

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO KNOW GOD



**A Handbook for Parents
From St Joseph's School**



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PRAYING

Try to pray often with your child, very simply. Make it a quiet time. Use your own words to speak to Jesus.

Try to pray as a family every night or once a week. Try to have a 'forgiving' time for all the family.

Here are some simple ideas that you may find useful when praying with your child.

Help your child to sit quietly for a few minutes while you talk to him or her about the day.

Use the time to say thank you to God for the day.

Take time to look at the things of nature e.g. a spider's web, the new moon or a flower. Encourage a sense of awe in your child.

Church

Visit the Church whenever you can. Just pop in and say a prayer, take time to look around and talk about what you see.

School

At school we use formal and informal prayers, the sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father and Glory Be. Other prayers are also taught, the Peace Prayer and Grace Before Meals. In Year 2 the children take part in the Mass by preparing readings and Bidding Prayers.

The Sign of the Cross

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen



Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

Our Father

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen

The Rosary



The rosary is a special way of praying to God that honours Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The month of May is dedicated to Mary the Mother of Jesus, who is often called Our Lady. The month of October is dedicated to the rosary

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The seasons of the Church present wonderful opportunities for talking to your child about God Our Father, The Holy Spirit, Jesus and His mother Mary.

Advent

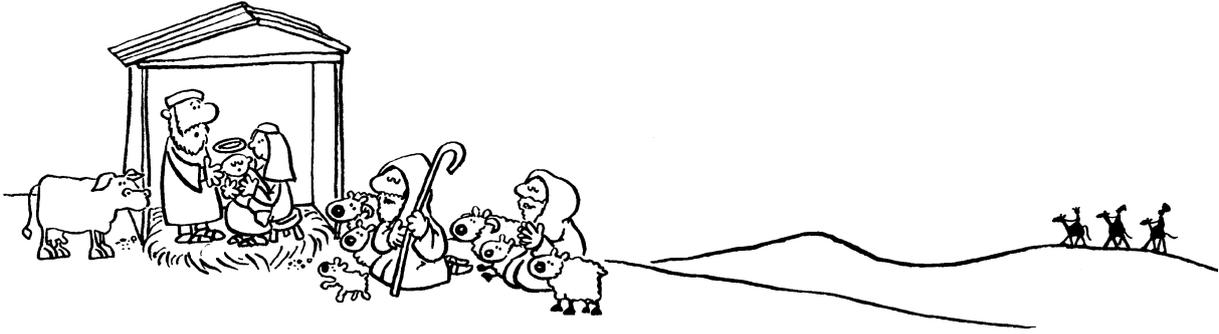
Advent is a time when we get ready for Jesus' birthday. There are 4 Sundays in Advent leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Try to choose an Advent calendar that tells the Christmas story. Make your own Advent wreath, and light a candle on each of the Sundays in Advent.



Help your child to anticipate the birth of Jesus and get excited about it. Talk to your child about the preparations you are making to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Try to help your child to understand

that without celebrating the birth of Jesus there would be no presents at this time.



Christmas is a happy time but we also think about people who are unloved and sad, lonely or poor.

Make a Crib and put it in a place of honour. Start with an empty crib and place some straw in the crib for each kind act during the day. The figure of the Christ Child is not placed in the crib until Christmas Eve. By that time the crib should be ready.

Epiphany (Jan 6)

On the feast of Epiphany we remember the Three Wise Men who brought gifts to Jesus. These were Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.



Candlemas or the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Feb 2)

After Jesus was born Mary and Joseph took Him to be presented to God in the temple and to give thanks for their baby. Talk with your child about their baptism and how you presented them to God, light their baptismal candle and let them know that you thanked God for their safe arrival.



St Joseph's Day (Mar 19)

This feast day of our patron saint is very special to us and we mark the occasion each year with a day of celebration. There is a special assembly during the day and sometimes a family Mass.



Lent

Lent is a time for us to do something extra for God to show that we love Him. It is a time when we try to think carefully about the things we have done to make God sad.

Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day is the day before Lent begins. Make pancakes and explain to your child that in the past this was a way of using up all the food in the house before the fasting of Lent began.

Lent is a time of preparation and lasts for 40 days. It reminds us of the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert praying.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. In school our Lay Chaplain distributes ashes, which are used to make the shape of a cross on our foreheads. This is a sign to show God's forgiveness.

Encourage your child to do something special during Lent e.g. do a kind act for someone in the family. Help your child to think of ways to help others.

The last week of Lent begins on Palm Sunday. We are reminded that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and that people spread palm branches in front of him.

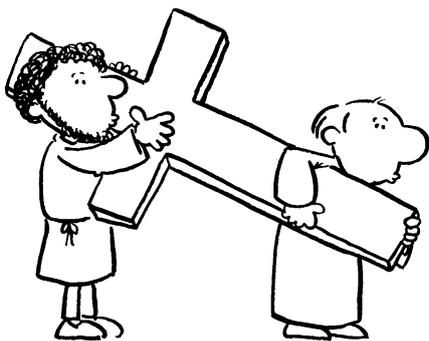


Here are the instructions for you to make your own palm cross

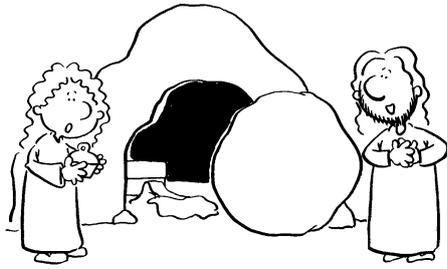
On Maundy Thursday Jesus ate His last meal with His special friends, the Last Supper, before He went to the Garden of Olives to pray for strength. In church the priest washes the feet of 12 people to remind us that Jesus washed the feet of the disciples to show how much He loved them and to remind them that they must love and help each other. He gave them bread and wine to remember Him. He said '*This is my body. This is my blood. Do this in memory of Me*'.



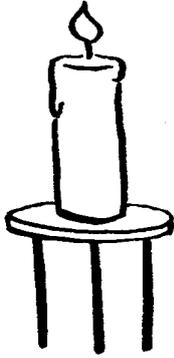
On Good Friday or 'God's Friday' as it used to be known, the church is very quiet, no colours, no music, no decoration. The crucifix is a very important part of the Good Friday liturgy because it reminds us that Jesus died for everyone.



Easter is one of the happiest times in the Church's year. It is the time when Jesus rose from the dead and reminds us that Jesus is alive today.



Make your own Easter Garden. Use stones, moss, small plants or flowers and three crosses made from twigs.



Make a Paschal candle and decorate it. At home you could light the Paschal candle to remind everyone that Jesus has risen and is alive today.

Ascension

Ascension is the day when we remember that Jesus went up to Heaven to be with God, His Father, and His friends knew that they would not see Him on earth any more.



Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost is also known as Whit Sunday. It is the day when the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus' friends because Jesus had promised to send them a helper so that they could spread the Good news that Jesus came to save us.



Find the story of Pentecost in the bible and talk about how the friends of Jesus might have felt. One of the symbols used for the Holy Spirit is a dove. We can remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is there to help us too.

Harvest Festival

In the autumn term at school we celebrate Harvest Festival to thank God for the bounty of the earth and the many gifts that He gives us. It is an opportunity to remember those in our country and around the world who have very little or nothing. Children are encouraged to think of ways in which they can give and share. When you are preparing your gifts for the Harvest Festival use that time to talk to your child about how much we have to thank God for.



All Saints (Nov 1)

Saints are people who love Jesus. Some saints are famous and some are ordinary people like you and me. That is why on this day we remember all those who have loved Jesus. Those who are less well known are not forgotten even if we do not know their names. You

could talk to your child about famous saints, for example St Francis or St Teresa. If your child has a saint's name you could use a book of saints to find out about the life of that saint and others.

All Souls (Nov 2)

This is the time when we remember all those people in our families who have died.

And finally

We hope that you will find this booklet useful in helping your child on their faith journey. May we suggest that the following items may be helpful for you to have at home ;

- ❖ a bible
- ❖ a book about the lives of the saints
- ❖ a rosary
- ❖ a children's Mass book
- ❖ a crucifix