

Family Conversations

STORE THIS CARD IN YOUR AUTOMOBILE GLOVE BOX OR CLIP IT TO YOUR VISOR. SHORT ON TIME IN THE CAR? KEEP THIS CARD IN YOUR DINING ROOM FOR A TABLE CONVERSATION INSTEAD.

KEY TO THE CONVERSATIONS



TAKE 30 (SECONDS): A pause to think or pray in silence.



PRAY: A suggested moment for prayer.



CHAT: A time for each person to share.



KEY IDEA: An insight about the Scripture.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2007—YEAR A

INTRODUCTION

Spend a moment as a family talking about the Sunday readings. Stow this card in your automobile glove box or clip it to your visor. If you are short on time in the car, keep this card on your dining room table instead. Use the following reflections to start a conversation. You may find something in the readings or in the homily that triggers different questions, which is fine. What's important is that you have the conversation. Follow the conversation wherever it leads.



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 2, 2007

Be Prepared!

ON THE WAY

Gospel Glimpse from Matthew 24:42-44

"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

KEY IDEA: Advent has two purposes: to prepare us for the feast of Christmas and to prepare us for Christ's second coming at the end of time.

CHAT: Today's Gospel reminds us that we cannot know the day or the hour of Jesus' return. What should we do with our time while we wait?

ON THE RETURN

TAKE 30 (SECONDS): What signs of preparation did you see and hear at Mass today?

CHAT: Would we do anything different with our time this week if we knew that Jesus was to return by Christmas? How would we prepare?

PRAY: (Repeat each phrase after the leader): Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Help us prepare to love you, Lord.

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 23, 2007

Be Not Afraid!

ON THE WAY

Gospel Glimpse from Matthew 1:20-21

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

KEY IDEA: Matthew's Gospel focuses on Joseph's role in the Christmas story.

CHAT: The angel told Joseph in his dream, "Do not be afraid." These were favorite words of Pope John Paul II whenever he met with young

CHAT: What sign makes you think that Jesus is present in your parish? Listen closely to today's homily, and watch the parish community for signs that the Kingdom of Heaven is present there.

ON THE RETURN

TAKE 30 (SECONDS): What signs of Jesus' presence did you see and hear around you at Mass?

CHAT: What could we do together as a family this week that would be a clear sign for others of the "good news of the kingdom" that we believe in?

PRAY: Let us pray for those people who help us hear the good news of Jesus Christ. (After each person mentions someone, all respond: "Thank you, Lord, come in glory!") Examples: "For grandma . . ." (all respond); "For Fr. Brian . . ." (all respond), "For my teacher . . ." (all respond), etc.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 16, 2007

Rejoice!

ON THE WAY

Gospel Glimpse from Matthew 11:2-5

When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."

KEY IDEA: The way that Jesus lived and the signs that accompanied his ministry were amazing signs that the Kingdom of God was near.

people. Give an example of when you have been afraid to do or try something. Why were you afraid? Listen to the Gospel at today's Mass to see what you can learn about not being afraid because God is with you.

ON THE RETURN
CHAT: God used an angel to remind Joseph to trust and "not be afraid." How does God remind you to not be afraid?

TAKE 30 (SECONDS): Recall something you used to be afraid of. How did you get over your fear?

PRAY: Bless each person on the forehead with a Sign of the Cross and these words: "Be not afraid, God is with you! Come, Lord Jesus, come."

sorry"? For what things should we say "I'm sorry" during the penitential rite at Mass today?

ON THE RETURN

CHAT: Who can name at least one good thing that they have said or done this past week? Why might we call these "good fruits"?

TAKE 30 (SECONDS): Think about something kind that you can do this week for someone in your family or at school or work.

PRAY: Father, thank you for our family and for the good fruit you help us to produce. Help us to grow in love, in care, and in hope this Advent season. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Savior Is Born!

CHRISTMAS EVE OR DAY

DECEMBER 24 OR 25, 2007

ON THE WAY

Gospel Glimpse from Midnight Mass: Luke 2:9-11

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord."

KEY IDEA: The angel announces the Good News: Jesus who is born to us is Savior, Christ, and Lord!

CHAT: What is your favorite part of the Christmas story?

ON THE RETURN

TAKE 30 (SECONDS): What makes Christmas Day special for you?

CHAT: Of the Christmas songs we sang at Mass today, which is your favorite? What does this carol tell us about Jesus?

PRAY: Thank you, God, for all your gifts, especially your greatest gift, that of your Son, Jesus.

Before bedtime on Christmas night, gather together as a family and bring along all of the Christmas cards received this year. As possible, have each family member choose a card and read it, and then everyone is to give thanks to God for the person or families who sent the card.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 9, 2007

Repent!

ON THE WAY

Gospel Glimpse from Matthew 3:1-2, 8

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! . . . Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance."

KEY IDEA: To "repent" means to acknowledge our wrongdoing, to turn from sin, and to let God change our hearts and our actions. John the Baptist reminds us that "good fruit" (actions) come from real repentance.

CHAT: Is there anything that we said or did to one another this past week for which we need to repent, and for which we need to say "I'm