

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Pope Francis has entrusted the **Missionary Childhood Association** with the responsibility of assisting you in forming your children as *Missionary Disciples*. Through their membership in this **Pontifical Mission Society**, children learn about the lives of their peers around the world and join in prayer and sacrifice for children in need in the developing world. In this way, children respond to the Holy Father's call to reach out to those in need on the peripheries of human society with the Good News of Jesus.

I hope that these resources will enrich your family's observance of the Advent and Christmas seasons.



Monsignor Arthur E. Rodgers, Director, Pontifical Mission Societies

Visit www.phillymissions.org for additional resources, including photos and stories from the Missions, World Mission Rosary resources and prayers for blessing the Christmas tree and crèche.

Advent Wreath Prayers for Missionary Families

First Week of Advent: Hope

Leader: The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath each week and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The first candle, or Prophet's candle, symbolizes the light of Christ's hope for the world. It was announced by John the Baptist. *[Light one purple candle.]*

ALL: Let our hearts shine with Christ's hope for all the world.

Reader: John 1: 6-9

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Pause for silent reflection

Leader: Good and gracious God, increase our strength and desire for doing good. Help us to reach out to those in need, and those who long for justice in our world. Give us a heart that is open to our baptismal call to serve all of Your people, especially those in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Week of Advent: Faith

Leader: The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The second candle, or the Bethlehem candle, symbolizes faith. Mary and Joseph showed great faith in God's will as they journeyed to Bethlehem. *[Light two purple candles.]*

ALL: Let our hearts shine with faith in Jesus for all the world.

Reader: Luke 2:4-7

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Pause for silent reflection

Leader: Good and gracious God, instruct us in your ways. Help us to walk in the light of Your ways as we reach out to those in need. Help us to build a world where there is no cause for war again. Guide us Lord, as we walk in Your light. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Week of Advent: Joy

Leader: The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The third candle, or the Shepherd's Candle, stands for joy. It was with great joy that the shepherds made known the Good News of the birth of Jesus. *[Light two purple candles and one pink candle.]*

ALL: Let our hearts shine with the joy of Jesus for all the world.

Reader: Luke 2:16-18

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Pause for silent reflection

Leader: All-powerful God, we wait in anticipation of the arrival of Your greatest sign to us – Your Son. In Jesus, Your Word took flesh on our earth. In these last few days of Advent help us to be fervent in our prayer. Help us to be kind and gentle with one another and with those we meet. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Week of Advent: Peace

Leader: The light of Jesus is hope, faith, joy and peace. As we gather around this Advent wreath and prepare for the birth of our Savior, we acknowledge His light through Scripture, prayer, song and these candles. May we carry that light everywhere we go as His Missionaries. The fourth candle, or the Angel's Candle, stands for peace. The Angels' message brought "peace on earth" to all who received it. *[Light all four candles.]*

Reader: Luke 2: 10-14

ALL: Thanks be to God.

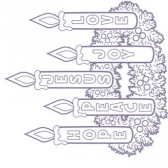
Pause for silent reflection

Leader: God of peace and justice, You faithfully lead Your people to new possibilities. Give us wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and strength to build a world where there is no harm or ruin, but only peace and love amongst all of Your creatures. Create in us hearts that strive for goodness. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.



2017 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR for Missionary Children and Families

Visit mca@archphila.org for more Advent prayers & activities



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 First Sunday of Advent Create a family Advent wreath. Light the first candle on your wreath. Recite the Advent Wreath Prayer as a family each week.	4 St. Francis Xavier, Patron of the Missions, Feast Day, <i>traditionally celebrated on Dec. 3</i> , brought the Word of God to Africa and Asia. Pray for the children of India & Vietnam today.	5 Spend time as a family determining one way each week you can save some money, perhaps by giving something up, to make a donation to the Missions through MCA.	6 St. Nicholas Follow the example of Saint Nicholas on his Feast Day. Surprise someone with an act of kindness today.	7 Learn to pray the World Mission Rosary at www.phillymissions.org Pray a decade for families in Asia and color the beads yellow.	8 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Mary was born free of sin. Say 3 Hail Mary's for unborn babies.	9 St. Juan Diego had the important work of sharing Our Lady's message with his Bishop for the world. How can I share Jesus' message with others?
10 Second Sunday of Advent <i>Go to Mass as a family.</i> Light two candles on your Advent wreath. Read today's Gospel Mark 1: 1-8 together.	11 Make a Christmas card for a teacher. Pray for him or her and for catechists who teach about Jesus in the Mission lands.	12 Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness is the story of Mary who appeared to Juan Diego?	13 There are many children who do not have friends. For each friend you see at school today, give a MCA donation for Advent. Thank God for all your friends.	14 Memorial of St. John of the Cross, who grew up in an orphanage. Give up a treat today to help the children in one of the 9,492 orphanages run by the Church in the Missions, over half in Asia.	15 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families in Africa. Color the green beads on your World Mission Rosary sheet.	16 Learn about the Mexican tradition of <i>Las Posadas</i> , reenacting the journey Joseph and Mary took to find shelter before the birth of Jesus.
17 Third Sunday of Advent <i>Go to Mass!</i> Light the first two candles and the pink candle on your Advent wreath and pray together for families in need.	18 Forgive someone who has hurt you. Plan time for your family to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas. Pray for peace in places in the Missions where there is conflict.	19 Make an MCA donation for every classroom you enter today. Pray for children who are not able to go to school because they have to work.	20 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families in the Americas. Color the red beads on your World Mission Rosary.	21 At each meal today, think about those who are hungry and in need of food and shelter, in your area and half a world away. Skip dessert or snack and make a donation to MCA.	22 Spend time with a loved one instead of watching TV or playing video games.	23 Conduct an "Advent cleaning" of your home. Collect clothes, toys, and household goods you no longer use. Donate them to people in need.
24 Fourth Sunday of Advent Read about Jesus' birth Matthew 1:18-25 with your family. Set up your Christmas crèche.	25 Happy Birthday Jesus! Celebrate the <i>Birth of the Christ Child</i> by joyfully thanking God for the great gift He has given you—the gift of His Son.	26 St. Stephen, the First Martyr. Martyr means "witness" in Greek. We are called to be witnesses for JESUS. How can I be a "witness" today?	27 Do a household chore today, without being asked.	28 Make a point to hug everyone in your family today. Pray for a child in the Missions who may not feel loved, and pray that a Missionary reaches him or her with God's love.	29 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families living in Oceania. Color the blue beads on your World Mission Rosary.	30 Feast of the Holy Family Say a prayer for your family and all they do for you, and one for families around the world.

What is the World Mission Rosary?

In 1951, Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen created the **World Mission Rosary** as a way to pray for missionaries and the people they serve. Each colored decade represents a different area of the world where Missionaries continue to share the “Good News” of Jesus. To pray each decade of the **World Mission Rosary**, think about the children below in the part of world the colored bead represents as you announce each mystery. **GREEN** symbolizes the forests and grasslands of **AFRICA**. **BLUE** is for the ocean around the **ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC**. **WHITE** stands for **EUROPE**, home of our *Holy Father*. **RED** shows the fire of faith brought to the **AMERICAS** by Missionaries and **YELLOW** is for **ASIA**, where the sun rises first.

Color or make a check, star or mark on the beads of the World Mission Rosary as you pray your Hail Mary for children in the Missions.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, **Missionary Children** throughout Europe travel through their neighborhoods dressed as the Three Kings, singing Christmas carols, and collecting MCA donations.



Missionary Children in Cuba go door to door talking with people about Jesus and evangelizing the two generations of Cubans that were raised without religion under the communist regime.



Sacrifices of **MCA members** provide clean water, health care, and education to children in the Lodwar Diocese in Kenya.



MCA supports schools and religious education programs in India, where just about 2% of the population is Christian. These girls from different tribal groups attend a boarding school run by the Sisters of Charity in the Diocese of Agartala.



MCA members help children in Papua New Guinea learn about the Catholic faith, attend school, and get access to clean water and medical care.



January 2017 MCA Calendar and Epiphany Door Blessing for Missionary Children & Families

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12/31 Pick a spot on each continent. Mark the New Year at their local time with a Hail Mary for children there.	1/1 Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God <i>Go to Mass on the First Day of the New Year!</i> Resolve to be a Missionary by your words, actions & prayers this year.	2 Welcome the New Year! How can you continue your Mission of praying for and helping children, just like you, through MCA in 2018? Make a list and share it with others.	3 Clean water isn't always nearby in the Missions. Make a donation to MCA for every faucet in your house.	4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton , the first U.S.-born Saint, learned about the Catholic faith from friends. How do your friends learn about Jesus through you?	5 & 6 January 6 is the traditional date of the Epiphany, the 12th Day of Christmas <i>[as counted from December 26th]</i> . To celebrate the Epiphany, Missionary Children throughout Europe dress as the Three Kings, sing Christmas carols and collect MCA donations in their neighborhoods.	
7 Epiphany of Our Lord celebrated today in the U.S.	8 Baptism of Our Lord On this Feast, bring your family together to retell the stories of each person's baptism. Remember, we are all called to be Missionaries, by virtue of our Baptism. Pope Francis reminds us, <i>"In the full range of the Church's Missionary activity, all the faithful are called to live their baptismal commitment to the fullest."</i> 					

Epiphany Door Blessing 20+C+M+B+18

This is an ancient blessing in the Catholic tradition that transcends cultures and continents. Legend says that the "chalked" letters correspond to the initials of the 3 Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar *[German spelling]*. More importantly, they abbreviate the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat* -- "*Christ bless this house.*" The year 2018 is divided by the letters to show that we must keep Jesus at the center of our lives daily, wherever we go when we cross the marked door's threshold. The four crosses signify the four corners of the world to which we, the baptized, are to proclaim the Gospel. Write the letters on the main doorway in your home with chalk or make a sign. Share this idea with your relatives and family—*could be a start of a new tradition.*

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And with you spirit.

Leader: May Christ dwell in this home and give peace to all who enter.

All: Amen.

Leader: A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew
[Mt 2:1-12]

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: *Let us Pray:*

The Son of God made his home among us. With thanks and praise let us call upon Him. Lord Jesus Christ, with Mary and Joseph you formed the Holy Family: Remain in our home, that we may share You with our families. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you had no place to lay your head, but in the spirit of poverty accepted the hospitality of your friends; grant that through our help the homeless of the world may obtain proper housing.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, the three kings presented their gifts to you in praise and adoration: grant that those living in this house may use their talents and abilities to spread Your Good News to others, even to the ends of the earth. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Oh God, You once used a star to lead wise ones to Your Son. May the light of Christ guide us to recognize Him in each other each and every day. As we cross this threshold for work, study or play, remind us of our true purpose in life—to love Your people, to do Your will and to lead others to You. May all who enter through this door find Your love and hospitality in us and may we continue to search for You in the face of every guest.

All: Amen

Leader chalks/places the sign of letters above the doorway.

Leader: May Christ dwell with us, keep us from harm and make us one in mind and heart, now and forever. We pray for this and all good things in the name of Jesus Christ, true King of our home.

All: Amen

If your Principal or DRE is not collecting MCA donations, please send your family's Advent/Christmas Offering to
Missionary Childhood Association, Archdiocese of Philadelphia * 222 N. 17th Street * Philadelphia, PA 19103
www.phillymissions.org 215-587-3945 mca@archphila.org

Celebrating the Birth of Jesus in the Missions



Children bring to life the birth of Jesus in Nativity plays in India and Africa.



Making tulle flowers for a Christmas Festival in Vietnam.



Playing games at a village-wide Christmas Celebration in Cambodia.



MCA Member in the parish of Nossa Senhora Aparecida in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, prepare a welcome for Baby Jesus.