

Waiting Together

Need Family Advent and Christmas Ideas? We are here for you! Here are some low-maintenance, budget friendly options for the entire family to participate in the coming season!

Bible-Verse Key Rings:

Print these bible verses on cardstock counting down to the birth of Christ. Cut and hole-punch (or have older kids do this themselves). Then loop the booklet with a key ring or ribbon, and encourage families to read a verse each night at dinner, or part of bed-time prayers: <https://happyhomefairy.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/25-Bible-Verses-to-Countdown-to-Christmas.pdf>

Holy Scavenger Hunt:

Encourage parents to grab the kids and get in the car! [Taking a tour of the neighborhood lights displays](#), have families try to find all of the symbols on this scavenger hunt. See the handout on our resource website for the official scavenger hunt.

As they find each symbol, parents can talk about its meaning in context of our Holy Season. Here's a cheat sheet to give to families on the meaning of symbols: <https://nolacatholic.org/christian-meaning-of-christmas-decorations>

If families complete the scavenger hunt, they can turn in their card for a prize from the parish (candy cane, ornament, Saint Nick holy card and coin, something special from your parish...be creative!)

Family Carols Night:

Host a family night at the parish. Have families sign up to perform one of their favorite Christmas Songs. You can provide a list of Christian options and encourage families to dress up to match their song of choice, include instruments and props, etc. Provide hot cocoa and cookies and have a parish night to remember! Parishioners can vote on best act for a special prize.

Family Service Activities:

Don't forget about giving back this holiday season! Here are 5 go-to service ideas involving the entire family: https://childrensministry.com/christmas-service/?utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=CM_Newsletter_20221102%20%2801GGQSH2E8175HY0R3HBZWETJ6%29&utm_userid=01FWRVS5FRPV9K1XRRS6VNP6FA&kx=O1kb9W4E_ZzmiqrctYLoa0cnMWrkXqbLpXcf1TswTGe9QVJwNluFNWy2XSe_Qyt.SMQ4NH

Resource for your own Library:

<https://www.amazon.com/Adventure-Christmas-Helping-Children-Traditions/dp/1590520890> This book helps explain the Christian origins behind holiday customs. This is a good go-to resource to have on hand for lesson ideas as you work to connect the everyday secular excitement of Christmas back to its original holy roots.

For more ideas or help with seasonal formation, please reach out to Megan Cottam at mcottam@richmonddiocese.org.

Ideas to Accompany Parents:

*When out Christmas Shopping, parents can invite kids to think of anyone they know that might have a need and purchase that item for them as an act of kindness.

*When making Gingerbread Houses, supply a list of common seasonal symbols and their meaning that kids can add to their houses.

*Offer a prayer that can be used before families decorate their homes. It can be as simple as “Lord Jesus, we ask that people see the lights on our house and think of you.”

*Challenge your families to put their “Elves on the Shelves” into a prayer pose (reading the bible, praying before a manger, praying the rosary, etc) and snap a picture to share on social media.
#Elvespraying

*Parents can ask their children their favorite Christmas Carols while riding in the car to look at lights, and have a family sing-a-long. Then they can ask them what they think the lyrics of the song may say about Jesus.

*When writing Christmas cards, have families send a Christmas card to your pastor! Parents can ask the kids to say something in gratitude for him and talk about the parish as being “part of the family.”

*For parents who are struggling with their children about how to discuss the reality of Santa Clause, provide them information on Saint Nicholas and the Christian values that Santa represents.

*After each Christmas event, parents can have children express one specific piece of gratitude for their experience.

*Provide parents with prayers of surrender and trust to help them realize that they are good parents, whether or not they accomplish everything on their Christmas to-do list!