

CGS FAMILY

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Volume II, Guide Number 4, December 19, 2021



Question of the Week

What can I do to show the love of Jesus to
my family and friends as we prepare for
the coming of Jesus Christ?

www.cgsgcc.church

Welcome

**HELLO,
CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD FAMILY!**



Welcome to our weekly CGS Guide that helps our parish families to grow in knowledge of the faith and deepen our relationship with Jesus as his disciples. As we encounter Jesus, we come to know him, love him, and serve him so that we can be reasonably happy in this life and happy with him forever in heaven.



This Week

Sharing in Mary's Mission

In today's Gospel, we hear about what happened after the angel Gabriel had announced to Mary that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, and she agreed. In her culture, she could have been stoned to death for being pregnant and unmarried, yet she knows she has been given a special mission from God and so she responds in faith, reaching out to another who will understand her mission, as the angel told her. When she is called to serve the Lord, she moves to action; she and her cousin Elizabeth show us an example of different generations serving the same mission in different ways. Mary reminds us to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives and respond with faith and trust in God.

We, too, can recognize the gift of faith as the greatest gift for difficult times. We are reminded not to get trapped in what we see, whether life difficulties or shiny material gifts, but reach out in faith to others and rejoice in relationships of loving support. We are reminded that Mary offers tender support to everyone who accepts their part in the mission of Christ, like Elizabeth did. Mary shows us the power of surrendering to God's will as a way to bring unexplainable joy!

Ivana T. Meshell

For questions, comments, and feedback, please contact us at

DISCIPLESHIP@CGSCC.CHURCH



The Holy Mass

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. (Cf. SC #10)

Why go to Mass?

Christ the Good Shepherd Mass Schedule

Find Mass Anywhere

This season, we are exploring the Big Idea

Who is Jesus Christ?

Forth Sunday of Advent readings and podcasts

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

First Reading: Micah 5:1-4a

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Additional options for studying and discussing the Word of God.

Opening the Word by FORMED

Sunday Connection by Loyola Press

Children's Liturgy of the Word by CatholicTV.org

WE LEARN & BECOME DISCIPLES TOGETHER

Question of the Week

What can I do to show the love of Jesus to my family and friends
as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ?

Opening Prayer

CONNECT with our GOD

- Let's start with the The Sign of Cross.
- In your own words, ask the Holy Spirit to be present as we gather so share our faith (Prayer to the Holy Spirit).
- Listen to the Lord speaking to you as someone reads out loud the Gospel for this week.
- Listen to each other as everyone shares what in the Gospel caught their attention.
- Pray Hail Mary and the "Glory be..."
For more on how to manage a group discussion, [click here](#).



Step One

CONNECT with our daily LIVES

Who are the people you will visit and celebrate with at Christmas?

Name some new ways we visit with family and friends (other than in person)? What is good and what is not so good about these various methods?

Popular media guides us to think of expressing love through giving expensive gifts. What is your opinion about this?

Getting Started

How to use
this Guide.

Why are we
doing this?

Step Two

CONNECT with Scripture and Tradition

In the HOLY SCRIPTURE we read about...

- Love one another as I have loved you John. 13:34-35
- Likemindedness in Jesus Christ builds unity between people. Philippians 2:1-11
- Loving unity is expressed through how we act daily. Ephesians 4:25-32

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we read:

- To love is to will the good of another. 1766
- Jesus makes charity the new commandment 1823
- The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy 1829

As a Domestic Church (your household) or Small Faith Group, pray and read through some of the suggested Scriptures & Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) references.

Discussion Questions

1. When Mary heard her cousin Elizabeth was pregnant, she went “in haste” to help her. Who are the people in your life you travel a long distance to offer loving support? How might we think of forgiving someone as a way to travel a long distance to help someone?
2. Think of all the diverse family and friends you will be with in celebration of Christmas. How does Jesus' New Commandment to “Love one another as I have loved you” guide you for these times?
3. Mary carried Jesus in her womb to Elizabeth. How are you called to make Jesus present at gatherings of your family, friends, or coworkers? How might you together with your family and friends bring the love and support of Jesus Christ to the poor and vulnerable?

[Go Deeper](#) if you want more Questions, Scriptures, and Catechism References.

Reflection Question

Do I show the love of Jesus Christ to my family and friends? Do I practicing self-giving love, forgiveness, forbearance, and kindness toward all I encounter on my life's journey?

RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

For related information, activities, and age-appropriate resources, turn to the *Resources for All Ages* section of this Guide. You may use as many or as few as you want to. Adapt to your situation and your household. You can even spread these activities over the span of the entire week.

Step Three

CONNECT with OTHERS... **Commit // Action**

What is one thing you are willing to do to act in loving support of your family and all those you will visit with in celebration of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?



Practical Activities

For the Individual

Enjoy beautiful music with family and friends at Christmas Eve Mass

CGS has a couple of Masses on Christmas Eve, but the one at 6pm will have Youth Orchestra playing. It is a beautiful way to start Christmas with your family and friends.

For Couples

Visit with an elderly person or an elderly couple

Think of people on your street, or contact your local retirement center about a person or a couple that has no visitors. Agree on how you might bring this person/ couple joy and love of the coming Christ. Ask to visit. Spend time listening and rejoicing in the blessings of the perspective of an older generation.

For the Domestic Church

Prepare children and teens to act out the story of Christ's birth

Help them be imaginative in improvise with the supplies they can find in the house as they follow the story from Luke 2:1-20. When you gather with family and friends one of the parents read the story from the Bible as the children act. Have fun!

Missionary Mindset

Go Christmas caroling with your CGS FAMILY!

We will meet in the Social Hall on **Sunday, December 19 at 5:00pm** to go caroling with our choir at the homes of some of our home-bound parishioners, afterwards we will get together for hot chocolate and songs of praise! You will need to drive your own car and parents must accompany their children. Hope to see many of us there!

Closing Prayer

- We sign ourselves with the Sign of Cross.
- According to what we reflected on, or whatever is in my heart share a petition, at the end we all say: **Lord hear our prayer.**
- Then we can pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory be...
- As we finish, let us share a sing of peace with each other.

An Advent Prayer by Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus,
Master of both the light and the darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.
We who have so much to do
seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.
We who are anxious over many things
look forward to your coming among us.
We who are blessed in so many ways
long for the complete joy of your kingdom.
We whose hearts are heavy
seek the joy of your presence.
We are your people, walking in darkness,
yet seeking the light.
To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"
Amen.

AT THE END OF THE LESSON OR END OF THE WEEK

From what you have learned, how would you now answer the Question of the Week?

**What can I do to show the love of Jesus to my family and friends
as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ?**



RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

POINTS OF UNDERSTANDING

Points of Understanding clearly state the Church's teaching. They can be used as a tool for conversation starters, family discussions, and as a means to unite the family or small

Faith Group under one theme. If this interests, you:

[Points of Understanding for this week](#)

[More information on using the Points of Understanding](#)

1. General Resources

The Holy Bible

[Online Bible via the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\)](#)

If you don't know much about the Bible or want to learn more: [Scripture Support](#)

Recommended Print Bibles

For Children: [Catholic Children's Bible](#) by St. Mary's Press. Purchase [directly from the publisher](#) or look online for other vendors.

For for Teens/Youth [Catholic Youth Bible](#) by St. Mary's Press. Purchase [directly from the publisher](#) or look online for other vendors.

For Families: [Family Connections Bible](#) by St. Mary's Press. Purchase directly from the publisher, or look online for [other vendors](#).

Catholics use the **New American Bible Revised Edition** (NABRE) as the translation for Mass readings. There are many acceptable versions of NABRE ([learn more](#)) as well as [other approved translations](#). You may purchase from any vendor and we do have some basic editions on hand at the parish office at no charge—available upon request.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

[Online Catechism](#) via the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

NEW! [Simplified version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)

If you don't know much about the Catechism or want to learn more: [Catechism Support](#)

Common Prayers and Formulas to Learn by Heart

[Familiar prayers](#) and a [chart showing at what age level they should be learned](#).

Formed

Our parish subscribes to a library of online resources called Formed. It is free for you to use. Register at www.formed.org - (use Parish Code: WXF2JZ) Need help? [Watch this video](#).

2. Age-Specific Resources

Early Childhood (Ages 3-5)

"**Seeds**" by Pflaum Publishing. Reserve your hard copies by contacting Jackie in the parish office; pick up at your convenience.

Catholic Kids Media // **Messiah! Advent 4C** --video (6:03)

Strong Catholic Family Faith // **Christmas for Families** (an excellent collection of activities and resources for the whole family).

Childhood (Elementary, Grades 1-5)

Grades K-1: "**Promise**" by Pflaum Publishing and

Grades 2,3 & 4: "**Good News**" by Pflaum Publishing--Reserve your hard copies by contacting Jackie in the parish office; pick up at your convenience.

Strong Catholic Family Faith // **Christmas for Families** (an excellent collection of activities and resources for the whole family).

Early Adolescence (Junior High, Grades 6-8)

Grades 5 & 6: "**Venture**" by Pflaum Publishing and

Grades 7 & 8: "**Visions**" by Pflaum Publishing.

Reserve your hard copies by contacting Jackie in the parish office; pick up at your convenience.

Strong Catholic Family Faith // **Christmas for Families** (an excellent collection of activities and resources for the whole family).

Adolescence (High School, Grades 9-12)

Life Teen // Go Home and Love Your Family--suggestions for action written by Nayeli Alvarez, a college student.

Strong Catholic Family Faith // **Christmas for Families** (an excellent collection of activities and resources for the whole family).

Adulthood

Everyday Power // 7 Ways to Treat Your Family and Friends with Unconditional Love--article

US Catholic Bishops // Follow the Way of Love: A Pastoral Message on How to Love Your Family --article.

Domestic Church // The Domestic Church--video (4:13)

Strong Catholic Family Faith // **Christmas for Families** (an excellent collection of activities and resources for the whole family).

ATTENTION PARENTS!

Our new season of Faith Formation has begun with the First Sunday of Advent. Age specific books and materials by **Pflaum Publishing** Company for early childhood through 8th grade are now available for your use together with this Guide.

Reserve your copies by contacting Jackie Coba in the parish office or by email.
346.236.6459 ex. 342
jcoba@cgscc.church

Counseling, Grief Support & Spiritual Direction

Our parish offers [Rejoice Counseling](#) for individuals and families for a variety of issues and needs. We also offer [Grief Support](#) ministry for those who have lost loved ones and [Spiritual Direction](#) for anyone interested. Follow the links or inquire through the parish office.

Music to Move You

Casting Crowns // [Is There Room in Your Heart for God?](#)--video (4:27)

Francesca LaRosa // Psalm 80 - Lord, Make Us Turn To You -video (5:04)

Jamie Biller // Hail Mary - Gentle Woman -video (4:30)

Sunday 7pm Choir // Come Jesus, Prince of Peace -video (3:50)

Agnes Choo // O come divine Messiah -video (1:59)

Donna Cori // O come, o come Emmanuel -video (3:06)

Sacred Art to Inspire You!

COVER ART FEATURED: Pontormo (1494-1557) [Visitation](#), c.1529, Oil on Wood; from the Church of San Francesco e Michele, Carmignano, Italy.

[Loyola Press](#) // [Arts and Faith: Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle C](#) -video (2:59)

[Unknown author](#) // [The Embrace of Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary, 1191, St. George Church, North Macedonia](#), source [Wikimedia](#)

[Giotto](#) // [The Visitation, 1310s](#), source [Wikimedia](#)

[Vittore Carpaccio](#) // [Visitation, 1504- 1506](#), source [Wikimedia](#)

[Carl Heinrich Bloch](#) // [The Meeting of Mary and Elisabeth, 1866](#), source [Wikimedia](#)

3. Sacramental Resources

The [sacraments section of our website](#) is being completely updated. You will find helpful material is being placed on our website beginning the week of December 20.

As the information is uploaded in the coming days, you can go to the sacraments page of our website and browse for the most current information. Questions may be directed to Selma DeMarco, Associate Director of Sacraments and Discipleship.

WE ARE THE CHURCH

What Makes us Catholic?

People often discard Christmas trees only one day after Christmas.

By Epiphany of the Lord on January 6th, barely anyone has the Christmas lights on. It is as if Christmas is over, but that is not how Catholics celebrate Christmas: we celebrate beginning with vigil Masses on Christmas Eve, December 24th and conclude on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 9th 2022. In most parts of the world, the tree remains until Epiphany or the "12th night" (January 6), which is where we get our "12 days of Christmas." During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him. He was born to die for us. [LEARN MORE](#)



HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD PRESENT AND ACTIVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK?

Word of the Week - Maranatha

An Aramaic expression occurring in St. Paul (1 Corinthians 16:22) in the verse "If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse on him. Maran atha." The Christian Fathers understood the term to mean "Our Lord has come." But more probably it means what St. John has at the close of the New Testament, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). (source Catholic Culture)

Saints of the Month learn about them!

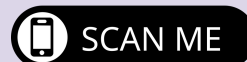
More for your Domestic Church

A Domestic Church is your household of believers in Jesus Christ. View a short video on what is the Domestic Church. See also this reference in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: CCC 1655-1858 and our Glossary of Terms. There is so much at CGS for your Domestic Church! See our website, social media pages, YouTube, and this week "**FLOCKNOTE**" for all things CGS!

"Faith Groups" on our Website

Find resources for your family, including how to use this Guide, family traditions from other parishioners, FAQs, how to use the Points of Understanding, a Glossary of Terms and more. Visit cgscdogh.org/faith-groups OR scan the QR code on the right with your smart phone.

Join a small Faith Group in our parish. Contact discipleship@cgscchurch.org





Our Mission as a Roman Catholic Community is to proclaim the teachings of Jesus Christ as declared in the scriptures and shown in the sacred tradition of the church. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to know, love, and serve God and our neighbors.

WE WANT OUR PARISHIONERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS GUIDE!

How is this Guide working for you and your family?

Show us what your family is doing with these Guides!

Share an idea, a resource or picture/video of what you are doing in your Domestic Church.

DISCIPLESHIP@CGSCC.CHURCH

BECOMING OUR "BEST PARISH EVER!"



Text CGS to 84576 to join us on Flocknote
You will receive emails & texts from CGS



CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



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The contents of this Guide are in accordance with the teachings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Curriculum Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston under the pastoral care of Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop.

What can I do to show the love of Jesus to my family and friends
as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ?



ON BEHALF OF FR. JAMES BURKART,
OUR PASTOR, AND OUR PARISH STAFF

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOUR DOMESTIC CHURCH!

KNOW THAT YOU REMAIN ALWAYS IN OUR PRAYERS
PLEASE KEEP US & YOUR FELLOW PARISHIONERS IN YOURS.

MAY THE PEACE OF JESUS CHRIST BE ALWAYS WITH US!