



Star Singers of Germany pictured above

This year, as we celebrate the **EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MISSION**, Missionary Disciples throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia became "*Children helping Children*" through their prayers and the sacrifices they made for children in Mission lands. They aren't alone, together, they join thousands of children all over the world, who are committed to helping others in most need.

In Germany, members of the **Missionary Childhood Association** participate

**January 6** is the traditional date of the **Epiphany**, the 12th Day of Christmas [as counted from December 26th].

in an annual Star Singers Campaign. "*Bring blessing, be blessing. Together against child labor, in India and all over the world,*" was the motto for 2018.



Dressed in their costumes of Magi, with their Star and their songs during Christmas time and in the early days of the New Year, the "Star Singers" go around visiting German homes. About 300 thousand children from Catholic parishes in Germany will carry the "C+M+ B" blessing [*Christus mansionem benedicat - Christ bless this house*] to the families, collecting donations for other children their age who suffer throughout the world.

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

**mca** missionary childhood association

ADVENT—EPIPHANY 2018 • MONTHLY MISSION RESOURCE

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## Mission Resources for the Season of Advent through the Feast of the Epiphany

### FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS:

- † Advent Mission Calendar [Page 3]
- † Mission focused prayers for each week of Advent [Page 4]
- † Prayer Service for the Feast of the Epiphany [Page 5]  
Use this cut out activity to pray for Mission Countries during the weeks of Advent. This fun, colorful activity can be used to engage a child with a disability in Mission! Also perfect for levels K to 3. [Page 6]
- † This Month's Mission **Saint is St. Frances Xavier, the Patron of Missions** [Page 7]
- † Distribute the **"Mission Focus: Tanzania, Africa"** worksheet. Pray with your students for orphans all over the world, who are being cared for and taught by Missionaries. [Page 8].
- † Add the Mission Photo Page to your Prayer Corner, update this corner each month during this **EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MISSION** [Page 9]
- † Incorporate the Mission Photo Pages these [Mission Bulletin Boards](#) at your School or PREP program

### FOR SECONDARY & HIGH SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS:

- † Include the Holy Father's December Prayer Intention for **Service of the Transmission of Faith**: *That people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.*
- † Baptism of Our Lord Activity, click [HERE](#).

Have you scheduled your annual MCA Mission Presentation? Schools around the Archdiocese have been actively praying and sacrificing for the Missions. *Contact the MCA office today, it is not too late to have a Missionary visit during the season of Advent!*



Presentation BVM School in Cheltenham



Kindergarten Class at Presentation BVM



Mission Presentation at Pope John Paull II Regional School in West, Brandywine



St Matthew School in Philadelphia had 44 children make Rosaries at their first ever Rosary Club Meeting





# 2018 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR for Missionary Children and Families

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>2 First Sunday of Advent</b> Create a family Advent wreath. Light the first candle on your wreath. Pray as a family each week.	<b>3 St. Francis Xavier,</b> Patron of the Missions, Feast Day, brought the Word of God to Africa and Asia. Pray for the children and Missionaries of these mission lands today.	<b>4</b> 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.	<b>5</b> Learn to pray the World Mission Rosary at <a href="http://www.phillymissions.org">www.phillymissions.org</a> Pray a decade for families in Asia and color the Beads yellow.	<b>6 St. Nicholas</b> Follow the example of Saint Nicholas on his Feast Day. Surprise someone with an act of kindness today.	<b>7</b> Do a household chore today, without being asked.	<b>8</b> Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Mary was born free of sin. Say 3 Hail Mary's for unborn babies.
<b>9 Second Sunday of Advent</b> Go to Mass as a family. Light two candles on your Advent wreath. Read today's Gospel.	<b>10</b> St. Juan Diego (feast celebrated December 9th) had the important work of sharing Our Lady's message with his Bishop for the world. How can I share Jesus' message with others?	<b>11</b> Make a Christmas card for a teacher. Pray for him or her and for catechists who teach about Jesus in the Mission lands.	<b>12 Our Lady of Guadalupe,</b> Patroness of the Americas. What is the story of Mary who appeared to Juan Diego?	<b>13</b> 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 your friends.	<b>14</b> Memorial of <b>St. John of the Cross</b> , who grew up in an orphanage. Give up a treat today to help the children in one of the 9,552 orphanages run by the Church in the Missions, over half in Asia.	<b>15</b> Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families in Africa. Color the green beads on your World Mission Rosary sheet.
<b>16 Third Sunday of Advent</b> Go to Mass! Light the first two candles and the pink candle on your Advent wreath and pray together for families in need.	<b>17</b> 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.	<b>18</b> 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.	<b>19</b> 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.	<b>20</b> 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.	<b>21</b> Spend time with a loved one instead of watching TV or playing video games.	<b>22</b> Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families living in Oceania. Color the blue beads on your World Mission Rosary.
<b>23 Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> Read about Jesus' birth Matthew 1:18-25	<b>24</b> 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.	<b>25 Happy Birthday Jesus!</b> Celebrate the Birth of the Christ Child by joyfully thanking God for the great gift He has given you, the gift of His Son.				

## Mission Prayers for each week of Advent



Advent Pageant in Manila, Philippines

### **Week 1: Light the first purple candle.**

#### **The first purple candle represents HOPE.**

Father in Heaven, we need the warmth of your love in our hearts and the light of your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with hope when Jesus comes. In our own little way help us to bring hope to children who are afraid, sad or alone. We ask you to bring them hope for tomorrow. Through us, shine your light of Hope upon them. Amen.

### **Week 3: Light the pink candle.**

#### **The pink candle represents JOY.**

Father in Heaven, we know that you love all of your people. Your love brings the gift of joy to our hearts. We think of all the unhappy children in the world today. We ask you to bring a little joy to their hearts this Christmas. Thank you for the joy we feel as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.

### **Week 2: Light the second purple candle.**

#### **The second purple candle represents PEACE.**

Father in Heaven, very soon the birth of your Son, Jesus will light up the world. May his quiet coming bring us true inner peace. Dear God, Help us to bring peace to those around us. Look after children who live with conflict at home, at school and in their country. Help us to throw your blanket of peace around their shoulders and comfort them with our friendship. Amen.

### **Week 4: Light the third purple candle.**

#### **The third purple candle represents LOVE.**

Father in Heaven, bless our families and bring us the spirit of understanding and love. May our homes be places of peace and laughter and may your love shine from our eyes. In everything we do and say, help us to show love to others. Today we ask your blessing on our circle of love and prayer. Keep us forever safe in the warmth of your love. Amen.

**“Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem, May we let ourselves  
be drawn by the light of God made man” - Pope Francis**





# Epiphany Prayer Service

When writer Robert Louis Stevenson was a little boy, he lived in a house on a hillside in Scotland. Every evening, he would watch the lamplighter walk through the streets in the valley below, lighting each of the village street lights. *“Look, Mother,”* he would say. *“Here comes the man who punches holes in the darkness.”*

**Epiphany** celebrates the time when God punched a hole in the darkness. The story tells us that Magi in the East **saw a sign of God – a bright star** – and left everything to follow the star. The Gospel tells us that this star *“filled their hearts with delight”* and that they delivered their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to the Newborn King.

## Leader:

### Read: Matthew 2:11

As we celebrate the Epiphany, we are reminded that **we are Missionaries** through our prayers, sacrifices, acts of kindness and through our financial gifts to the **Missionary Childhood Association**. We help to bring the light of Christ through our efforts to be *“children helping children”* in the Church around the world. Like the Magi, we offer special gifts to our Savior. Song: We Three Kings *[TO DO: Representatives come forward from the back of the church and process to the manager scene on the altar to present the offerings. Use decorative containers to represent each of the three gifts of the Magi.]*

## READER 1:

Frankincense recalls how Jesus lived His life as **One with the Father**, always seeking to do God’s will. Our prayers rise like sweet-smelling incense before God. The thankfulness of our hearts and the holiness of our lives make us like frankincense to God and to the world.

*[TO DO: Bring up all the prayer offerings we made during Advent for the Missions.]*

## READER 2:

Gold is a precious metal, considered worthy of a king. It was used to barter and make purchases. As we prepared for Jesus’ birth, we put aside money from little jobs we had performed or from sacrifices made by not eating a piece of candy. *[TO DO: Bring up our MCA mission money to make a difference in the lives of children.]*

## READER 3:

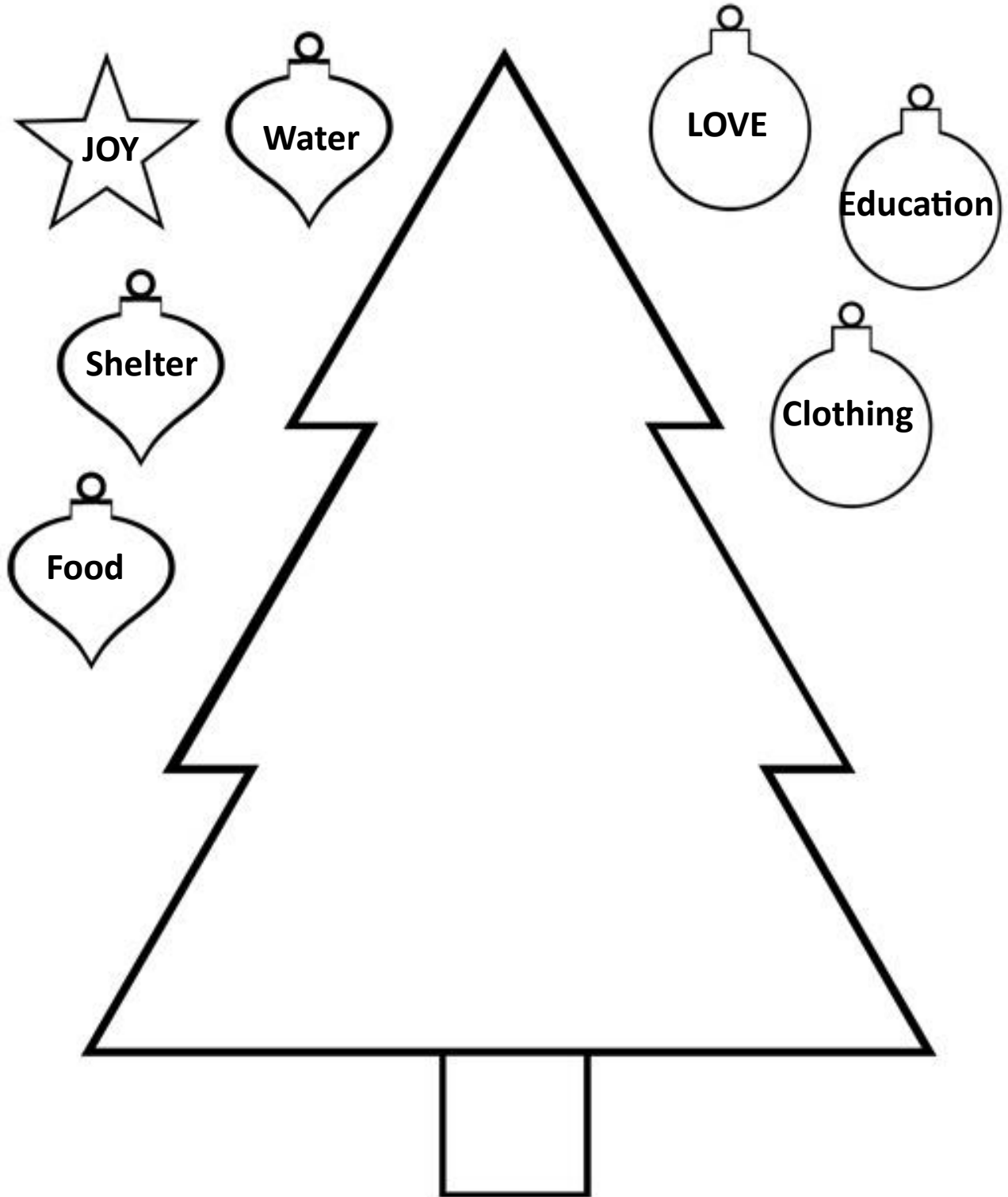
Myrrh is part of the compound in anointing oil. It has been used as medicine, a preservative and perfume. Frequently it is associated with death. In preparation for Christmas we were encouraged to give of ourselves, to volunteer, and to offer service hours expecting nothing in return. We had to die to self to help others. Let us bring these sacrifices to the Infant King.

*[TO DO: Here particular students can be highlighted to say a few words about their personal efforts. For example: I watched my baby brother without asking my mom for money; I went to Mass every Tuesday during Advent; I gave my candy money to the Missions, etc. Then, announce the total money collected for the Missions during Advent.]*

**Leader:** Thank you girls and boys for this **Epiphany**, making your love visible with the Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh of your life. Continue **to be Missionaries** and let your light shine everywhere. Continue to punch holes in the dark-ness of our world, even to the ends of the earth, letting the Light of our Lord shine through our words and actions. **Now let us join together as one family in faith and pray Our Father...**

## Closing Song: Joy to the World

## Mission Christmas Tree



Color and cut the tree and ornaments and glue the ornaments on the tree. *Be creative!* When you are finished, as a Class, select a different Mission country for each of the **4 weeks of Advent**. [Teachers, you can have fun with your students. Spin the globe and have students stop it with their fingers. The Mission country is chosen by where you land] For that week, pray that the children of the Mission country you selected have the things that are listed on the Ornaments. Even when Christmas is over, you can continue to pray for a different Mission Country each week!

## Saint Francis Xavier: Patron Saint of the Missions

On April 7, 1506, Francis Xavier was born in Xavier Castle, in the kingdom of Navarre [part of present-day Spain]. He was a member of a noble family, and his childhood was one of privilege—however, it was disrupted by his father's death, as well as by outside efforts to take control of Navarre.

In 1525, Francis went to study at the University of Paris. There, he met Ignatius of Loyola, who himself later became a Saint. Ignatius had experienced a religious conversion and did his best to convince Francis to join him on the same path of devotion. Though at first hesitant, Francis was eventually inspired by his friend's example.

On August 15, 1534, Francis Xavier, Ignatius and five others pledged themselves to the **Society of Jesus** [the Jesuits]. In addition to vows of celibacy and poverty, they also promised to visit the Holy Land. Impressed by the Jesuits, King John III of Portugal asked the Jesuits for Missionaries to work in his empire. Although Ignatius initially selected others for the task, Francis stepped in when a fellow priest became ill.



Francis began his Missionary work arriving in Goa, India in 1542. He came to be admired in that country for his ability to live and work side-by-side with the poor. Fulfilling his baptismal call to be *Missionary* and wanting to bring the word of Jesus to others, Francis continued to travel to Ceylon, the Molucca & Banda Islands, and the Malay Peninsula.

In 1549, Francis landed at Kagoshima, Japan. As he had at his other Missions, Francis arranged for the translation of religious texts. These steps helped him

reach so many converts in his year-and-a-half stay in Japan.

Francis' next Missionary focus was China. He traveled to one of the outside islands, but was not able to access the Mainland. The borders were closed to foreigners. Before Francis could find a way to reach the China mainland, illness struck. He died on the island outside of China on December 3, 1552, at the age of 46.

Though Francis passed away at a relatively young age, he accomplished much in his life. In addition to being a founding member of the **Society of Jesus**, **he baptized an estimated 30,000 people**. Francis was canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.

A famed Missionary, he is known as the

***Patron Saint of Missionaries.***



*"I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him or have forgotten Him"*

- St. Francis Xavier

**Feast Day:** December 3rd

**Patron of:** Missions

**Birth:** April 7, 1506

**Death:** December 3, 1552

**Beatified:** October 25, 1619

**Canonized:** March 12, 1622

### Discussion Questions:

Saint Francis was inspired by his friend Saint Ignatius of Loyola to devote himself to God.

- † **Is there a person or friend in your life, who inspires you to pray and sacrifice?**
- † **How can you encourage those around you to grow closer to God during this **EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MISSION?****



## Mission Focus: Tanzania

### Sun of Hope Orphanage

Have you ever heard of Mount Kilimanjaro? ***It is the tallest mountain in Africa!*** Only a few short miles away from this prominent landmark, is the Mother House for the **Holy Spirit Sisters**, in Moshi, Tanzania. This Missionary Religious order was founded for teaching, pastoral care, nursing and social work. In Tanzania, God inspired them to hear the cries of the poor and abandoned children of Moshi.

Responding to God, on the 50th Anniversary of their founding, the **Holy Spirit Sisters** opened the Sun of Hope Village Orphanage. The Sun in the orphanage's name has come to represent another day in the lives of each of these children.



Children meeting for the first time!

Children from miles away, most without even a pair of shoes, arrive at the orphanage with just the clothes on their back. The orphanage, opened now for two years, has become *their home*.

Twenty children are taken care of here and the number is growing, each and every day. Their future is looking **Bright**, like the Sun.

Through the **Missionary Childhood Association**, the **Holy Spirit Sisters** are able to feed the children, care for them, and teach *them about Jesus!* The children celebrated their first Christmas, **working together**

**to make their very own Christmas Tree.** They received one of their first Christmas gifts, and each child received a new Uniform!

Pray and sacrifice for children like those in Moshi, Tanzania and around the World. The children at Sun of Hope are being taught to pray the **World Mission Rosary, just like you!** To the left is a photo of the children praying.



Children arriving at Sun of Hope



Together, the Children made a home-made Christmas Tree



Each child received a Christmas gift, they were so happy!



Every time you pass a house that is decorated for the holidays during this Advent and Christmas season, we ask that you remember the Children in the Missions, and pray that their Holiday is joyful and **bright!**

**MCA Children!** Make a small sacrifice of **\$2**, so a Child can receive a Christmas Gift, like the Holy Spirit Sisters give at **SUN OF HOPE.**

Tanzania, Africa



Pictures & Story Excerpts -Holy Spirit Sisters



All over the world, children are celebrating the Birth of Jesus!



Christmas Play in Ghana, Africa



Children receiving a Christmas Snack at an Orphanage in India

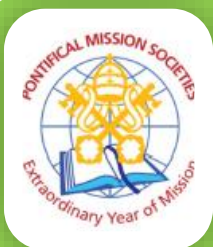
“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but might have eternal life.”



Delivering Christmas Gifts in Mongolia



Children preparing for a Christmas Nativity Play in the Dominican Republic



Remember that here in Philadelphia, we are celebrating an

**EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MISSION**

During this Holy Season of Advent, pray that the joy of Jesus' birth reaching the ends of the Earth, and that the 1,111 diocese we support all over the world have a very

*Merry Christmas!*