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Children's Ministry Faith Formation

Kindergarten thru Fifth Grade

December 2009



*O come, O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*



The commercial rush of Christmas begins earlier every year. By the time Thanksgiving rolls around we are often overwhelmed with the hustle and bustle of the season and the expectations we place on ourselves for this holiday. Advent marks the four weeks before Christmas. During this time we, as Catholics, should make a determined effort to renew and restore the real values of this holiest of feasts—Christmas.

As we prepare our families to await the celebration of the coming of Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, take time to slow down, pray, simplify our lives. Emphasize the joy that some would compare to the months before a child is born: excitement, wonder, joy, expectation, even exhilaration at the life that is in our midst right now, yet also a hope and longing, and a carefulness to get things into order. Remember the true reason for our Christmas celebrations...the greatest gift from God our Father to us...the birth of our Savior.



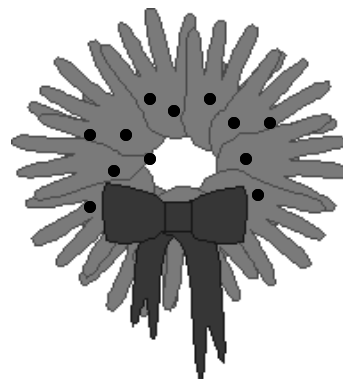
O God, My heart desires the warmth of your love, and my mind is searching for the light of your Word. Increase my longing for Jesus this Advent season and always. Amen



Important Upcoming Dates:

- 12/6:** Classes resume from Thanksgiving Break
- 12/8:** Immaculate Conception of Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)
- 12/12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** (Celebration begins at 5:00 a.m. with Las Mañanitas) See back page for more details.
- 12/20-1/10:** Christmas Break
- 1/15, 1/21 & 1/27:** 1st Reconciliation Celebrations
- 1/24/10:** Special Sacrs First Communion Parent Meeting
- Week of 2/1/10:** 2nd Grade 1st Communion Parent Meeting

Customs and Traditions



Holly is a popular Christmas decoration. Legend tells us that the holly bush was once covered with white berries, and that the crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head at the crucifixion was made from holly branches. As the story goes, when the soldiers pressed the crown into Jesus' head, the white berries turned red as an everlasting reminder of the redeeming blood Jesus shed out of love for us.

Make a "holly" wreath this Christmas season by tracing your children's hands on green construction paper. Cut out the handprints and glue them together into a wreath shape, with the wrists overlapping a little bit. Cut out red "berries" to decorate the wreath and attach a red ribbon to the bottom of the wreath.

Saint of the Month: Our Lady of Guadalupe

***There will be many Saints depicted in our new church, through various works of art. This portion of the monthly Faith Formation newsletter will begin to introduce your family to those saints.*



In 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a humble Indian convert named Juan Diego. She asked that a church be built in her honor on the hill of Tepayac in Mexico, at the site of the apparition. Juan Diego tried to give this message from Our Lady to the bishop, but the bishop required a sign. Days later Mary appeared again to Juan Diego. This time, in the presence of the bishop, Juan Diego opened his cloak, or *tilma*. When he opened his *tilma*, a cascade of rare Castillian roses fell to the floor. The bishop immediately knelt in front of Juan Diego. The roses were only one sign. A much more significant sign was the portrait seen below, which Our Lady left imprinted on the inside of Juan Diego's *tilma*. This *tilma* remains today at the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Over the centuries, many experts have examined the cloak, but no one has been able to explain how the portrait was imprinted onto the *tilma*.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of all the Americas. In the United States, we celebrate her feast day on December 12.

More information about Our Lady of Guadalupe can be found on-line at <http://www.shjolg.com/> and <http://www.sancta.org/>

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Francis of Assisi

Bring your family to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, December 12. The celebration begins at 5:00 a.m. with Mañanitas serenading the Virgin. Mañanitas is followed by dancing by the La Danza group and a reception. There will be Mass in English at 8:30 a.m. From 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. the Worship Area will be open for prayer. At 5:00 p.m. there will be the Our Lady of Guadalupe procession from Pizza Hut Park to St. Francis of Assisi. At 7:00 p.m. there will be a Spanish play that will teach the story of when Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego, followed by the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at 7:30 p.m.



Christmas can be a difficult time of year for many families and with the current economic conditions, Frisco Family Services is helping more families than ever. This year Children's Ministry will be collecting canned foods during Advent to help Frisco Family Services in their efforts. Please send canned foods with your

children to class during the weeks of December 6-10 and December 13-17. There are over 1,400 children in our program. If every child brings in at least two cans, we should be able to provide close to 3,000 cans of food for the Food Pantry!



Children's Christmas Choir:

The Children's Christmas Choir is comprised of children in grades three and up. Rehearsals will be the three Wednesdays before Christmas: 12/9, 12/16, 12/23 and 12/20 from 6:00 to 6:50 p.m. The choir will sing at the 3:00 Mass on Christmas Eve. Please bring your child to share their gift of song with our parish for Christmas.