

# January

## January 1

### Feast of Mary, Mother of God

On January 1st, the Church focuses our attention on Mary, the Mother of God--the woman who had such an important role in the birth of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, both God and man, divine and human. In the Mass we pray that Mary, the mother of the Lord, will help us by her prayers.

#### Prayer

Hail, holy Mother! The child to whom you gave birth is the King of heaven and earth for ever. (Sedulius)

#### Craft

Cut out a circle from white paper. Make the circle as big as you like. Fold the circle in half. Open. With a blue magic marker outline thickly the left half of the circle. Take a flesh colored marker or crayon and color in a large oval near the top of the outline and a smaller one near the bottom (these will become the faces of Mary and in her arms the child Jesus). With a yellow marker outline the right half of the circle. With a thin black marker draw a thin star in the right half. This craft can sit on your desk or dresser drawers as a reminder of Mary's presence always with you.

## January 1

### World Day of Peace

#### Country Search

Have each child look up information on the people of different countries. If possible, they can interview someone from that country. They can report on food, dances, types of government, festivals, problems, types of poverty, etc. Have each child draw a simple outline-map of their country which they can post on colored construction paper. Make a home or classroom display by posting the maps on the wall with a colored strip of paper to connect them. Underneath each map can be listed some of the information they found about the country. Have the children then write a prayer for peace in the world, especially in the countries they researched.

## January 6

### The Feast of the Epiphany

This feast ends the Christmas season. To understand this Feast Day we have to remember that the Old Testament Chosen People were of Jewish Descent. Salvation was for the Jewish People only. Jesus, however, came to bring salvation to the Jews and the Gentiles (those who are not Jews). On the Epiphany we see those who are not Jews coming to adore Jesus.

#### Play

characters:

Mary

Joseph

Jesus (doll dressed in swaddling clothes)

3 Kings

King Herod

chief priests and scribes  
choir (to sing *We Three Kings*)

While the Scripture is read the narration can be acted by the characters.

After Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, astrologers from the east arrived one day in Jerusalem inquiring, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." At this news King Herod became greatly disturbed, and with him all Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him. "Here is what the prophet has written:

"And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the princes of Judah,  
since from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them: "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have discovered something, report your findings to me so that I may go and offer him homage, too."

After their audience with the king, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at its seeing the star, and on entering the house, found the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they offered their coffers and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Sing *We Three Kings* (words can be found in an old Missalette or any Christmas song book)

They received a message in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

### **Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh and ?**

The visitors from the East each brought very expensive and precious gifts to give to Jesus. What is a special gift that you can give Jesus. Write about it on a piece of paper and seal it in an envelope. Put the envelope somewhere where you will find it in a few months. Then you can open it to reminds you of the gift you promised to give the Lord.

### **Christian Unity Week**

On the night before he died, Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us,...so that the world may know that you have sent me." (Jn 17:21) Today the Church prays to recover the unity of all Christians. This is a gift of Christ and the call of the Holy Spirit. The Church spends a whole week dedicated to intense prayer for Christian Unity.

### **Christian Unity Sign Up**

What did Jesus mean by "That they may all be one?"

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What being Christian means to me:

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How I can show others I am happy being a Christian:

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My prayer that all believers will come together:

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### **Vocations Awareness Week**

Invite a priest or sister to your classroom or over to your house for dinner. Ask them to tell their vocation stories.

Write a paper or draw a picture that finishes this sentence: "If I were a priest/brother/sister I would...."

### **National Migration Week**

During National Migration Week we become more aware of the special needs of the migrants in our country. Migrants are people who have left their country and are following the crops to get work in the United States. Many times they are not treated very well and they are not paid very much. Children of migrant families never spend very much time in one school because their families are always moving--if they go to school at all.

Draw a straight line down the center of a large piece of poster paper. On the left side paste pictures from a magazine of the things that your family has and enjoys: food, TV, cars, toys, microwave, etc. On the right side paste picture of poor people, run down houses, old cars, etc.

Discuss: What would it be like to have the right side as your way of life. Try telling a story of a day in the life of a migrant child. What would it be like? Why do you think some people have so many things and others don't have enough to eat? Is there a way you can share some of the things you have with other people? Can you write a prayer to say before meals that remembers those who have nothing to eat?

## **Peace Week (Martin Luther King's Birthday)**

### **Research**

Look up in a library information about Martin Luther King. After you read some of the things he wrote and said, what would he think of situations in the country today like gang warfare, drugs, violence, abortion, euthanasia.

### **War Toy Question**

Look at the toys you play with and think about why you like them.

Do you see a positive reason for making a decision not to play with war toys. Discuss this with friends or family or classmates.

Put all war toys in a box and give them to a parent.

Make a list of all the other types of games you can play. Make a visit to a toy store and make a list of all the other types of games available.

Put in a special place "non-violent" toys. Ask friends, parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters to teach you games you may not know.

## **Virtual Reality, Computer Games and Video Games**

If you have games of this sort, are they filled with violence? How do you feel when you play violent games? How do you feel when you play non-violent games? If you receive these as gifts, could you ask family members to give you computer games that are non-violent in the future?

## **Respect Life Walk**

January 22 is always the date of the national respect life walk in Washington DC at the capitol. People come from all over the nation to march through the streets of Washington in order to draw attention to the fact that abortion (the killing of babies before they are born) is murder and should not be protected by the laws of this country. Even if you cannot go to Washington to march, here are some things you can do.

### **Write Letters**

Write a letter to the President of the United States telling him what you think about abortion.

### **Posters**

Make a poster using a large picture of a baby. Some of the words you can use are: Sing a new song unto the Lord; Life--what a wonderful choice; God is faithful--I trust him; Wait and the Lord Shall Come; I Love the Word with All My Heart; The Natural Choice is Life!

## Baby Talk

During the month of January, collect toys, food, and/or children's clothing for a homeless shelter or unwed mother's home.



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