

Prayers and Blessings for Your Home: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

December is a time to

Prepare for the birth of Jesus (Advent)

Celebrate at the birth of Jesus (Christmas)

*and Welcome Jesus into your heart and
your home (Epiphany)*

How do we get from here



to here?



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Prayers for Lighting the Advent Wreath in Your Home

The First Week of Advent *(light one candle)*

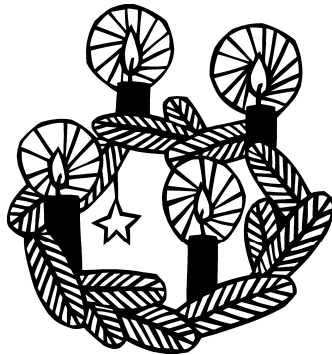
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

You call all nations to walk in your light and to seek your ways of justice and peace, for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near.

Bless us as we light the first candle of this wreath.

Rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes and welcome him into our hearts and homes, for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever. Amen.

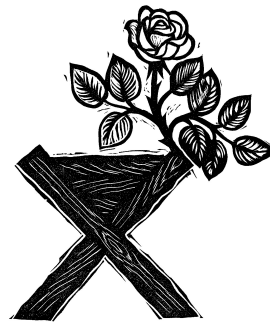


The Second Week of Advent *(light two candles)*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way for the kingdom of heaven is near. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit, that we may be a light shining in the darkness, welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

The Third Week of Advent *(light three candles)*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. Amen.



The Fourth Week of Advent *(light four candles)*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In your Son Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra

Nicholas was born in the fourth century in Asia Minor (Turkey). It is believed that he became a bishop in the church while still a young man. Although we don't know much about his life, it is believed that he was compassionate, kind and generous.



The most familiar story of St. Nicholas involves a family with three daughters. The family was so poor that the daughters were about to be sold as servants because there was no money to provide dowries. One night Nicholas, unseen, dropped a bag of gold through an open window, to provide a marriage dowry for the oldest daughter. The girl's stockings were hung on the chimney in front of the fireplace so that they could dry from the heat of the fire during the night. Nicholas' coins fell into the stockings.

In time, he dropped another bag of gold through an open window for the second daughter's marriage dowry. Again, no one saw Nicholas. But when he tried to secretly leave a bag of gold for the third daughter, someone saw him. Nicholas begged the person not to tell what he had done, but the story of his generosity spread. Ever since that time, children have eagerly waited for gifts from Saint Nicholas.

On the evening of December 5th, the night before St. Nicholas' feast day on December 6, children in the Netherlands traditionally left their shoes outside their door to be filled with candy and small gifts by St. Nicholas (known in the Netherlands as "Sinterklaas.")

Nicholas of Myra is the real person around whom our tradition of Santa Claus has evolved. The debate between the emphasis on Santa Claus at Christmas and the emphasis on the birth of Jesus is one that families need to settle on their own. As Christians, we know the real meaning of Christmas is the gift to us of God's Son, Jesus. By focusing on the real St. Nicholas and his generosity based in Christian love, we can shift the emphasis away from Santa Claus and commercialism. In the end, we can help our children to understand that we value God's gift of Jesus over any other.

Many of our traditions have their source in the story of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra:

- Hanging stockings by the fireplace to be filled with gifts
- gold coin candy treats
- candy canes (the shape resembles the Bishop's staff)
- Giving generously out of Christian love for all people

Santa Claus and Saint Nicholas

Everybody loves Santa Claus. He embodies holiday cheer, happiness, fun, and gifts—warm happy aspects of the Christmas season. How do Santa Claus and St. Nicholas differ?

Santa Claus belongs to childhood;
St. Nicholas models for all of life.

Santa Claus, as we know him, developed to boost Christmas sales—the commercial Christmas message;
St. Nicholas told the story of Christ and peace, goodwill toward all—the hope-filled Christmas message.

Santa Claus encourages consumption;
St. Nicholas encourages compassion.

Santa Claus appears each year to be seen and heard for a short time;
St. Nicholas is part of the communion of saints, surrounding us always with prayer and example.

Santa Claus flies through the air—from the North Pole;
St. Nicholas walked the earth—caring for those in need.

Santa Claus, for some, replaces the Babe of Bethlehem;
St. Nicholas, for all, points to the Babe of Bethlehem.

Santa Claus isn't bad;
St. Nicholas is just better.

—J. Rosenthal & C. Myers

Compare Santa & St. Nicholas (no date) *St. Nicholas Center*. Available at: <https://www.stnicholascenter.org/who-is-st-nicholas/compare-santa-st-nicholas> (Accessed: November 13, 2025).

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Blessing of the Manger Scene

O Lord our God,
with Mary and Joseph,
angels and shepherds,
and the animals in the stable,
we gather around your Son, born for us.
Bless us with your holy presence
and inspire us to help those
who have no place to dwell.
Be with us that we might share
Christ's love with all the world,
for he is our light and our salvation.
Glory in heaven and peace on earth,
now and forever.
Amen.



Blessing of Christmas Gifts

Blessed be your name, O God,
you are the source of every blessing.
From your hand we receive the good gifts
of life, health and salvation.
As we give and receive these presents,
bless us with hearts thankful for the birth of your Son.
May the opening of these gifts lead us
to share our love, faith and goods with the poor and needy.
Blessed be God forever. Amen.

Epiphany

January 6th

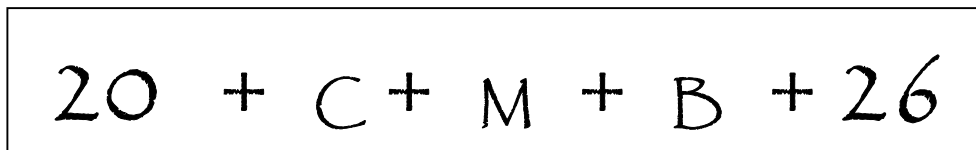
Epiphany means “manifestation” or “appearance.” It is the twelfth day of Christmas and the end of the Christmas season. Traditionally, this day is also recognized as “Three Kings Day,” the culmination of the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem, guided by the brilliant star that announced the birth of Jesus, the Messiah.

Like St. Nicholas Day, in many places around the world, it is traditional to give small gifts in honor of the gifts that the magi presented to the Christ child.

Blessing of the Home on Epiphany

Matthew writes that when the wise men saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. “On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother.” (see Matthew 2:10-11) In your home, Christ is met in family and friends, visitors and strangers. Christ is welcome.

If you live alone, invite friends to share your house blessing with you. In many countries, every year on Epiphany the portal to the home is marked with white chalk in the following way:



The numbers change, of course, with each new year. The three letters stand for either the ancient Latin blessing *Christus mansionem benedicat* (“May Christ bless this house”) or the legendary names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar.

Here is a prayer of blessing for your home:

*O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star.
We pray that you bless this home and all who live here, with your gracious
presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide,
your truth our light, and your peace our benediction;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*