

ABSOLUTELY ADVENT!

A TEEN'S JOURNEY
TO CHRISTMAS
2024★

For Teens



Here's the big question

WHAT DOES CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING HAVE TO DO WITH ADVENT?

During Advent we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus into this world—at the first Christmas, today, and at the end of time. His coming into the world, the Incarnation, means Jesus coming as a human being. Jesus is both God and human. Therefore, all of the principles of Catholic social teaching once affected Jesus just as they affect us.

As we prepare over these next four weeks for the birth of Jesus in our world, we have a great opportunity to examine how we are preparing ourselves, each other, and our planet for Jesus. How are we caring for one another, especially the poor and vulnerable? And how are we caring for God's Creation?

There is work to do so we can welcome Jesus into a world marked by the principles of Catholic social teaching. **Absolutely Advent** will help!

The season of Advent includes four Sundays. Beginning today, you are invited to spend the next four weeks reflecting on your faith in God and the Church. But you will also be challenged to put that faith into action by engaging in activities that, in small, simple ways, will help to create a better world. It's time to live out your faith with

Absolutely Advent!

EACH DAY YOU WILL

- ☐ Read a Scripture passage taken from the readings of the day.
- ☐ Reflect on the Scripture with journal questions that relate to your own experiences.
- ☐ Engage in activities that make the Scripture come alive for you.
- ☐ Reflect on how to put Catholic social teaching into action in your family, school, parish, and community.

★ **Centesimus Annus.** This Latin title means “hundredth year.” Saint John Paul II wrote this encyclical letter in 1991 to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the first social encyclical.

★ **The Challenge of Peace.** The U.S. Catholic bishops wrote this pastoral letter on war and peace in 1983, in the midst of the nuclear arms race.

★ **Gaudium et Spes.** This document's title means *Joy and Hope*, with the subtitle *The Church in the Modern World*. The Vatican II Council Fathers wrote this document in 1965, at the end of Vatican II.

★ **Economic Justice for All.** The U.S. Catholic bishops wrote this pastoral letter on Catholic social teaching and the U.S. economy in 1986.

★ **On Social Concern.** Saint John Paul II wrote this encyclical in 1987 to express his concerns about the condition of the human person in modern society.



First Monday of Advent

DECEMBER 2

In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains...
Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

« ISAIAH 2:1-5 »

War and peace are huge, but they can be encountered on a smaller scale; for example, at school. Our Catholic social teachings include the **right** to an education and a safe environment. But all **rights** carry **responsibilities**.

Consider these rights. **Write an "S" before rights you need to survive, and a "C" before rights you need to be a contributing member of society.**

___ **EMPLOYMENT**

___ **BASIC HEALTH CARE**

___ **FOOD**

___ **SHELTER**

___ **EDUCATION**

___ **CLOTHING**

___ **SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

___ **GOODS TO SUPPORT A FAMILY**

What personal responsibility do you take or will you take to insure that you and your classmates have a safe school environment?

The Second Week of Advent

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of the community of marriage and the family. **Gaudium et Spes, #47**

The first and fundamental structure for a “human ecology” is the family, founded on marriage, in which the mutual gift of self as husband and wife creates an environment in which children can be born and grow up. **Centesimus Annus, #39**



Communication IS THE KEY!

Communication breakdowns usually spell trouble for families. Good communication, an emphasis on faith, and the practice of religion are also important.

GROWN-ISH. BOB’S BURGERS. THE CONNORS. These TV families may or may not be the model families for the 21st century, but the media shows us some characteristics of modern families and the problems they face.

- Whether or not we like it, we are all born into a family.
- Families come in all shapes and sizes.
- There are many stresses on today’s families including:
 - » a limited amount of time to spend together
 - » high prices that limit family income
 - » the mobility of families, which causes a lack of connection to the extended family
 - » many more!



What does your family look like?	PARENT(S)	SIBLING(S)	OTHER(S)
Take a minute to write down who is in your family and what you value most about each person.			

Five Ways to Celebrate Rights and Responsibilities

1 When you purchase a new item of clothing, donate an item from your closet.

2 Serve a meal at a local shelter or community meal program.

3 Look for someone who is new to your school. Who is sitting alone at the lunch table? Welcome the stranger.

4 Visit an elderly person in a local nursing home.

5 Help someone at your school who is having trouble with homework. Serve as a tutor.



Our Role Model in Faith

DOROTHY DAY



Dorothy Day was born in 1897 in Brooklyn, New York. After struggling to find herself and her true calling in life, she met Peter Maurin, an activist who worked on behalf of the poor. Dorothy and Peter started a newspaper that provided a voice to the voiceless—*The Catholic Worker*, founded in 1933. During the Great Depression, Dorothy and Peter opened a House of Hospitality, which provided meals to poor people in New York City. More of these houses opened, and some developed into communal farms.

Dorothy Day is considered one of the twentieth century's greatest advocates for the poor. She opened her home to those in need. Finally, she became a great peace advocate, especially during World War II and the Vietnam War. Dorothy Day truly lived the message of Jesus from Matthew 25. She also gave us a great example of the principle of rights and responsibilities.

Let us pray

Provider God, you give us what we need to live. Yet, you remind us that we have brothers and sisters who do not have enough to eat or drink, who do not have clothes to wear, and who do not have shelter for their heads.

You challenge us to see our responsibility as Christians to feed, house, visit, and welcome. Give us the strength and courage to accept your challenge. We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord and companion. Amen.



Fourth Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 22

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb.

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

« LUKE 1:39-42 »



This passage tells the story of two very happy women. Because of the angel's communications, they anticipated each other's good news and were spending time together.

It's good manners to let a person know when you're coming for a visit. **Write the text message that Mary might have sent when she set out from Nazareth on her way to visit Elizabeth.**

Recall a recent visit of a guest to your home. Write about this visit. How did you and your guest greet one another? What did you talk about?



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