

Celebrating Advent and Christmas

Keep these ideas in mind as you study **Unit 2, Session 10**.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and marks the start of the Church's liturgical year. We prepare our hearts during the season of Advent to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. **PAGE 79**

On December 8, we celebrate the Immaculate Conception, which reminds us that Mary was born without Original Sin. Even before she was born, God chose her to be the mother of Jesus. Mexican Catholics honor Mary on the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, which celebrates Mary's appearance to Juan Diego. **PAGE 80**

Advent is a time to awaken our faith. To awake from sleep, which is our call to action, requires us to be happy, present, and engaged in planning for the coming of the Savior. **PAGE 81**

During Advent, the Scripture readings at Mass remind us of how our ancestors in faith prepared for Jesus, the Messiah. We reflect on the Incarnation, our belief that the Son of God became flesh and was born fully human without loss of his divinity. **PAGE 81**

The mystery of Jesus' birth as told in both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is known as the Nativity story or an Infancy Narrative. Each Nativity story includes unique details. **PAGE 82**

In Matthew's Gospel, the Magi follow a star and bring baby Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts were signs that the Magi had come to serve a king. **PAGE 83**

A holy place to worship God, such as a church, is called a sanctuary. **PAGE 83**

God's greatest gift to us throughout all ages is still Jesus, the one true Light of the World. Christ comes to us through the many sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. **PAGE 83**

Catholics celebrate feast days, such as the Feast of the Holy Family on the Sunday after Christmas, throughout the year. Feast days are important liturgical celebrations in the life of the Church that mark an event in the life of Jesus or a saint. **PAGE 84**

A Holy Day of Obligation is a day when Catholics participate in the Eucharist to celebrate the great things that God has done through Jesus and the saints. **PAGE 84**

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