

Passing on the Faith

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

www.stjohnsarnold.org

Dear Families,

The Church divides the year into different seasons that emphasize the life of Christ and the life of the Church. Beginning on Sunday December 3rd, 2017, we will enter the season of the Church year called Advent. Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas, and continuing to Epiphany on January 6th, 2018.

The focus of Advent is two-fold. On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world as both God and man so that our sins might be forgiven. On the other hand, we anticipate the day when Jesus will return to Earth and bring an end to this world. Those will be scary days, but we can look forward to the end of the world with hope because through faith in Jesus, the end of this world will mean the beginning of a new life with Christ for eternity.

Advent, then, is a time for us to repent and believe. Knowing that Jesus was born to forgive our sins, we repent (admit our failures to God) and believe that we are forgiven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf. Also, knowing that Jesus is coming back, we repent and believe that when He returns, He will give us eternal life.

Questions to ask your children:

Tell me some things you need to wait for? Are they worth the wait?

Have you ever had to ask someone to forgive you? How did it feel?

How does our family prepare for Christmas? What kind of things do we do?

What are some special things that you look forward to?



Upcoming Topic:

January

Honesty

February

Generosity

March

Lent

Sharing your Faith:

The Advent Wreath -

Each candle on the Advent Wreath has a specific meaning:

- Candle one (blue) represents hope. It is often called the Prophecy candle.
- Candle two (blue) represents preparation. It is often called the Bethlehem candle.
- Candle three (pink) represents joy. It is often called the Shepherds' candle.
- Candle four (blue) represents love. It is often called the Angel candle.
- Candle Five (white) represents Christ. It is placed in the middle of the wreath.

You are your child's best and first teacher.

How can you celebrate Advent? Here are some ideas for your family.

1. One way is to buy or make an Advent wreath to lay on your table. An Advent wreath typically consists of greenery with five candles, three blue, one pink and one white.
2. Another way to celebrate Advent is to create an Advent calendar. Of course, kids love the calendars with chocolate inside, but the ones I'm talking about are a little different, consisting instead of different activities to do each day. For example, one day you might read a particular book or Bible passage, make Christmas cookies for a lonely neighbor, or sing Christmas carols together.
3. You can also celebrate Advent in your home by decorating a Jesse tree. A Jesse tree (named after King David's father) is covered with ornaments that represent people and stories in the Bible. For example, you might hang an ark, a rainbow, or a dove ornament to represent Noah or a harp to represent David. You can use a table-top Christmas tree as your Jesse tree, hanging an ornament each night and reading a passage in the Bible about the characters you have chosen.
4. Make a Prayer Garland: On paper strips, write the name of a family member, friend or ministry. Staple the strips as links into one long garland. Hang the garland in your apartment or house as a decoration. Every day in December, have a family member remove one of the paper strips. As a family, pray for the person or ministry whose name is on that strip of paper.
5. Use Christmas Cards as Prayer Reminders: As Christmas cards arrive during December, place them in a noticeable area. Once a day, pull out one card and pray for that person or family together. You may want to write the person a note signed by your family that says, "We prayed for you today."
6. Sing Christmas Songs and Hymns. Choose a new song to learn every few days.
7. Set up your family Nativity Set. Read the Nativity Story. Add different figures each week and talk about their roles. Add baby Jesus on Christmas Eve.
8. Wrap up many kids books about Christmas (some religious, some secular) with plain tissue paper and put them in a basket. Every night before bed, unwrap a book and together read it as a family.



Bible References:

Matthew 1: 18 – 25

Luke 2: 1 - 20

Christmas Musical

Join us at St. John's Lutheran Church for **Emmanuel, God With Us**, this year's annual Christmas musical. Performances will be held Friday, December 15 at 7 pm, Saturday, December 16 at 7 pm, and Sunday, December 17 at 4 pm. Admission is free and no tickets are required. Doors open one half hour before event.

Christmas Eve, December 24

2:30 pm, Family Service

5 pm, Choirs & Candlelight

7 pm, Choirs & Candlelight

10:30 pm, Special Music & Candlelight

Christmas Day, December 25

10 am