



December 24, 2024 -  
December 28, 2025

# Building Faith@HOME

**December 22, 2024**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

[1st Reading - Mi 5:1- 4a](#)  
[Responsorial Psalm - Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19.](#)  
[Second Reading - Heb 10:5-10](#)  
[Gospel - Lk 1:39-45](#)

## Share the Joy of Christmas!

Make a bunch of these special treat bags and share them with friends and family during the Christmas Season. Download the gift tag to add to each treat bag.



[bit.ly/Christmas-Treat-Bags](https://bit.ly/Christmas-Treat-Bags)

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

**Please Note...**

During the Christmas Season, our staff will take a break. There will be no Building Faith pages after this issue until January 19th. We hope you and your family have a blessed Christmas Season and joyous New Year.

The 4th Sunday of Advent Year C reminds us to be always looking for signs of God's presence in our lives. The Visitation, where Mary visits Elizabeth, is full of joy. Elizabeth recognizes Jesus when her baby, John, leaps in her womb. This moment shows us the importance of being open to God's presence in everyday moments.

Elizabeth could have dismissed her baby's movement as just another kick. Instead, she saw it as a sign of something bigger. She recognized it as a moment of grace and the closeness of redemption. This teaches us to see God's hand in small, everyday events.

Jesus came to us as a baby in Bethlehem, but He also comes to us in our daily lives. If we only see Him in the nativity scene, we miss many moments of grace. We need to be ready to encounter Him in our interactions with each other. Through prayer and the sacraments, we prepare ourselves to recognize and welcome Jesus every day.

The 4th Sunday of Advent Year C encourages us to be watchful and open to God's presence. Like Elizabeth, we should be aware of the signs of grace around us. By doing so, we prepare our hearts for Jesus and experience the joy of His coming, not just at Christmas but every day.

<https://young-catholics.com/3455/4th-sunday-of-advent-year-c>

### FAMILY TABLE TALK

How does Elizabeth's joy at recognizing Jesus challenge you?  
How can prayer and the sacraments help you recognize Jesus in your life?

This week we light the "Angel" Candle, reminding us that the angel heralded the coming of the Savior. Make this simple paper angel ornament to add to your tree this Sunday.



[bit.ly/Paper-Angels](https://bit.ly/Paper-Angels)



The Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Messiah!**



[bit.ly/Catholic-Kids-Media-Advent4C](https://bit.ly/Catholic-Kids-Media-Advent4C)

## The Christmas Season

Though the Christmas season includes the 12 Days of Christmas, the Christmas Season does not conclude until The Baptism of Our Lord.

The Christmas Season includes several important feasts:

- December 26 is the Feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr.
- December 28, is the Feast of the Holy Innocents
- December 29, Sunday is the the Feast of the Holy Family.
- January 1, Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God
- January 5, Sunday is the Epiphany of the Lord
- January 12, Sunday is the Baptism of our Lord

See our special additional pages!



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

Receive a full page of family faith builders each week as a PDF to view or download! Join the mailing list here:

[bit.ly/Build-Faith-At-Home-Email](https://bit.ly/Build-Faith-At-Home-Email)



# More Faith Builders!



Let's **BUILD** a **Jesse Tree!**



[bit.ly/Jesse-Tree-Week4](http://bit.ly/Jesse-Tree-Week4)

Download and print this week's ornaments. Read the Scripture story, color the ornament, and add them to your Jesse Tree or Christmas tree.

Are you looking for Christmas music?

Here are some music videos for your enjoyment during the Christmas season.



Listen to 3 hours of piano Christmas classics. Have as background music during your Christmas Day celebrations.

[bit.ly/Christmas-Music-Piano](http://bit.ly/Christmas-Music-Piano)



Listen to 8 hours of music with fireplace image video! Stream to your TV or computer display and enjoy the music and fireplace!

[bit.ly/Joyful-Christmas-Fireplace](http://bit.ly/Joyful-Christmas-Fireplace)

**LOOK** for this



The **Book of Gospels** is often adorned and treated with particular care, reflecting the reverence to the words of Christ. The priest or deacon holds the Book of Gospels high as an invitation to the assembly to focus their attention on the upcoming proclamation.



**Listen for this!**

This week's Gospel Acclamation is....

*"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.*

*May it be done to me according to your word."*

These words are known as Mary's fiat. The term "fiat" is a Latin word that translates to "let it be done" or "may it be." It signifies a declaration or an authoritative command. In the context of Mary's response to the Annunciation, it reflects her acceptance and willingness to fulfill God's plan. This moment is pivotal in Christian theology as it marks Mary's consent to become the Mother of God.

What does it mean for them to say "yes" to God in their daily lives? How can they respond to God's call, just as Mary did?

## More about parts of the Mass: The Gospel Acclamation.

The Gospel Acclamation serves as a way to prepare us for the reading of the Gospel. It is a moment of anticipation and reverence, signaling that something significant is about to happen. We take the posture of standing to show honor and respect for the Word proclaimed. The Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word, and the acclamation helps to highlight its importance. The Gospel Acclamation often includes a verse from Scripture that relates to the Gospel reading. This verse is chosen to prepare the hearts of the faithful for the message they are about to hear. It reinforces the connection between the Old Testament readings, the Psalm, and the Gospel.

## Building Prayer Time @ Home.

### Lighting the Fourth Candle of Advent

The fourth candle of Advent represents Love, the ultimate love of God that He might send His only Son for us. Called the "Angel's Candle," the fourth candle of Advent is lit the Sunday before Christmas, and it is the color purple.

**Light all four candles**

**Scripture Reflection:** "And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11

**Pause for reflection**

**Advent Wreath Prayer:** Dear Jesus, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Amen.





# Building Faith@HOME

## Special Edition

### The Twelve Days of Christmas

#### Day 1 December 25 - Christmas Day

Merry Christmas! Thank you Jesus for coming to us as a little child and living among us to show us God's love.

*As a family, write a "Christmas card" to Jesus. Thank him for coming to live among us as our Savior. Have all sign the card and place it near the creche.*

#### Day 2 December 26 - St. Stephen's Day.

He was the first Christian martyr. St. Stephen was one of the first 'social workers' in the Church, and it was his task to organize meals to feed the poor. Britain celebrates this day as "Boxing Day"

*As a family, create a box to fill in gratitude of Christmas blessings. Add gifts of clothing or toys, etc and give to a family in need.*

#### Day 3 December 27 - St. John the Apostle

On the third day is the feast of St. John, the Apostle, "whom Jesus loved." St. John is the patron saint of love, loyalty, friendships, and authors. He is often depicted in art as the author of the Gospel with an eagle, symbolizing "the height he rose to in his gospel."

*As a family Don't forget to say "I love you!" to each other.*

#### Day 4 December 28 - The Feast of the Holy Innocents

Also known as the Feast of the Holy Innocents (and referred to as Childermas) refers to King Herod's order found in Matthew's account of the king's reaction to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. (MT 2:16)

*Pray for children around the world.*

#### Day 5 - December 29 - Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

This feast day honors Jesus, the Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph as the holiest of families, and therefore a model for all Christian families. They were holy because they placed God at the center of their family life, they loved and sacrificed for one another, and they radiated that love to others in the redemptive mission of the Word Incarnate.

*Thank your parish priest and pray for him.*

#### Day 6 - December 30

In the carol of the *12 days of Christmas*, "on the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, six geese a laying ." The number six is meant to represent the six days of Creation.

*As a family, create a mural depicting the 6 days of Creation. Discuss how to be better stewards of God's Creation.*

#### Day 7 - December 31

In the carol of the *12 days of Christmas*, "On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, seven swans a-swimming. The seven swans are meant to remind us of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit . The gifts are: courage, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, reverence, awe & wonder, counsel.

*As a family, identify these gifts in each other.*

#### Day 8 - January 1- Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

This is also the "World Day of Peace".

*Say decade of the rosary with a focus on world peace and makes sure you wear blue in remembrance of Mary.*

#### Day 9 - January 2- St. Basil the Great

One of St. Basil's famous quotes is, "A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love."  
— St. Basil

*Each member of the family should do a good deed for another member of the family.*

#### Day 10 - January 3 - Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (Optional Memorial Day)

The Church reveals to us the wonders of the Incarnate Word by singing the glories of His name. The name of Jesus means Savior; it had been shown in a dream to Joseph together with its meaning and to Our Lady at the annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel.

*Have the family members tell the stories of their names. Who are you named after? What does your name mean? Is it a saint's name if yes who and discover their life story.*

#### Day 11 - January 4 - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first citizen born in the United States to be given the title of "Saint." She is the patron saint of Catholic schools.

*As a family, commemorate and celebrate those family members who taught you through word and witness about the Catholic faith.*

#### Day 12 - January 5 - Epiphany of the Lord

The Church will celebrate on the Sunday liturgy of the Epiphany of the Lord on January 5th. On the Epiphany, the Magi recognizing Jesus as king, prophet and priest. According to legend, the three magi were Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar

*Blessing your home : 20 + C + M + B + 25*

*For more information about this ritual visit, [Busted Halo](#). Bless your door this Epiphany*



# The Twelve Days of Christmas

Use this matching activity to learn more about this song and our faith! Match the numerical days to the symbols. On the blank lines, write the corresponding number. For the answers, listen to the song! To learn more, follow the “Dynamic Catholic” webpage!



[bit.ly/Twelve-Days-Song](http://bit.ly/Twelve-Days-Song)



[bit.ly/Dynamic-Catholic-12Days](http://bit.ly/Dynamic-Catholic-12Days)

My true love...

On the First Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me a...

On the Second Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 2...

On the Third Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 3...

On the Fourth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 4....

On the Fifth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 5....

On the Sixth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 6....

On the Seventh Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 7....

On the Eighth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 8....

On the Ninth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 9....

On the Tenth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 10....

On the Eleventh Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 11....

On the Twelfth Day of Christmas,  
My true love gave to me 12....

- geese a-laying symbolize the \_\_\_ days of creation, emphasizing God's power as the creator of the world.
- French hens signify the \_\_\_ theological virtues: faith, hope, and love (or charity).
- turtle doves represent the Old and New Testament, which are deeply connected and meaningful.
- pipers piping represent the \_\_\_ faithful disciples of Jesus: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the Younger, Simon, and Jude.
- golden rings represent the first \_\_\_ books of the Old Testament, also known as the Pentateuch or the Torah. These books include: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- ladies dancing represents the \_\_\_ fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- A partridge is a bird that is known to sacrifice its life for its babies. This bird represents Jesus, who is willing to give his life for us. The pear tree symbolizes the Cross.
- God, who loves us so much, he gave his only Son.
- calling birds symbolize the \_\_\_ Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which spread the good news of Jesus' life and teachings.
- maids a-milking symbolizes the \_\_\_ Beatitudes preached by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: (See Matthew 5:3-10)
- swans a-swimming represent the \_\_\_ gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.
- lords a-leaping signifies the \_\_\_ Commandments
- drummers drumming represent the \_\_\_ points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed, which summarizes the core beliefs of Christianity.