



*St. Paul Catholic School delivers a distinctively Catholic formation of children through excellence in education faithfully guided by the Magisterium of the Church.*

**Sunday:** *Advent begins. Advent is a time of quiet, joyful preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth and also a time to remember that we wait for Christ to come again at the end of time. It is a time to enjoy the hope that Christ's Resurrection points to. The first Sunday of Advent is also a time of new beginnings – it is the official start of the Church's calendar.*

*Advent gives us a wonderful opportunity to pray together as a family. At the end of this 'memo' is a Home Prayer for Gathering around an Advent Wreath. There will also be daily suggestions for activities listed in the December memos. (Note: Activities come from the 2013 Family Advent Calendar which can be found at [www.usccb.org/advent](http://www.usccb.org/advent).)*

**Monday:**

- Put your leftover Christmas cards to good use by participating in the Holiday Mail for Heroes program and sending words of gratitude to military service members.
- Angel Gift Shop browsing for grades PreK-5

**Tuesday:**

- On this Feast of the great evangelizer of Asia St. Francis Xavier, reflect on how your family evangelizes, both with words and through Christian example in your everyday lives.

**Wednesday:**

- As you fill out your Christmas list, consider purchasing gifts that support farmers and artisans and their families in developing countries and in low income communities in the United States.
- Angel Gift Shop – shopping for grades K-5

**Thursday:**

- The Philippines have been struck by two natural disasters in two months. As victims struggle to recover from the earthquake and typhoon, prayerfully reflect on how your family can help by donating to relief efforts.
- 9:00am: School confessions for grades 3-8
- Angel Gift Shop – shopping for grades Pre and 6-8

**Friday:**

- On his feast day, read the story of St. Nicholas, who is not only the original "Santa Claus", but also the patron of brides and children. Say a family prayer for engaged couples or children you know.
- 10:00am: Mass, grade 5

## HOME PRAYER – GATHERING AROUND AN ADVENT WREATH

*Gather around the advent wreath. Point out that the wreath is circular, with no beginning or end, like God's love. Explain that there are four candles, one for each Sunday of Advent. The third candle is rose because on the third Sunday we celebrate the joy of waiting for Christmas.*

*Use this service the first time you light your wreath and then on the following three Sundays when you light each new candle after the Psalm response.*

*During the first week of Advent, light the first purple candle. During the second week of Advent, light two purple candles. For the third week, light two purple candles and one rose candle. During the final week of Advent, light all four candles. For your weekday celebration, simply light the candle(s), read one verse from Isaiah 40:1-5 and 9-11 (choose a different verse each time), and then say grace.*

*Before you begin, find the reading (Luke 1:39-45) in your Bible, ask a volunteer to read it, and encourage the reader to practice reading it twice.*

*You may wish to begin with a simple Advent song, such as "Soon and Very Soon". Then an older child or adult reads the leader parts.*

**LEADER:** In this holy season of Advent, let us turn our hearts to God, who showers blessings on all those who hope and wait for him to come again in glory.

For thousands of years, people had been waiting for a Great Light to dawn. God promised that one day that Light would be ours. Soon, we will celebrate Christmas, that wonderful day when the Great Light was born in Bethlehem and shed his peaceful joy on all humanity. God keeps his promises! We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross:

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross.

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LEADER:** Let us pray the Psalm Response: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**ALL:** To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**LEADER:** May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

**ALL:** To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

✠ Light the candles(s). Then all stand and sing Alleluia.

**READER:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

✠ Read the scripture passage from the Bible

The Gospel of the Lord.

✠ All sit and observe silence.

**LEADER:** Lord God, as we gather around this Advent wreath to celebrate the coming of your Son, fill our hearts with your light. We ask for this blessing through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen.

✠ All make the Sign of the Cross