

## Celebrating Advent and Christmas

### Engage: Page 79

- ▶ Together make a list of items you would need for a family party. **Ask:** *How does preparing for the event make it more meaningful?* (Possible answer: The preparation raises our anticipation for the event.)
- ▶ Read aloud the title Celebrating Advent and Christmas and the sentences in the blue box. Discuss the questions. Then read aloud the page. **Ask:** *What can we do to prepare the way of the Lord?* (Possible answer: Proclaim the Gospel message.) *What is the Incarnation?* (God becoming man in the Person of Jesus) Display a liturgical calendar and point out the seasons of Advent and Christmas.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

### Explore: Pages 80–81

- ▶ Discuss Advent traditions celebrated by your family and your parish. **Ask:** *How do these traditions help us prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth?* (Possible answers: They help us focus on the real meaning of the Advent and Christmas seasons. They encourage us to reflect on what Jesus' birth means to us today.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the article title A Time to Prepare and the first three paragraphs. **Ask:** *How was Advent first celebrated in the Church?* (Local communities followed various traditions to help prepare them to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.) Draw your child's attention to the word *apologists*. **Say:** *An apologist is anyone who defends the faith through his or her words and actions.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character. **Say:** *In this case, doctor is an honorary title given to someone who has made significant contributions to our understanding of who God is.*
- ▶ Together read aloud O Antiphons on page 81. Point out that Catholic rituals include numerous antiphons, such as the antiphons used during the Liturgy of the Hours. **Say:** *This form of prayer includes Scripture readings, hymns, and writings from the early Fathers of the Church.* Read aloud the lyrics of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and point out each of the O Antiphons.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Ready for Confirmation feature. Give your child writing supplies and then **say:** *Take a few moments to write questions you can use to help you reflect on who Jesus is and what his coming to earth means to you.*
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

### Explore: Pages 82–83

- ▶ Display various images of angels. **Say:** *Throughout history God has relied on angels to deliver messages to people. He also relies on heralds—all those who announce his Good News through their words and actions.*

- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the article title God's Messengers and the first two paragraphs. Remind your child that the Christmas season begins with Mass on Christmas Eve and goes through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in early January. Read aloud the story of the Annunciation. [Luke 1:26–38] **Ask:** *What message did the herald Gabriel deliver?* (that Mary was going to become Jesus' mother)
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Art feature. **Ask:** *What are the townspeople doing to celebrate Jesus' birth?* (Possible answer: They are offering gifts to Jesus.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the sections Biblical Heralds and Sainly Heralds on page 83. Explain that we prepare the way of the Lord every time we perform acts that build up God's kingdom.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud We Are Heralds. Give him or her time to reflect silently on how to live out the virtues of simplicity, poverty, and humility.
- ▶ Read aloud the Our Catholic Character feature.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

### Reflect: Pages 84–85

- ▶ Read aloud the title God's Greatest Gift and the paragraphs in the left column. Point out that the prayer on this page is a form of *lectio divina*, a reflective way of praying with Scripture.
- ▶ Lead your child in the prayer Who Do you Say That I Am? Pause as appropriate to give your child time to reflect on the Scripture passage and the questions. Conclude by praying together the closing prayer.
- ▶ Ask your child to name his or her favorite childhood storybooks and share the memories associated with them. **Ask:** *Did the joy you experience come from the pages of the book itself or from somewhere else?* (Possible answer: It came from the pages of the book together with memories of reading it with a loved one.) **Say:** *The joy of God is the same. He is in the Gospel stories because Jesus is the Son of God.* Read aloud the introductory paragraph in Where Do I Fit In? on page 85.
- ▶ Together read aloud Where's God? **Ask:** *How was God present even in the man's negative response?* (Possible answers: The comment caused the author to feel more strongly her own conviction that God is everywhere. It increased her desire to share this news with others. It led to the writing of this article.)
- ▶ Invite your child to complete the activity God Is Present independently.

### Respond: Page 86

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the directions. Remind him or her to use the page references to help find the correct matches as he or she completes the activity independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? Allow time for your child to complete his or her prayer. **Say:** *Prayer is one way for us to prepare our minds and hearts for Jesus' coming.* Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at [www.loyolapress.com/retreat](http://www.loyolapress.com/retreat).