned about candles as a symbol of Advent. What symbols having to do with Jesus' life would you use to represent the spirit of Advent- joy, hope, peace, love? What would you emphasize about Jesus' life (for example, His kingship, His miracles, etc.?). Why would you choose these symbols?**

**You may also draw them in the boxes below, showing the transition from week to week in Advent with sequential art (like a comic book).**

**Hope:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**Peace:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**Joy:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**Love:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Hope

Peace

Joy

Love



**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 2**  
**Grade 5- “Joy Among Us: St. Lucy”**

St. Lucy’s feast day is celebrated on December 13. St. Lucy is the patron saint of the eyes. Her name means “light.” She is a light who helps us to see God with her own example of a holy life. St. Lucy was born to a wealthy family in Sicily, Italy, in the third century (200s A.D.). She decided to dedicate her life to God, and did charitable (loving) things for others to express her love for God, such as giving her wealth to the poor. St. Lucy lived among non-Christian Romans who persecuted her for her faith. She faced pressure to pursue worldly things, but St. Lucy stayed true to God, and stood up for her beliefs.

St. Lucy is respected for her bravery and faith in God. We can continue to pray for St. Lucy to help us bring the light of Christ’s love and joy into our world. She is remembered today throughout the global Church. People around the world celebrate St. Lucy through traditions that begin their Christmas festivities.

1. How is St. Lucy an example of joy we can look to during Advent? Even through the challenges she faced, what did she do?

---

---

---

---

2. Research how St. Lucy, or “St. Lucia,” Day is celebrated around the world. What are some examples of St. Lucy traditions that you learned about?

---

---

---

---

3. Why do you think these traditions are good ways to prepare for Christmas? How do they reflect a spirit of joy?

---

---

---

---

4. Which St. Lucy tradition do you think you would most enjoy celebrating? Is there a new tradition you can start to honor saints like Lucy during Advent? How can you bring light, sharing Christ’s love, in this season?

---

---

---

---

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 3**  
**Grade 5- “December Monthly Challenge Reflection”**

This month, our challenge was to spread Christmas joy through doing something kind. In your reflection question responses, write about what you learned from doing the monthly challenge.

1. To complete your monthly challenge, what did you decide to do to bring joy?

---

---

---

2. We learned about how universal signs and symbols in the Church connect us all, like Advent colors that remind us of the meaning of the season. We also learned about how people celebrate the Feast of St. Lucy (December 13) around the world. What kinds of traditions in your family, and/or in the Church/parish community, have been passed down to bring joy during the Advent season each year?

---

---

---

---

3. Think about the shepherds and wisemen in the Nativity story each traveling in groups to visit Jesus when He was born. How does celebrating the joy of Jesus’ birth as a family and **parish** community bring us closer together?

---

---

---

---

4. Why is it important to journey through the liturgical seasons as a **universal** Church community, and practice loving God by loving each other?

---

---

---

---

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 1****Grade 6- “The Advent Wreath: The Spirit of the Season”**

It’s the most wonderful time of the year: Advent! We will spend four weeks getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, but as we wait, we do things to honor God. We help others, giving from our hearts to share our joy for Jesus’ birth. We spend time getting to know and love God more, by praying, going to Church, and reading or listening to the story of Jesus’ birth, the Nativity story.

One way we can celebrate Advent is with an Advent wreath (evergreen shaped in a circle), with four candles placed on it. Each candle represents a week of Advent. The First Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit, representing hope. On the Second Sunday, another purple candle is lit, symbolizing peace. A pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday, standing for joy. Finally, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, a purple candle is lit to represent love. Sometimes white candles are used instead, with pink and purple ribbons tied around them. A white candle may also be lit on Christmas. If you don’t have a wreath, you can draw your own Advent wreath on a poster.

**Read the Nativity story in the New Testament Gospels of Matthew and Luke:** Luke 2:1-20 (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/2>) and Matthew 2:1-12 (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/2>).

**Then, listen to Christmas carols telling the story of the birth of Jesus, such as “The First Noel,” “Away in a Manger,” “Silent Night,” and “O Holy Night.” For each of the Advent week themes, write about a Christmas carol, explaining why it best represents that theme and fits with the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke. Or, use one Christmas carol, explaining how it captures the spirit of each Advent weekly theme.**

**Hope: What Christmas carol did you choose, and how does it exemplify hope?**

---



---



---

**Peace: What Christmas carol did you choose, and how does it exemplify peace?**

---



---



---

**Joy: What Christmas carol did you choose, and how does it exemplify joy?**

---



---



---

**Love: What Christmas carol did you choose, and how does it exemplify love?**

---



---



---

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 2**  
**Grade 6- “Joy Among Us: Our Lady of Guadalupe”**

Mother Mary continues to intercede for (help) us and be actively involved in our salvation, bringing us closer to Christ. She is **Mediatrix** of All Graces- She mediates between Her Son (Jesus) and us. She is a channel of grace, a bridge to bring us together. Through Mary, we receive special graces from God. As we pray and become closer to Mary, we see how much She loves us, and knows us personally as a Mother. Throughout history, apparitions of Mary have shown that She is a universal Mother, the Mother of us all, like the Mother Church Herself. Around the world, Mary has appeared to people according to how their culture would recognize Her. As a result, there are many different Marian archetypes, or cultural images of Mary.

Advent is a time of active waiting, of doing things that help us to be prepared to let Christ into our lives on a deeper spiritual level. There were no rooms for the Holy Family in the inn, but we can take steps to become closer to Christ, and open our hearts to welcome Him during Advent. We can begin by asking Mary for Her intercession, remembering Her as we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12.

In December 1531, St. Juan Diego was visited by Mother Mary in Mexico. She asked him to build a shrine to Her on the hill where She appeared, but when he went to ask the bishop, the bishop did not believe that She had really appeared. Mother Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego again, and he told Her what had happened. Although it was winter, roses grew on the hill where She appeared. St. Juan Diego gathered the roses in his cloak to bring as proof of Mother Mary’s wonderworking. When he opened the cloak to show the roses to the bishop, an image of Mary was seen on the cloak, much like how Jesus’ face is imprinted on the Shroud of Turin. Miraculously, the cloak has survived for over 500 years (normally, the fabric would have fallen apart after about 20 years), and the image of Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, is still venerated.

1. Research how Our Lady of Guadalupe’s Feast Day is celebrated. What are some popular devotions, or traditions, people use to honor Mary on this day?

---

---

---

2. As you research, look for examples of special Christmas traditions around the world. Is there a special tradition your family celebrates? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. What can you do to honor Mary during Advent? Do you have an idea for a new tradition you can start? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**December 2024 3-6 Activities: Week 3**  
**Grade 6- “December Monthly Challenge Reflection”**

This month, our challenge was to spread Christmas joy through doing something kind. In your reflection question responses, write about what you learned from doing the monthly challenge.

1. To complete your monthly challenge, what did you decide to do to bring joy? How did you use your talents to honor God?

---

---

---

2. Thinking of what you learned about Our Lady of Guadalupe in Week 2, how does Mother Mary bring us joy? How does She inspire you to joyfully keep hope and faith in the future, after the season of Advent?

---

---

---

3. Advent is a season of waiting, but how does waiting help you to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day more joyfully? How does it make the things you do to prepare for Jesus’ birth, like what you completed for your monthly challenge, more meaningful?

---

---

---

---

4. In Week 1, you read the Nativity story in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke from the New Testament of the Bible. These two accounts from Sacred Scripture are synoptic- not only do they tell the same story, but they are “seen the same.” John’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ divinity (His divine, godly, nature), but the other Gospels emphasize His humanity (human nature). **Although these stories may have similar details, what differences did you see between them? How did each story give you a new perspective on what joy is, and what it truly means in this season of Advent?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

## December 2024 Grades 3-6 Review

Use this review sheet as a reference to track progress and check that learning goals are met.

### **Recap:** What did we learn?

#### All Grades

- During the four weeks of Advent, we celebrate hope, peace, joy, and love
- The liturgical colors of Advent are purple and pink
- Advent is a season of waiting as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth

#### Grade 3

- God is at the center of life
- There is a threefold call to holiness: priest, prophet, and king
- The gifts the wisemen brought Jesus represent how Jesus lived out each of these callings
- We each have unique talents we can use to honor God

#### Grade 4

- During the liturgical (Church) year, there are special seasons celebrated that remind us of the events of Jesus' life
- Advent is one of these seasons, but we can celebrate joy in Christ year-round
- Doing kind things for others is a way we can live out Jesus' love and joy
- Corporal works of mercy care for the body, while spiritual works of mercy care for the soul
- There are eight Beatitudes that tell us how to live a good life (by keeping a good attitude)

#### Grade 5

- The vestments worn by the priest celebrating Mass follow the liturgical colors of the season
- The purple vestments worn at Advent symbolize penance, and the pink represents joy
- We celebrate Advent traditions within our families, in our parish communities, and as a universal (global) Church
- Saints such as St. Lucy inspire us to live out the spirit of Advent, of love and joy for Jesus

#### Grade 6

- Both Matthew and Luke wrote Gospel accounts of the Nativity story
- The New Testament contains the Gospels telling about Jesus' life. Three are synoptic (seen the same: written with similar styles/perspectives), and one is non-synoptic
- Mother Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces
- We celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December

### **What vocabulary words did we practice?**

#### **Grade 3**

##### Week 1



☐ Charity

Week 2

☐ Faith

Week 3

☐ Hope

**Grade 4**

Week 1

☐ Liturgical seasons

Week 2

☐ Adoration

☐ Corporal works of mercy

Week 3

☐ Benediction

☐ Spiritual works of mercy

**Grade 5**

Week 1

☐ Vestments

Week 2

☐ Universal

Week 3

☐ Parish

**Grade 6**

Week 1

☐ Testament

Week 2

☐ Mediatrix

Week 3

☐ Sacred Scripture

☐ Synoptic/Non-synoptic

**What prayers did we practice?**

**Grade 3**

☐ Advent Wreath Blessing

**Grade 4**

☐ Advent Wreath Blessing

**Grade 5**

☐ Advent Wreath Blessing

**Grade 6**

☐ Advent Wreath Blessing

**Checklist: Activity Completion**

**Grade 3**

☐ Week 1: "The Advent Wreath: Acrostic Poem"

☐ Week 2: "Joy Among Us: The Nativity Story"

☐ Week 3: "December Monthly Challenge Reflection"

**Grade 4**

☐ Week 1: "The Advent Wreath: Bringing Light to the World"

☐ Week 2: "Joy Among Us: St. Lucy"

☐ Week 3: "December Monthly Challenge Reflection"

**Grade 5**

☐ Week 1: "The Advent Wreath: Liturgical Colors and the Art of Advent"

☐ Week 2: "Joy Among Us: St. Lucy"

☐ Week 3: "December Monthly Challenge Reflection"

**Grade 6**

☐ Week 1: "The Advent Wreath: The Spirit of the Season"

☐ Week 2: "Joy Among Us: Our Lady of Guadalupe"

□ Week 3: “December Monthly Challenge Reflection”

**Quick Check:**

- ✓ Did your child fully answer all of the questions (in spoken discussion or in writing)?
- ✓ Did your child demonstrate their understanding of concepts through their artistic response (i.e. drawings)?
- ✓ Did your child use their vocabulary words in spoken discussion or in writing?
- ✓ Did your child practice saying their prayers and applying their knowledge, such as by making the Sign of the Cross or helping to say grace at a meal?
- ✓ Did you and your child work on the monthly challenge to put our theme into practice?
- ✓ Did you use the thematic guiding questions to discuss concepts related to the theme?

Tell us about your experience with these activities this month! Our December 2024 Google Form for Grades 3-6 is available here: <https://forms.gle/d8kBveWZLiB8s3Cr9>