

Christmas Traditions for Children



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The Christmas Story

Long ago a young woman named Mary lived in a small town called Nazareth. She was good and holy and filled with the love of God. One day, while she was praying, an Angel came to her. He said, "Hail, Mary. You are full of grace. God has chosen you to be the mother of His son. You are to name the baby Jesus." Mary said to the angel, "I shall do what God wants." Then the Angel left her.

Not long after, Mary married a man named Joseph. He was a good and holy man. Joseph was a carpenter, and Mary would come visit him. Every day he worked hard in his shop where he made things out of wood.

Each day at home, the candles are lit, perhaps before the evening meal – one candle the first week, and then another each succeeding week until December 25th. The rose candle is usually lit on the third Sunday of Advent. As the candles are lit, the following prayers may be said:

DAILY PRAYERS FOR LIGHTING

THE ADVENT WREATH

FIRST WEEK: O Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, desire of every nation, Savior of all peoples, come and dwell among us.

SECOND WEEK: O King of all nations, Jesus Christ, only joy of every heart, come and save your people.

THIRD WEEK: O Key of David, Jesus Christ, the gates of heaven open at your command, come and let your people free.

FOURTH WEEK: O Wisdom, holy Word of God, Jesus Christ, all things are in your hands, come and show us the way to salvation.

CHRISTMAS EVERGREENS AND FLOWERS

Centuries ago Christians brought plants and flowers into the celebration of Christmas, for did not Christ come to uphold the dignity of all God's creation? The natural world, as well as humans, Angels, and animals, should have a part in welcoming Him.

The evergreens, from ancient times symbols of life and eternity, have always had a prominent place in Christian celebrations. Holly, with its green leaves, its prickly points, and red berries, suggested that the Child born in the manger would wear a crown of thorns and shed drops of blood. Mistletoe, long associated in the pre-Christian world with healing, became a symbol of the healing power of Christ.

The poinsettia, from Central America, with its bright, starlike flowers, is a natural reminder of the Star of Bethlehem. Other plants that bloom during this season are images also of the Root of David that flowered with new life.