

"Watching Guide"

A weekly guide to preparing for the birthday of Christ by preparing for his return.

A weekly publication during Advent

December 4-December 10, 2011

Monday Dec 5



Read: Isaiah 11: 1-5

Reflect:

Have you ever seen a shoot growing from a "dead" stump? Do you have any situations in your life that seem hopeless?

Do:

Pray that God makes a "shoot of hope" spring up in your "difficult" situations.

With a child:

Draw a picture of a stump with a new shoot coming out and talk about how Jesus helps us to never give up.

Tuesday Dec. 6



Read: Matthew 25: 31-40

Reflect:

How can I care for "the least" of those who live in my county?

Do:

Make a contribution to your favorite local charity. Assist at Ronald McDonald House

With a child:

This is St Nicholas Day. Monday night have your child put her slippers outside the bedroom door to find them filled with "sweets" in the morning. Talk about how St Nicholas was a Christian Bishop who helped the poor, especially children.

Wednesday Dec 7



Read: Matthew 3: 1-4

Reflect:

When was the last time you asked someone for forgiveness? When was the last time you said, "I forgive you"?

Do:

Who needs your verbal forgiveness? From whom do you need to hear it? Make a plan.

With a Child:

Look up the word "repent" and discuss what it means or tell of a time when you asked for or gave forgiveness.

Thursday Dec. 8



Read: 2 Peter 3: 8-13

Reflect:

What have you waited for that made it better when you finally attained it? How might you delay gratification in ways that help others?

Do:

Wait longer to buy something you want in order to help another with something they need.

With a child:

Do something together that does not worry about the time!!!

Friday Dec. 9



Read: Philippians 1: 9-11

Reflect:

Which are your favorite fruits? Which seem sour? Which of your habits are sweet and which are sour?

Do:

Make a list of your sour habits and work to "sweeten" them.

With a child:

Together eat a slice of sweet fruit (like a Delicious apple) and then taste a slice of a lemon. Compare them to our conduct. Share a personal story.

Saturday Dec 10



Read Isaiah 11: 6-10

Reflect:

Who are the lions and tigers and bears in your life? Can God bring reconciliation?

Do:

List the lions and tigers in your life on a 3x5 card and clip it to your car visor. When you stop for a red light look up and pray for reconciliation with them.

With a child:

Find pictures of lions and lambs online. Print them and place them together on the refrigerator.

Advent Traditions

The Advent Wreath

An Advent wreath is laid on its side with four or five candles. The first candle is lit on the first Sunday in Advent. Each Sunday we add a another until Christmas Eve when the fifth one (white) in the center is also lighted. The candles may be white but most often are colored.

The first, second and fourth Sundays are blue which is the liturgical color of Advent (blue which is the color of the Advent season and stands for the kingship of the coming Christ).

The candle for the third Sunday is "rose" (a pinkish-purple), because it is lighted halfway through the Advent season, in anticipation of Christmas. This third Sunday is called "Gaudete" (Latin for "rejoice!") Sunday.

Santa Lucia

In Scandinavia, Lucy (called Lucia) is remembered on December 13 in a ceremony where a girl is elected to portray Lucia. Wearing a white gown with a red sash and a crown of candles on her head, she walks at the head of a procession of women, each holding a candle. The candles symbolize the

fire that refused to take St. Lucia's life when she was sentenced to be burned for her faith. The women sing a Lucia song while entering the room. Each Scandinavian country has lyrics in their native tongues. After finishing this song, the procession sings Christmas carols or more songs about Lucia. A similar version occurs in Scandinavian communities and churches in the United States

This festival and ceremony reminds us that watching and preparing for the return of Christ may mean that we are scorned by the world around us.