



Catholic  
Apostolate  
Center

# Advent Activities

*For Youth and  
Young Adults*



A guide to  
catechetical  
activities according  
to age and  
learning ability for  
children, youth,  
and young adults





# What to expect:

*Ages 3-11*

- From ages three to seven, children are in the pre-operational stage of development and can understand symbols and imaginative thought, but not others' points of view.
  - In this stage, children can begin to understand and imagine the manger scene and realize that they have to wait for Christmas for Jesus to be born.
- From ages seven to eleven, children move into what is known as the concrete operational stage, which helps children think more logically, systematically, and deeply.
  - In this stage, children gain inductive reasoning skills, which helps them to have a more complex and logical understanding of the meaning of Advent.

## Catechetical Tips

- Ask children questions that allow them to think about others' perspectives.
- Ask hard questions like "What was Jesus' relationship to God the Father?" and answer children's questions when they ask things like "Does God forgive me always?"
  - This allows children to begin to tease out more complex theological and pastoral questions that will come up in pre-adolescence and can be understood more fully in adolescence and young adulthood.





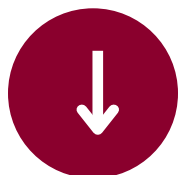
# What to expect:

## *Ages 12-19*

- Middle and high school students are in what is known as the formal operational stage of cognitive development.
- In this stage, pre-teen and teenage thinking becomes more abstract, complex, and organized, drawing from multiple points of view. These are all critical in faith development.
  - This stage allows for deeper self-reflection, helping adolescents understand their faith journey, where it is, and where they would like it to go.
- Despite their ability to have a more complex understanding of faith, experiences like direct service also profoundly resonate with adolescents because they can connect human experiences to abstract thoughtful concepts.

### Catechetical Tips

- Adolescents are able to put themselves directly into the Bible and with their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.
  - Symbolic thought helps strengthen the previous understandings of Church signs and symbols.
- Ministers must accompany teens individually and communally to help them cope with the stresses of adolescent life while also growing closer to Christ and the Church.





# What to expect:

## *Ages 18-35*



- Some teens can cognitively develop more quickly than others, but most teens are closer to full development by the time they are nineteen or twenty.
  - Some master formal operational skills by the time they graduate high school, but most do not.
- We must account for those who need further faith development and guide them in their faith journey while also inviting those who have already begun the process to go deeper into the complexity of their faith life.
- We must be centered on the encounter with Christ and reflecting with peers to experience community to come to know Christ and the Church more.

**"Whenever you are enthused about life in common, you are capable of great sacrifices for others and for the community. Isolation, on the other hand, saps our strength and exposes us to the worst evils of our time."**

**-Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, #110**





# Activities for *Ages 3-11*



- Advent Wreath Making
  - Gather your family and help create a home Advent wreath.
- Make a DIY Nativity Scene
  - Make a small home for Jesus in your home and pray at the Creche often.
- Have a "Good Deed" Stocking
  - Every time your child does a good deed, write it down and place it in a stocking as a present for Jesus.
- Fill Jesus' Manger with Straw
  - Have a manger and fill it with straw (one good deed = one piece of straw).





# Activities for *Ages 12-19*



- **Participate in Direct Service**
  - Adolescents enjoy and are affected by seeing the realities of faith in action.
- **Create and Implement an Advent Prayer Service**
  - Having teens create and run a prayer service for the parish or younger children allows them to learn more and become engaged in the parish.
- **Foster Community within the Parish**
  - Invite teens to attend and participate in larger parish events and Liturgies.
  - Inviting and giving teens a place in the larger community instills a sense of belonging and importance that leads to personal connections to Christ and the parish.





# Activities for *Ages 18-35*



- Young Adult Discussion Nights
  - This could be done at Lectio Divina or Adoration and could be centered around the Advent readings and themes of active waiting.
  - Young adults crave community so allowing them to pray together is central to their faith development.
- "Theology on Tap" or similar events
  - Events that have both a social and catechetical component
  - Catechesis in a "non-traditional" environment will bring many new people to events like this.
- Asynchronous Learning
  - Examples include podcasts, readings, and blog posts. These could be for discussion and can be utilized at one's convenience amid work or downtime.
  - Many young adults are already listening to podcasts, so a good faith podcast can help them go deeper "on-demand" in their busy schedules.

**For additional resources, please visit  
[www.catholicapostolatecenter.org](http://www.catholicapostolatecenter.org)**



**Catholic Apostolate Center**

Reviving Faith • Rekindling Charity • Forming Apostles