
















# December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Christmas Plant pick up 	4 Wear your OLA gear or blue and white 	5
6 	7	8 Advent Mass 9:00 am  <b>ADVENT</b>	9	10	11 End of Warm, Winter Wear Drive 	12
13 	14 3 <sup>rd</sup> Advent Liturgy 9:00 am MITTEN MONDAY 	15 STEM Day TRENDY TUESDAY  CHRISTMAS WEAR	16 WACKY WINTER HAT  WEDNESDAY	17 THURSDAY TREE DECORATIONS 	18 NO ELP today FABULOUS SWEATER FRIDAY 	19
20 	21	22	23	24	25	26
<b>CHRISTMAS BREAK</b>						
27	28	29	30	31		
<b>CHRISTMAS BREAK</b>						



## DECEMBER 2020

### CALDER'S COMMENTARY

Advent has begun and we are preparing our hearts and homes for the birth of Jesus. With all of the extra measures placed upon us this week, it is easy to be down and frustrated as we may not be able to prepare in ways we have in recent years. I had a great discussion with our grade six class, however, about how the restrictions that have been placed upon us will actually free us this year to prepare in a scaled back way that allows us to truly focus on family and reflect on what the coming of Christ brings to our lives. Despite the changes we are facing, there is a strong sense of HOPE. Hope is an important part of our Advent season. Jesus brings hope to each of us. Additionally, OLA students will focus on Joy and Love for our Act Like Mary challenge this month, finding ways we show these virtues within our school.

Each of these virtues, along with peace, form the weekly foci of the advent wreath. The wreath provides weekly reminders of hope, peace, joy, and love as we approach Christmas. We will work to experience each of these at OLA in the coming weeks as we prepare our virtual Christmas program, collect warm winter wear for those in need, and join together (virtually) to celebrate our school community. I continue to be so proud of our students, staff and families who find ways each day to bring a positive outlook and form practices to achieve their best.

The generosity of our community is so apparent. Thank you to everyone who supported our poinsettia fundraiser and our warm winter wear collection. We are continually looking for ways to help one another and we are succeeding.

Have a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas  
Mrs. Calder



### MAKING OUR MARK: JOURNEY OF AN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE

We are in the second year of our Making Our Mark: Journey of an Intentional Disciple three-year plan. The theme for year 2 is Transformed by the Journey and the calls to action are to Be Grateful and Be Gracious. For the month of December students will be challenged to find examples of what Joy and Love look like here at Our Lady of the Assumption school. This is an amazing way of showing how grateful we are to be a part of this school community. Another way to be grateful during this advent season is to spend some time as a family and reflect on the blessing we have in our lives. A great way to do this is having a conversation about all the significant events that have occurred this year at OLA.

Important dates this month are:

- Nov 29<sup>th</sup> - 1st Sunday of Advent
- Dec 8<sup>th</sup> - The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Dec 25<sup>th</sup> - The Nativity of the Lord

May God bless you all during this advent season

Mr. New

### **ADVENT PRAYER**

God of Love,  
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.  
He is a sign of your love.  
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,  
As we wait and prepare for his coming.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.  
Amen.

Source: Loyola Press

### CHRISTMAS PLANT DELIVERY

Thank you to all the families that supported the Christmas Plant fundraiser. The plants will be ready for pick up on Thursday, December 3. Please call the office at 403-327-5028 when you arrive and we will bring the plants out to you. Please ensure you make arrangements to pick up your order before the weekend as we cannot be responsible for their care.

### WARM WINTER WEAR



This year we are collecting NEW socks, mitts and toques to be donated to "Fill Your Heart Christmas Dinner" at the Soup Kitchen. We will be accepting donations until December 11. The class who brings in the most pairs of socks will receive an ice cream party.

### CHRISTMAS VIDEO

This year each class will be videotaping a short Christmas performance for our OLA community to view. Permission forms have been sent home and need to be returned by December 4. If you choose not to sign the consent form, your child will not be in the recording. Further information will be forthcoming once the details have been finalized.

### LOST AND FOUND

Our blue lost and found bin is located at the bottom of the stairs near the east entrance to the school. If your child is missing any clothes, outerwear, shoes, or lunch kit, please have them check out the box. Please remember to label all your child's belongings with both their first and last names so that items can be returned if they are misplaced. Many students have the same boots, so labelling these items will cause less confusion. We also strongly urge that children take home all their winter outerwear for use over the Christmas break.



### ONLINE LEARNING

Our Superintendent, Mr. Ken Sampson, emailed families on Thursday November 26 about the new regulations and restrictions set forth by the Alberta Government. Please take some time to review what these mean for your family. The most notable change for elementary families is for the week of January 4-8. This week will be at-home, online learning led by your child's teacher and attendance is mandatory. We will be preparing students in the coming weeks for this week of online learning. I encourage you to make sure you have what you need to support your child(ren) in their learning during that week. Should you have any questions, I know that the teachers, and myself, would be most happy to address them before Christmas break begins on Dec. 18.

## REMINDERS

- **MASKS** are mandatory for all students in grades 4 – 6. Please ensure your child comes to school with a mask every day.
- **WATER BOTTLES** – as our water fountains are only used as filling stations, we ask that you send a water bottle with your child.
- **NO NUTS PLEASE!** There are some students in our building who have a potentially life threatening allergy to peanuts and nuts. We ask for your cooperation in avoiding sending peanut butter, Nutella or other products which may contain nuts.
- **SPOONS AND FORKS** are not provided by the school. If you are sending lunch that requires utensils, please remember to send them along.



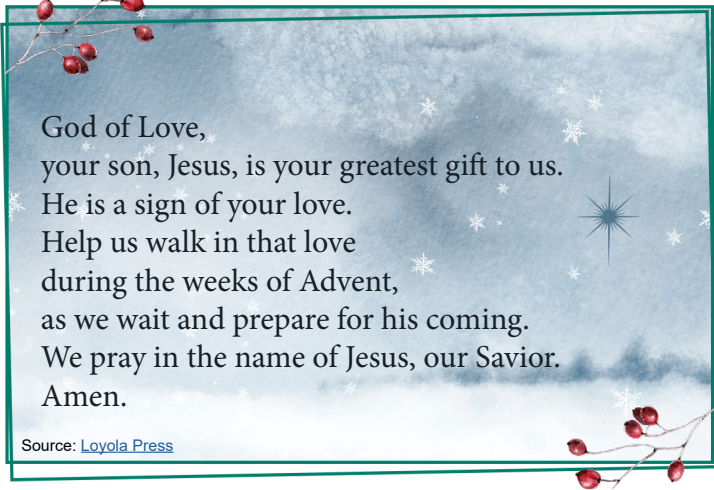
Transformed by the Journey

# DECEMBER

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us...*  
Isaiah 9:6a

## Special Days to Remember Month of the Immaculate Conception

- 8 Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 19 Christmas Break Begins
- 25 Nativity of the Lord
- 27 Feast of the Holy Family



God of Love,  
your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.  
He is a sign of your love.  
Help us walk in that love  
during the weeks of Advent,  
as we wait and prepare for his coming.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.  
Amen.

Source: [Loyola Press](#)

Click [here](#) for a printable version of this prayer.

## Be Gracious

Is there any time of year when we feel more joy than during the season of Advent as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas? Joy is one of the Fruits of the Spirit and is a gift from God — it makes us feel so good! When we feel good, we do good; when we do good, it reminds others of what joy feels like, inspiring them to do the same.

Jesus is our Saviour who brings light into the darkness of this world and Advent is a time of preparation as we wait for Christ's coming. During this season, families are encouraged to remember "the reason for the season" and to bring light into the world in their own small ways. What a perfect time to help your children think about ways to be gracious to others through simple acts of charity and kindness. Consider putting this [Advent calendar](#) on your fridge and encourage everyone in your family to act with graciousness each day as you prepare yourselves for the celebration of Christ's birth.



## Catholic Education

As you look ahead to the Christmas break, please remember that if you have children in Grades 1-7, you have access to a home portal on our [Growing in Faith Growing in Christ website](#).

There are many wonderful videos and stories to enjoy that will help your child understand the meaning of Advent and Christmas. Please check with your child's teacher if you have forgotten the username/password.



## Be Grateful

If you recall the first chapter of the book of Genesis, God was delighted with his created world. "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (1:31) In the season of Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of God the Son, we are reminded that there is goodness all around us. And that is something to be joyful about!

An important question to ask ourselves in the month of December is, "Do we truly experience God's joy in our daily lives?" Do we see it in our everyday moments or are we expecting trumpets announcing a big "God moment" before we pay attention? Certainly our preparations for Christmas will look different this year, but maybe that's okay. Maybe it's the year to be a little less busy and a little more still — could that perhaps be a gift for us to be grateful for? Have we learned in the past few months to appreciate the goodness that is all around us? Is God giving us a nudge to spend a little more time as a family doing simple things this month to really enjoy the season of Advent with that bit of extra time on our hands. Rather than attending to all of our usual holiday activities, perhaps we could spend more time simply cooking or baking together, playing a board game in the evening, or going for a walk and enjoying hot chocolate with our family.

This month, keep your family focused on the joy that comes from seeing everything that God created for us to enjoy and recognize that indeed, it is very good. Let us be grateful for all of our blessings and let us rejoice!



## Faith & Family

A kind word goes a long way! How can we help our children feel a deep, true sense of joy? Give them opportunities to be the face of God and show kindness to others. This month, have your children show their appreciation to those who have been taking such good care of others during the pandemic. Have them make a Christmas card with a heartfelt message of gratitude for those who serve — our teachers, our health care providers and health care staff, our first responders, our clergy, our grocery store staff, our mail carriers and our delivery people. These cards will give a much needed lift to folks who are undoubtedly feeling the strain of serving others during these challenging times. Teach your children that by sharing their gifts, they will bring some joy to others!



We hope you are enjoying the Mass Transit Cards to discuss the Sunday Gospel with your family. To access the December cards, click [here](#).

Resources: *Everyday Stewardship - Reflections for the Journey* by Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS  
*Experiencing God in the Ordinary* by William A. Barry, SJ  
*Living Stewardship* by Darrin J.G. Gurr

*"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

(Psalm 118:24)



# How Celebrating a Good Advent Gets Families Ready for Christmas

by Fr. Kevin Tumback, All Saints Parish

Advent (a time of preparation for Christmas) takes little thought and some planning, but can lead to a more joyful Christmas and one more centered on the *Reason for the Season*. We sometimes forget that the only reason we get this holiday is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. So how can we put our focus on Jesus?

**1. ADVENT WREATH.** The Advent wreath is a circle of greenery that signifies the eternity of God (the Alpha and the Omega). Decorated with 3 purple candles and 1 pink candle, it counts down the 4 weeks till Christmas. Some will place a white candle in the middle that is lit on Christmas day, or they will replace all 4 candles with white candles, which are all lit for the 12 days of Christmas. Some people will also place a small crib in the middle as a reminder of who we are waiting for. The greenery in the wreath represents the new life that comes to us in Jesus.



**2. CHRISTMAS TREE.** Many people put up their Christmas tree the 1st day of Advent, some put the Christmas tree up on the Feast of St. Nicholas on December 6th, and some will wait till just before Christmas as they want their tree to stay up for the 12 days of Christmas.



**3. SHOES AT THE DOOR.** In some traditions beginning on December 6th, shoes are placed at the door and small gifts are placed in the shoes each night leading up to the great celebration of Christmas.



**4. DOOR DECORATION.** A tiny or large decorated wreath adorns the front door, announcing to visitors and passers-by the anticipation of Christmas that is coming. It provides a sense of joy so it is often decorated with lively colors, balls and ribbons.



**5. CRIB.** Many will assemble a crib inside the front door. It's a simple depiction of the first Christmas in Bethlehem. Some will put out a complete Nativity scene and some will move Mary and Joseph around the house as if travelling to Bethlehem.



**6. CANDIES.** There are many traditional candies associated with Christmas and for some just getting the family together to make the homemade sweets adds to the joy and anticipation.



**7. DECKING THE HALLS.** Putting up tinsel and lights and all that goes with that is part of the anticipation of the Christmas joy. For some, they will put it all up at once, while others will have different elements that go up each week of Advent until Christmas arrives.



**8. CHRISTMAS CARDS.** This may be an old tradition but in these challenging times, this might be a time to send people something special like a Christmas card. In some ways it is like opening a gift.



**9. CARDS LEAD TO LETTERS.** Yes there is email and texting and/and/and. But again in these trying times a handwritten or even computer generated letter coming in the "snail mail" can truly help others prepare for the season of Christmas.

**10. 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS.** Which has nothing to do with Advent, but beginning on Christmas day and each day for the next 11 of the 12 days of Christmas, gifts are placed somewhere in the house reminding us that Christmas is not about one day, but rather our entire lives.



# 40 Activities to do Together as a Family

## INDOOR AT-HOME

1. HAVE A MOVIE MARATHON
2. BAKE COOKIES
3. DO A PUZZLE
4. BUILD WITH LEGO
5. DRAW, PAINT, COLOR
6. MAKE YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS FOR THE TREE
7. JOURNAL
8. WATCH FUNNY ANIMAL VIDEOS
9. BUILD A FORT
10. DRINK A CUP OF HOT COCO
11. PLAY A CARD OR BOARD GAME
12. HAVE A DANCE PARTY
13. MAKE BRACELETS
14. LOOK AT PHOTOGRAPHS
15. CALL, TEXT, VIDEO CHAT A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND
16. DO SOMETHING KIND
17. PLAY WITH PET
18. MAKE HOMEMADE PLAYDOUGH
19. PLAY A GAME OF I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE...
20. READ OUT LOUD

## WINTER OUTDOOR

21. TAKE A DRIVE TO LOOK AT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS IN OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS
22. GO FOR A WALK
23. BUILD A SNOWMAN
24. FIND SHAPES IN THE CLOUDS
25. THROW, KICK, BOUNCE A BALL
26. PLAY OUTSIDE- CREATE YOUR OWN GAME
27. HAVE A SCAVENGER HUNT
28. SING AS LOUD AS YOU CAN
29. TAKE TURNS CAPTURING PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS
30. BIRD WATCH
31. WATCH THE SUNSET
32. BUILD A SNOW FORT
33. GO SLEDDING
34. CATCH SNOWFLAKES
35. HAVE A WINTER PICNIC
36. MAKE A SNOW ANGEL
37. WRITE YOUR NAME IN THE SNOW
38. BLOW BUBBLES AND WATCH THEM FREEZE
39. MAKE DIFFERENT TRACKS IN THE SNOW
40. HAVE A CONTEST TO SEE WHO CAN THROW THE FURTHEST SNOWBALL

