



DECEMBER FAMILY ACTIVITY #1
Mary-The Immaculate Conception
Create a Prayer Chain



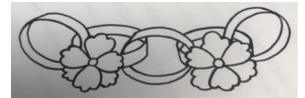
For this month's first Activity we would like your family to focus on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception which is on December 8th and is a Holy Day with Obligation. This year, however, due to Covid-19 and the obligation of mass lifted, there are no additional masses offered at our parish, just the regular morning daily masses. (The masses for Tuesdays are: 8:30 AM at Holy Angels, 8:30 AM at St. Sylvester, 9:00 AM at St. Basil)

Our goals for this activity are for your family to have a solid understanding of the Immaculate Conception and then create a paper prayer chain for this special feast day. Let's begin on the first goal: understanding the Immaculate Conception.

The Immaculate Conception is one of the most misunderstood doctrine or concepts of the church because many people associate it with virginal conception of Jesus Christ in Mary or the Virginal Birth of our Lord. The reality is this refers to and is in celebration of the special way Mary herself was conceived without original sin. The best way to teach this concept to our children is to break down the words. Immaculate means *pure* or *without blemish* so from the moment was conceived in Saint Anne's womb, she was without blemish or sin. Why is this so important to understand? God preserved Mary from sin so she could be the worthy and holy mother to Jesus! In order to become the mother of Christ, her soul never suffered the effects of original sin.

There are a few ways you can celebrate the Immaculate Conception with your family.

- 1) Create a prayer chain for your family prayer space, near your Advent wreath or a special place in your home. First, You will need a few sheets of **white** paper and markers. Cut the paper into 17 thin inch strips. Make a paper chain with the 17 strips. Add a **white** paper flower for each family member you would like to include. Put the family member's name on the flower. The white chain links and flower are for the purity of Mary when she was conceived. Each day from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8) until Christmas (December 15) say a special prayer to Mary in preparation for the Birth of Jesus. You can pray the Prayer for the Immaculate Conception (which is attached) or a Hail Mary with each link.
- 2) You can use the attached coloring page of Saint Anne to help your child understand the concept of the Immaculate Conception.



As always, please send us a picture of your prayer chain and coloring page or a personal response to the activity to either Carolyn Eisenbarth ceisenbarth@blessedtrinitypgh.net or Elaine Garfold egarfold@blessedtrinitypgh.net . This is how we can keep track of "attendance" and completion of work. Thank you!



Prayer to Mary on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus, we honor you on this special day. You were born to grow up to be the mother of Jesus. What an awesome job! As we remember you today, we ask that you help us to love God with all our hearts. You accepted God's plan for your life without hesitation and we ask that we too will be able to accept God's plan for our lives. In your Son, Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.