

Advent and Christmas Stations

Suggestions for use

These stations can be used for personal and family prayer online. Printed out, and either laminated or framed, they can be used for prayer during private visits to the church.

One of the Advent Stations could be used each week during Advent and the two Christmas stations could be used towards the end of the Christmas season. See also the “Prayer around the Crib” resource.

The stations could also form the basis for online liturgies with the additions of some of the music suggestions given for each station.

If we can have congregations present in our churches around the Advent / Christmas seasons the stations could be used as short prayer services.

The illustrations for Advent Stations 1,2, and 3 are taken from the windows in St. John’s Cathedral

The Annunciation - Luke 1:26-38



In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Reflection

“God continues to look for allies, he continues to seek men and women capable of believing, remembering, and recognizing that they are part of his people and cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

God continues to walk our neighbourhoods and our streets; he pushes in each place in search of hearts capable of listening to his invitation and making it become flesh here and now.

The Lord continues to seek hearts like that of Mary, disposed to believe even in very extraordinary conditions.”
Pope Francis

Prayer

God our Father,

You will that your Son, Jesus

should take on the reality of human life

in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

May we become more like Jesus,

Whom we acknowledge as our Redeemer, God and Man.

Amen.

Music suggestions:

- [Gabriel's Message \(100 Carols for Choirs\)](#)
- [The Lourdes Magnificat \(Alleluia Amen\)](#)
- [The Maiden and Her Child \(Ancient Ways, Future Days Lawton\)](#)

Mary's Visit to Elizabeth - Luke 1:39-56



In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Reflection

“Reaching out to others is another Christian sign. Persons who describe themselves as Christian and who are unable to reach out to others, to go and meet them, are not totally Christian.

Being of service and reaching out to others both require going out from themselves: going out to serve and meet others, to embrace another person.

We imitate Mary when we reach out to others for an authentic encounter, allowing the Lord to work.

Through Mary’s service towards others, through that encounter, our Lord’s promise is renewed and makes it happen now, just as it did then.” Pope Francis

Prayer

Eternal Father,

You inspired the Virgin Mary, mother of your Son,

To visit Elizabeth and assist her in her need.

Keep us open to the workings of the Holy Spirit,

And with Mary may we praise you forever.

Amen.

Music suggestions:

- Lourdes Magnificat (Alleluia Amen)
- From Heaven You Came (The Servant King)(In Caelo)
- Hail Mary Mother of God (In Caelo)
- I will Glorify the Lord (In Caelo)
- Mary our Mother (In Caelo)

Joseph's Dream Matthew: 1: 18 - 24



This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means “God with us”.

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Reflection

“Joseph is a “protector” because he is able to hear God’s voice and be guided by his will; and for this reason, he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God’s call, readily and willingly.

Here I would add one more thing: caring, protecting, demands goodness, it calls for a certain tenderness. In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!”
Pope Francis

Prayer

Father,

You entrusted your Son, our Saviour,

into the selfless love of St. Joseph.

May your faithful people continue to serve its Lord, Jesus Christ

with hearts filled with this same selfless love.

Amen.

Music suggestions:

- Behold a Virgin Bearing Him (Feasts and Seasons & Veritas)
- A Virgin Most Pure (100 Carols for Choirs)
- Make me a Channel of your Peace (Hymns Old and New)

The Journey to Bethlehem Luke 2: 1-5



In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census, the first, took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Reflection

“So many other footsteps are hidden in the footsteps of Joseph and Mary. We see the tracks of entire families forced to set out in our own day. We see the tracks of millions of persons who do not choose to go away but, driven from their land, leave behind their dear ones. In many cases this departure is filled with hope, hope for the future; yet for many this departure can only have one name: survival.

God is present in the unwelcomed visitor, often unrecognizable, who walks through our cities and our neighbourhoods, who travels on our buses and knocks on our door. This perception of God should develop into new forms of relationship, in which none have to feel that there is no room for them on this Earth.” Pope Francis

Prayer

Light of God, guiding Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, burn brightly in our hearts this Christmas, healing the wounds in our country, our community, our homes and our hearts, show us the path of forgiveness and love. May this God given light strengthen the sick, the needy, and all those who cannot be home this Christmas time.

May this guiding light be a light of Hope, guiding our way.

Light of Bethlehem shine in our lives this Christmas and always.

Amen.

Music suggestions:

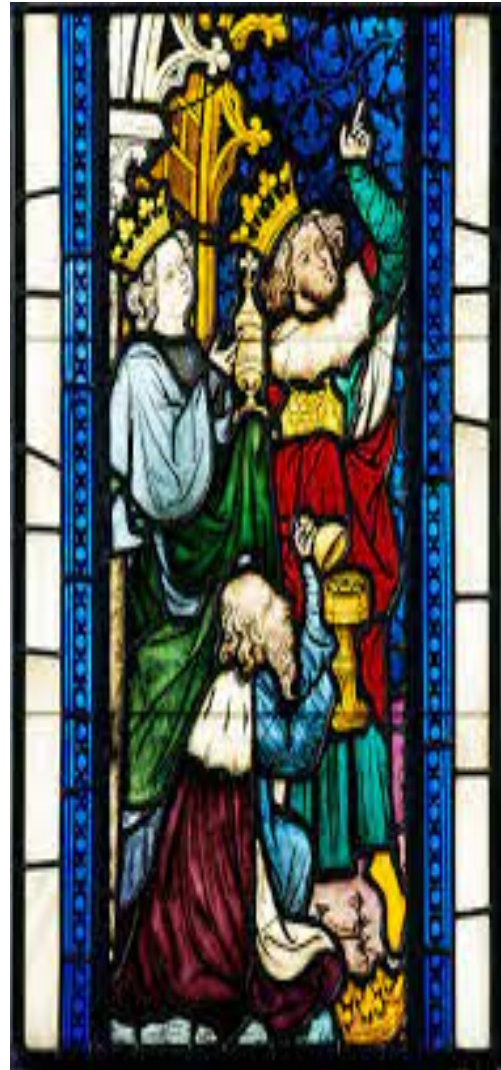
- Christ be our Light (In Caelo)
- Lord of all Hopefulness (Veritas Hymnal)
- O Comfort my People (Veritas Hymnal)

The Visit of the Magi

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for from you will come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and determined from them the exact [e]time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” After hearing the king, they went on their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over the place where the Child was to be found. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And after being warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.



Reflection

“The Magi teach us that people can come to Christ by a very long route. Men of wealth, sages from afar, a thirst for the infinite, they set out on the long and perilous journey that would lead them to Bethlehem. Great joy comes over them in the presence of the Infant King. They are not scandalised by the poor surroundings, but immediately fall to their feet to worship him. Kneeling before him, they understand that God who with sovereign wisdom guides the course of the stars also guides the course of history, casting down the mighty and raising up the lowly. Upon their return home, they would certainly have told others of this amazing encounter with the Messiah, thus initiating the spread of the Gospel among the nations.” Pope Francis

Prayer

O God, who revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy, that we, who know you already by faith ,may be brought to behold the beauty of your sublime glory.

Music suggestions:

- Hail to the Lord who comes (Veritas)
- Canticle of Simeon (In Caelo)
- Christ be our Light (In Caelo)
- The Light of Christ (Alleluia Amen)
- Be Thou My Vision (Veritas & In Caelo)

about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Jesus Presented in the Temple Luke 2:22-38

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke



Reflection

“The Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple is also known as the Feast of the Encounter. This is the encounter between Jesus and his people when Mary and Joseph brought their child to the Temple in Jerusalem; the first encounter between Jesus and his people.

Let’s observe what the evangelist Luke tells us of them, as he describes them. He says four times that Our Lady and St. Joseph wanted to do what was required by the Law of the Lord. One almost feels and perceives that Jesus’ parents have the joy of observing the precepts of God, yes, the joy of walking according to the Law of the Lord! They are two newlyweds, they have just had their baby, and they are motivated by the desire to do what is prescribed. This is not an external fact: it is not just to feel right, no! It’s a strong desire, a deep desire, full of joy.” Pope Francis

Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only Begotten Son was presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so, by your grace, we may be presented to you with minds made pure. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music suggestions:

- Hail to the Lord who comes (Veritas)
- Canticle of Simeon (In Caelo)
- Christ be our Light (In Caelo)
- The Light of Christ (Alleluia Amen)
- Be Thou My Vision (Veritas & In Caelo)

