



Keeping Advent - Ideas for Spiritual Living

Many people are eager to discover ways to make Advent and Christmas an expression of their faith. Here are offered some ideas you may want to incorporate in your spiritual life this year.

- ❖ Advent is a time of quiet, darkness and waiting. Make a date with yourself - create some space for you - mark it in the calendar if you must and let nothing interfere. Ask other family members to respect "your time" to pray, read a spiritual book, take a hot bubble bath and reflect, an evening or early morning saunter to slow down.
 - ❖ Rethink your expectations for yourself, family, gatherings etc. for the Christmas Season - it is a time when people tend to have unrealistic expectations.
 - ❖ Choose one night a week for the family to be together and turn the TV off and the phone machine on - have conversation with each other, bake, play games, pray.
 - ❖ Meditate on Psalms: 80, 25, 72, 85, 98, 143 or 146.
 - ❖ Pray the Rosary, especially the Joyful Mysteries: The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Birth, The Presentation in the Temple and The Finding in the Temple. The passages can all be found in the first chapters of the Gospel of Luke.
 - ❖ Have your own family gatherings in the Christmas season, 25 December thru 11 January.
 - ❖ Plan to invite a friend or relative who has been "alienated" from the Church to Eucharist during the Christmas Season.
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- ❖ Daily read a passage of Sacred Scripture, especially: Isaiah, chapters 40-55; The First Letter of John; The Infancy Narratives from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew: Luke 1:26-2:40 / Matthew 1:18-2:23 (How are the two versions of Jesus' birth different? the same?); Jeremiah, chapter 33; Micah, chapter 5 and The Gospel of John 1:1-18.
 - ❖ Enter into silence. Choose to not watch TV or listen to the radio for the four weeks of Advent. *(It is easier than you might think and you will be amazed at how little you will miss it.)*

- ❖ Fast once a week for peace - spend the time you would be eating in prayer.
- ❖ Start hand writing Christmas letters. Let them reflect what you feel for the person and what they have given you by their presence in your life.
- ❖ Set a limit to the amount you will spend on each Christmas gift - and on gifts as a whole. Shop responsibly - donate a portion of what you save to a service organization.
- ❖ Excuse yourself from Christmas gatherings in the Advent season and be honest about the reason for not attending.
- ❖ Limit the number of gifts per individual on your list.
- ❖ Make a gift-certificate entitling the receiver to be taken out to dinner by you so that you can spend time together in conversation and in each other's presence.
- ❖ Visit, call, or write a letter to a lonely neighbor, an estranged relative/friend, perhaps a nursing home patient.
- ❖ Use the Advent Wreath or an Advent Calendar at home to be the basis of family prayer.
- ❖ Choose a book of spiritual significance to read a bit each day.
- ❖ Plan to invite someone outside your normal circle of friends to your Christmas gatherings especially someone who lives alone, has emotional needs, lives far from their family and cannot join them for the holy days.
- ❖ Simplify your decorations so that they can be put up just before the holy day and keep them up throughout the holy season.
- ❖ Initiate one act of peacemaking within your circle of family, friends, co-workers or neighbors.
- ❖ Consciously keep the spiritual dimension of Advent and Christmas in your preparations and celebrations.

*The Advent-Christmas Season begins the evening preceding
Sunday, 29 November 2020 and concludes with
the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, 10 January 2021.*

