



The formal learning we do these months will be reinforced and made part of our lives through our at home ritual. Pope Benedict XVI suggests that the best way to read scripture and to approach the history of salvation is to do it through the Christological key. This means, to come to know Jesus Christ and then knowing Christ to go back and read scripture, tradition, creation, etc. and everything will make sense and find its proper place from that perspective because Jesus is the fullness of revelation.

Our at home ritual this month follows that advice, so we begin by celebrating Advent and preparing our hearts to receive Jesus and come to know him, then as we celebrate Christmas we engage in a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus through out the whole season, through Epiphany and until the Baptism of the Lord. After that, with that Christological key we go back and look at creation and Scripture with the hope that in this way things will fall into place and we will be able to come to know that God that has spared no effort to show us that he is love and wants to be in relationship with us. That we will be able to see God in creation, hear God in Scripture and Tradition and touch God in Jesus, present to us in others, in the poor, in the Sacraments, in the Most Holy Eucharist. That open to God's presence and communication in all these ways, we will come to experience the reality of God with us, always.

## **At Home Ritual**

On November 29 we will begin a new liturgical year and a new liturgical season. The new liturgical season is called Advent, which means "coming," and is composed of 4 weeks of preparation for Christmas. The liturgical color for the season of Advent is purple. We invite you to change the table mat of your sacred space from green (ordinary time) to purple for the Advent season (save the green mat to use in later January).

You can either remove the elements from last month if you do not have much space or if you have the space you can set them aside on the green cloth and place on the purple cloth the new elements you have received.

You will be engaging with them through out the next couple months.



## **November 29 – December 15**

Set the wreath in the center of your purple mat. During each of the days of the weeks of Advent take a couple minutes to light the candle or candles for the week and to say the prayer for that week, provided in the little Advent booklet. Try to be intentional throughout the day focusing on joy, peace, love, hope as instructed each week.

## **December 16-24**

December 16 begins the second part of Advent, a more immediate preparation for Christmas. These two weeks we will ask you to continue to engage with the Advent Wreath as you did November 29-December 15. In addition, we invite you to set up the little manger (crib for baby Jesus) on one corner of the purple cloth. Then set the peg dolls of Mary and Joseph on the opposite corner. Each day after you have lit your Advent candles and said the proper prayer move the peg dolls of Mary and Joseph one step closer to the Manger. As Mary and Joseph journey towards Bethlehem, we too journey to opening our heart and lives for the coming of Jesus.

(Store the baby Jesus peg doll for now.)





## **December 25 to January 10**

Place the baby Jesus peg doll in the Manger on Dec. 25, and until January 9 (Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and the end of the Christmas season) we suggest that each day, either as a family or as individuals, you hold baby Jesus and talk with him. You can tell him about your day, what's worrying you, whatever is on your mind, etc. Just as we can't build and maintain a friendship without talking to the other person, our relationship with God grows and develops with communication. This action of spending some time talking with baby Jesus is meant to help us with this practice.

*"Let us hold the Child Jesus tightly in our arms; let us place ourselves at his service. He is the font of love and serenity. It would be beautiful this season if each day, when we get home, we would go to the nativity scene and kiss the Baby Jesus and say: "Jesus, I want to be humble like you, humble like God", and to ask him for this grace" Pope Francis*



## **January 11- February 14**

During these 6 weeks we will be focusing on Creation: in nature, in others, in us, and on Scripture.

This time of year it might be difficult to find much of interest in nature, so we will bring some of nature into our home and allow ourselves to marvel in the miracle of life contained in a small seed by planting and caring for some beans. As we care for our plants we will also be invited to be attentive to the ongoing work of creation of God in us and others. Just like the beans, growth in us happens slowly and almost imperceptibly, yet God is always at work transforming us into God's likeness.

We will water our beans each day, and we will water ourselves each day as well with the Word of God. As we plant the Word of God in our hearts, we cooperate with God's work in us. A short passage is provided for each week for us to read daily and meditate upon through out the day. Just let this short passage sink in, again and again each week.

To set up this part of the journey: Along with everything else, you were provided with a bag of soil and a bag with beans, along with a small booklet. Take the candles out of your advent wreath candle holders and fill  $\frac{1}{2}$  of each cup with soil, then place 2 beans on top of the soil in each cup and add more soil to fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cup. Water your seeds daily.

During each of the days between January 11 and February 14 take a couple minutes to water your seeds and to say the prayer provided in the booklet and read the passage provided for that week in the booklet. Try to be intentional through out the day focusing on the passage suggested for that week.