



Religious Education Program

DECEMBER 2011



St. Alphonsus Parish



POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your Christmas preparations and to ready your hearts for his arrival.
2. To help your family stay focused on Jesus during the holidays.
3. To replace stress and busyness with calm and peace, so you can treasure family time.

How to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas

From At Home With Our Faith



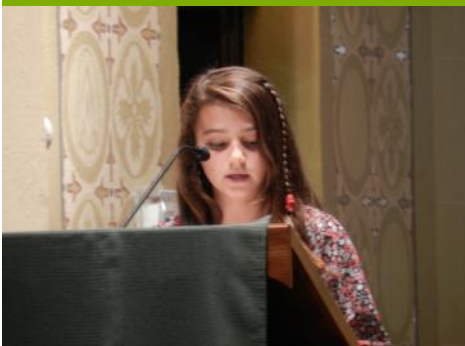
This year, hand on heart, I saw Christmas decorations for sale on October 1. When I was little, we didn't even start thinking about Christmas until after Thanksgiving.

My family would spend most of Advent getting ready. We'd shop for a tree, pull decorations down out of the attic, stock up on wrapping paper, and make lists for Santa. Most years the grownups would gather for a Christmas Eve party, and we kids would struggle to stay awake late into the night.

At the end of the evening, we'd bundle up against the cold and drive over to the church for Midnight Mass. Early the next morning my brothers and I would clatter down the stairs to the living room to tear into our presents. And then Christmas was over. For the next week or so, we played with our new toys and waited for school to begin again.

In the church calendar, however, Christmas does not end on Christmas Day. It is only the beginning. In an earlier time Christmas lasted for 12 days—a tradition from which we get the famous Christmas song.

(cont. next page)



THE MASS IS PART OF OUR CURRICULUM



We are assisting you in teaching the Catholic way of life... which has the Mass as its source and summit.

RE class is not a replacement for participating in the Mass.

RE BAKE SALE

To benefit the
Catechist Appreciation Fund
Dec. 18th after all Masses
in the Church Hall



Celebrating the 12 Days of Christmas (cont.)

While engaging in Christmas festivities, start a conversation by asking these questions:

1. What are your favorite Christmas traditions, and why? How do our traditions help us remember the real meaning of Christmas?
2. What are some ways we can add service and outreach to our Christmas celebrations?
3. How would you explain Christmas to someone who didn't know anything about Jesus?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Add a meaningful new twist to your Christmas celebrations by trying these ideas:

• **Unwrap the Story**—Start a new tradition as you unpack your family's crèche, or nativity scene. Let each person pull out one or two wrapped figures without peeking to see what's inside. Take turns unwrapping figures. When someone adds a figure to the scene, have him or her say a prayer of thanks for the role that figure played in Jesus' birth. For example, the person holding the stable might say, "Thank you that there was at least a stable nearby where Jesus could be born." The person with a shepherd might say, "Thank you that the shepherds went and told lots of people about Jesus' birth."



After the scene is complete, discuss the role we all can play in preparing for Jesus' birth and in telling people why Jesus came to earth.

• **Parable Ornaments**—Make a different ornament each week that reflects a parable from the Bible. For week one, pour salt into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 5:13). For week two, pour mustard seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 17:20). For week three, tie Goldfish crackers in netting (Matthew 13:47). For week four, pour sunflower seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 13:37). Print the verses and tie them to the ornaments. Then hang the ornaments on a small Christmas tree as a powerful reminder of Jesus' life and teachings.



MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: *The Adventures of Tintin*

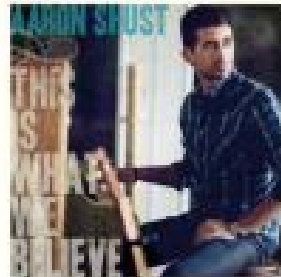
Genre: Animated adventure

Rating: PG (for adventure-action violence, some drunkenness and brief smoking)

Cast: Jamie Bell, Daniel Craig

Synopsis: In this motion-capture film based on comic books, a boy and a captain go on a treasure hunt to find a sunken ship.

Our Take: With Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson at the helm, *Tintin* is being hailed as a "must-see" family movie this Christmas.



MUSIC

Artist: Aaron Shust

Album: *This Is What We Believe*

Artist Info: Shust, a church worship leader, won several Dove Awards for his 2005 folk-driven album *Anything Worth Saying*.

Summary: The singer-songwriter's fourth album contains several heartfelt worship anthems, including "My Hope Is in You." The moving video is available on YouTube.

Our Take: Shust's powerful tunes and lyrics will help listeners of all ages celebrate God's power and love.



CULTURE & TRENDS

- Last year, 36% of kids ages 10 or 11 owned a cell phone. That number has more than doubled since 2005. Boys are more likely than girls to perform "data-intensive" activities with their phones, such as browsing the Web and downloading games. (Mediamark, NY Times)

- Before heading to the ER with their sick children, more parents are now logging in. One in eight parents now checks the Internet for medical information before plunking down an emergency-room copay. (Reuters)

QUICK STATS

- Only 4% of adults ages 25 to 34 in the U.K. believe that the most important part of Christmas is the religious meaning. (Church of England Newspaper)



- According to a new study, preschoolers who have trouble resisting temptation and delaying gratification are more likely than their more-patient peers to become adults who lack self-control. (HealthDay)

WHAT WOULD JESUS WATCH? (WWJW)

The big cinema and television corporations, about twenty or so of them, reject having the name Jesus mentioned within the movies and programs they produce, unless, of course, it is used as a swear word. The wildly successful movie, "The Passion", the highest-grossing rated R film in U.S. box office history, the highest grossing foreign language film and/or subtitled film in US box office history, and the highest grossing religious film of all time in worldwide box office history, was entirely funded by Mel Gibson, because every movie corporation refused to produce it.

A Hollywood script may possess word "saint", or "God", or "heaven", or "angel", but not "Jesus". You may have noticed, for instance, that in the popular television show, "Touched by an Angel," "He" was never mentioned. Pay close attention to the movies produced in the last ten years, and you will find this to be true. Writers run into a glass wall in Hollywood, trying to get a script accepted that holds up the name Jesus. Yet—

"God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Little Tykes for Christ

Advent Family Event

Families with Pre-K children came together hours before the first Advent Mass to hear more about the meaning of Advent, listen to a story, play games, make an Advent Calendar and Advent Wreath, and enjoy some refreshments. They proudly brought their Advent Wreaths to the front of the church to be blessed along with the parish Advent Wreath.





December



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Women's Club Luncheon Event 12:00 6:00pm - RE Advisory Board Mtg		
RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 CLOW 11:00	RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00		RE Sessions 6:00 - 7:30	The Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation 		
RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 RE for Deaf 3:15-4:45 Pancake Breakfast	RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00		RE Sessions 6:00 - 7:30			
RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 Bake Sale CLOW 11:00 RE for Deaf 3:15-4:45 Song of the Stable	RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00 Tri-Parish Reconciliation 4:00-5:30 6:30-8:00			<i>Winter</i>		Christmas Eve Masses: 3:30, 3:35, 5:30, 12:00
 Christmas Day Masses: 7:30, 9:00 11:00					The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph	