

Greetings Children's Faith Formation Families!

The Good Shepherd Staff here at Mary Mother have been busy preparing our next series of presentations and materials. It has truly been a delight to share these sessions with you and the children! I am amazed at their adaptability! They do indeed create an 'atrium-like' environment for our time together, particularly at prayer time.

This weekend, November 28-29, is the first weekend of Advent. It is also the first weekend of a new church year! Do not be surprised to hear your child wish you a happy new year – or better yet, maybe you could beat them to it. 😊 Your child should have received a NEW LITURGICAL CALENDAR in the first packet of materials. There are a limited number of extra here if it was not included, or misplaced. Just let me know!

When our sessions resume on Wednesday, December 2 and Sunday, December 6, we will be celebrating Advent with a celebration at prayer time. The children will be changing the prayer tables from green to purple for the new season. We will be adding an Advent wreath and candles (3 purple-1 pink-1 white) to our prayer table as well. If you do not have a traditional wreath, please let me know. I have a few extra and I am happy to borrow to you. Or, the children came up with some fabulous ideas to make their own in lieu of an evergreen wreath.



Advent is the season of joyful waiting in anticipation of the Feast of Christmas. We have some materials prepared for the entire family to share in preparation and prayer during these next four weeks. The materials will be exploring the Jesse Tree, the family tree of Jesus. These will be distributed with the materials in the Drive-thru Packet Pick-up.

Drive-thru Packet Pick-up for Advent/Christmas materials will be held on:

- Wednesday, November 25, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Sunday, November 27, from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

If you are unable to pick up the materials for your family during either of these times, please give me a call. (952-890-0045 or 612-849-6843) I will happily accommodate you schedule as much as possible.

Our primary focus these next few weeks will be on stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus. We will be spending time sharing about the land of Israel and some of the significant places in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The children will come to know it is a real place that still is there today! There will also be time spent on a number of seasonal Prophecies (messages from God given to us by the Prophets). Attached you will find some Parent Pages that will help to build your understanding of these presentations and the work that goes along with them.

Several parents have asked exactly 'how' this work should be done. The items we send are tools to help the child encounter the Good Shepherd in scripture and liturgy more fully. In this packet, particularly with the Biblical Geography pages, you and the child are provided with ideas of how to explore the land more fully. These are only suggestions. They need not be made exactly as suggested – please do not stress yourselves out by thinking everything needs to be made exactly as directed. Just like with the Advent wreath, the children are very good at suggesting other ways to make and work with the materials. Follow the child! As catechists, we trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in your children, guiding them to work with that which touches their heart most dearly. We allow them room to learn and grow, and we help them when they ask for it. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask me. The single most important thing they can take away from all of these Zoom Atrium sessions is **the gift of PRAYER!** Encourage them to use their prayer table kits daily!!

Here are is another link to some additional [Advent resources for the family](#).

It is our sincere hope that you and your family have grown even closer together as you pray together, play together, laugh together and learn together! May your Advent season find you all waiting in joyful anticipation for Jesus, The Light, to be born into the world!

Joyfully,

Cindy, Terri, Dave and Ken

Your Good Shepherd Staff