

Welcome to our Advent/Incarnation Walk!

Tonight, as a family you will
be going on a journey of talking
and listening to God...

Be ready to....



Look with your eyes

Listen with your ears



touch with your hands

smell with your nose



Are you ready?



As we approach Christmas, we find ourselves buying and wrapping presents in preparation to give to our friends and family.

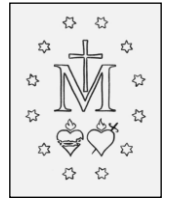
But how do we prepare to welcome Jesus who is at the heart of this season?

Let's journey together during this Advent Season to learn more about His Incarnation by being introduced to people and things involved in Jesus' arrival and His Incarnation.

If you're ready, follow the footprints



Station 1: Mary



Mary was Jesus' mother and she was only 13 years old when she found she was pregnant. An angel came to her and told her that she was going to have a baby and that the baby was going to be God's son. Can you imagine that? That might be pretty scary, but pretty exciting too. Mary realized what an important job God wanted her to do.

Just as Mary awaited the birth of her son, Jesus. What brings you excitement as you wait for Christmas?

On a streamer, write something that makes you excited as you wait for Christmas. Tie the streamer onto the ring to build up a mobile of exciting things! Thank God for all the excitement and joy that Christmas brings.

Station 2: Joseph



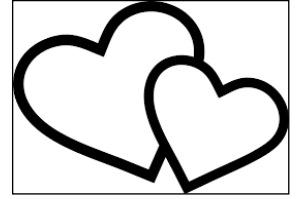
Joseph was a carpenter. He was also going to be Jesus' dad on earth. God sent an angel to talk to Joseph in a dream. The angel explained that God had chosen Mary, and that Mary's baby would be very special. When Joseph woke up, he knew that he and Mary were a part of God's plan. Joseph knew and trusted that he would be a good father to Jesus.

Carpenters often fix or restore things that are broken. These nails and wood are here to remind you of Joseph the carpenter.

Think of something that you would like to fix or make better in your life.

Joseph was a very humble man and constantly worked on bettering himself. As you hammer a nail into this wood think about something you would like to improve or fix in your life. Ask God to help you with this over the Advent season.

Station 3: Zechariah and Elizabeth



Zechariah was a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth honored God, and God loved them. But they didn't have any children. They had really wanted a baby, but they were old and they had given up hope of ever having a baby. One day Zechariah was in the temple, lighting the incense, and saw an angel who told him that he and Elizabeth were going to have a very special son and his name was going to be John. Zechariah wasn't sure he believed the angel, because he thought they were too old, and so God took away Zechariah's voice as a sign of God's power. Imagine if you had seen an angel who had told you wonderful, happy news, and you weren't able to tell anyone what had happened! Zechariah was sad to have lost his voice, but he was happy to know that he would have a son chosen by God to do important work.

Just as Zechariah & Elizabeth were shocked they were to have a baby at their old age. Think of a time something really great happened in your life, write it down and put it at the stable scene. Offer it up to God by thanking and praising God. Watch the smoke of the incense travel upwards. Smell its perfume and think of Zechariah in the temple.

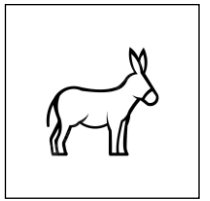
Station 4: John the Baptist



Elizabeth and Zechariah's son grew up to be called John the Baptist. He was Jesus' cousin. God chose him to tell the people about Jesus. John did not look like other people, and some people probably thought he was a little strange. He thought getting ready for Jesus was more important than cooking or farming animals. He was so busy getting ready for Jesus that he didn't have time to think about regular meals and normal food. He just ate whatever he could find in the wild and was grateful for it—it was common for him to eat locusts and wild honey and he wore clothes made from animal skins. John wanted people to know that Jesus is the Son of God, the savior that God had promised the people so many years before. He baptized them in the rivers and preached telling them to get ready for Jesus to come.

John the Baptist, lived very simply and was very good at being grateful for all things, both big and small. Enjoy a piece of honey candy and share what the last thing was that someone did for you that filled your heart with gratitude.

Station 5: Baggage



Before you go on a journey, you need to take luggage, or 'baggage'. Baggage can be heavy! Sometimes the word 'baggage' is used to describe our worries or feelings of sadness or bad moods. Mary and Joseph had to go on a LONG journey from their home town in Nazareth to Bethlehem. They walked the whole way (about 90 miles) - Mary rode on the back of a donkey. It took a very long time, was uncomfortable, and tiring. When they finally arrived exhausted, they were worried because there was nowhere for them to stay and their baby was about to be born.

Jesus ended up being born in a stable - where the animals lived. What a place to be born!

As Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem, they had a lot to bring with them. Think of a time you were very worried. How did you overcome it?

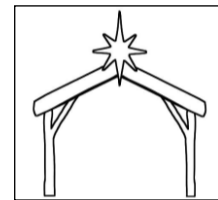
How does this Advent find you? Does it find you excited for family coming together for Christmas or anxious about all the preparation?

In this time of reflection, pick a stone out of the bowl, hold on to your stone and remember that God knows what it feels like to be worried or anxious.

God promises to be with us through both the good times and bad.

Throw your stone in the bucket - ask God to take your 'baggage', your worries away. Let your act of faith be to let Jesus find you wherever you are on your journey, to create a space in your heart to grow in joy and peace during this Advent season.

Station 6: Preparing for Jesus



Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, which is an animals feeding trough. That's not a normal place for a baby to be born. In the manger are some strips of cloth which if laid on top of each other make a type of quilt on which a baby could be laid.

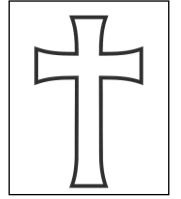
Jesus wants us to prepare for his birth and not lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. Share about how you can best prepare your home, heart and mind for Jesus.

Take a few pieces of straw and lay it in the manger.

Once everyone in your family has placed straw in the manger, pray this prayer together:

“Here is a place we are preparing for You, baby Jesus. Give us the hope and peace we need to prepare our hearts to be ready to love and welcome You. Help us to love You and grow closer to You, Jesus. Amen.”

Station 7: His Incarnation



Incarnation is a big word. It means to take something not physical and make it physical. When you build a fort out of Legos, you take your idea of a fort and incarnate it and make it physical. When it comes to Jesus' Incarnation, the focus of this month, it breaks down into—"Jesus in the flesh."

Jesus is God incarnate. He is the invisible God made visible. God is finally visible to all the world when he is born in Bethlehem. That's the way Jesus is. He could have become a man in some glorious way. But instead he chose to come into an ordinary family, in fact into a poor family. He grew up, just like you. He had a family and friends, just like you. He learned things, just like you. God loves you so much that He wanted to experience life just like you do. He also wanted to free you from your sins. That's the incarnation.

Think about the mystery of Jesus being both divine and human. What questions or thoughts stir in your mind when you hear this statement?

Station 8: Jesus' Light



Jesus came to be the light of and for the world – for us in our lives and for everyone. The dark and hard times will NEVER put Jesus' light out. The big candle is called the Christ candle and represents Jesus' who came to the world to show us how to live and love others the way God wants us to. That is why He is called the "light".
Jesus will always bring light to the darkness.

He is the light of the world and helps us see the good even in bad things. We just have to ask Him for the strength to help us see the light.

Light (turn on) a small tea light candle and place it around the Christ candle. Quietly think about how you can seek out Jesus and be His light to others every day. Share one way you can be light to others this Advent season.