

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

ADVENT—EPIPHANY 2021 • MONTHLY MISSION RESOURCE



Dear Mission Moderators, Principals and Directors & Coordinators of Religious Education,

The **season of Advent** begins four Sundays before Christmas and is a time of prayerful preparation. During **Advent** we recall the Israelites' long wait for the Messiah's birth and remember that Jesus was born into the world and will come again.

This year, we anticipate the birth of Jesus in a very different world. As we continue to navigate through this pandemic, please use this resource as a tool to celebrate **Advent** with a special *prayerful and giving* concern for the Missions.

Each week, as we light the **Advent candle**, each of us must remember to thank God for the many blessings we receive in our lives. Add to this, a petition asking Him to provide His loving care and mercy for all Missionaries and children and families in the Missions, who are most in need during this difficult time.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, schools and religious education programs are utilizing virtual learning in countless ways so that their students can fully receive their curriculum. Be creative and look for ways to bring the message of their baptismal call *to be Missionary* to them at least once each and every month.

We implore you to visit our website, www.phillymissions.org/MCA that includes additional videos and virtual activities that will continue to help educators foster Missionary Disciples.

Blessings to you and yours this Advent season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Sincerely in Christ's Mission and in prayer,

Reverend Monsignor Arthur E. Rodgers
Archdiocesan Director



Nativity Play at the Chiriaco Mission
in the Amazon region of Peru

Ali Holden
Mission Education

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

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS:



- † Christmas Artwork Contest Winners [Page 3]
- † Advent Mission Calendar [Page 4]
- † Christmas Artwork Contest Entry Form [Page 5 & 6]
- † Mission focused prayers for each week of Advent [Page 7]
- † Prayer Service for the Feast of the Epiphany [Page 8]
- † Use this coloring Activity during the 12 days of Christmas. Use this to have students brainstorm how they can help the Missions in the New Year [Page 9]
- † This Month's Mission Saint [Page 10]
- † Distribute the **Mission Focus: page**. Pray with your students for children in the Mission lands [Page 11]
- † Add the Mission Photo Page to your Prayer Corner; remember update this corner each month [Page 12]

FOR SECONDARY & HIGH SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS:

- † Baptism of Our Lord Activity, click [HERE](#).
- † Include the Holy Father's December Prayer Intention: *that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ may be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.*
- † Visit the USCCB Advent home page for interesting and informative resources on Advent [HERE](#).

Congratulations to the 2020 Christmas Artwork Contest Winners!

All Winners were at Archdiocesan Celebration of World Mission Sunday on October 18.
See this presentation and more our website at www.phillymissions.org.

VIEW THE CHILDREN'S WINNING ARTWORK ON PAGE 3



NATIONAL Artwork Winners

The creativity of students in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was acknowledged this year, as **two students** were chosen as **NATIONAL WINNERS** of the **2019-20 Missionary Childhood Association Christmas Artwork Contest**.

These two student were among twenty-four selected from Dioceses across the US as **NATIONAL WINNERS**. The students' artwork will be recognized virtually and shown online throughout Advent. All winners receive a commemorative plaque of recognition.



Andrea Verch
Regina Coeli Academy



Toni Frank
Saint James Regional School

Archdiocesan Artwork Winners



Pari Amin
Maternity BVM



Hannah Pozzi
Saint Peter the Apostle



Rachel Wiegand
Notre Dame de Lourdes



Nathan Gotto
Saint Francis of Assisi

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
**MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD
 ASSOCIATION**



**2020 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR
 for Missionary Children and Families**

Visit www.phillymissions.org for more Advent prayers & activities

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>29 First Sunday of Advent Create a family Advent wreath. Light the first candle on your wreath. Pray as a family each week.</p>	<p>30 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.</p>	<p>1 Perform some act of service for your parish. Ask your Pastor for suggestions!</p>	<p>2 Learn to pray the World Mission Rosary at www.phillymissions.org. Pray for families in Asia.</p>	<p>3 St. Francis Xavier Feast Day — the Patron of the Missions. He brought the word of God to Africa and Asia. Pray for these children & Missionaries in these Mission lands today.</p>	<p>4 Make a Christmas card for a teacher. Pray for them and for their teachers who bring the word of Jesus to children in Mission lands.</p>	<p>5 St. Nicholas Follow the example of Saint Nicholas on his Feast Day tomorrow. Surprise someone with an act of kindness today.</p>
<p>6 Second Sunday of Advent Go to Mass as a family. Light two candles on your Advent wreath. Read today's Gospel.</p>	<p>7 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families living in Oceania.</p>	<p>8 To honor the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. pray the Rosary. Mary was born free of sin. Say 3 Hail Mary's for unborn babies</p>	<p>9 Do a household chore today, without being asked.</p>	<p>10 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families living in the Americas.</p>	<p>11 Learn about the Mexican tradition of <i>Los Posados</i>, reenacting the journey Joseph and Mary took to find shelter before the birth of Jesus.</p>	<p>12 Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the Americas. What is the story of Mary who appeared to Juan Diego?</p>
<p>13 Third Sunday of Advent Go to Mass! Light the first two candles and the PINK candle on your Advent wreath and pray together for families in need.</p>	<p>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 9,552 orphanages run by the Church in the Missions, over half in Africa.</p>	<p>15 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families and Missionaries living in Europe.</p>	<p>16 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.</p>	<p>17 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.</p>	<p>18 Spend time with a loved one instead of watching TV or playing video games.</p>	<p>19 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.</p>
<p>20 Fourth Sunday of Advent Read about Jesus' birth Matthew 1:18-25</p>	<p>21 Make a point to hug everyone in your family today. Pray for a child in the Missions who may not feel loved. Pray that a Missionary makes him or her feel loved!</p>	<p>22 Pick one way you can simplify your lifestyle, to make more room for God.</p>	<p>23 Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary for families in Africa.</p>	<p>24 There are many children in the missions who do not have family or friends. For each family member you have, or friend you see at school today, give a MCA donation for Advent. Thank God for your family and friends.</p>	<p>25 Happy Birthday Jesus! Celebrate the Birth of the Christ Child by joyfully thanking God for the great gift He has given you, the gift of His Son!</p>	<p>Have a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!</p>



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS ARTWORK CONTEST 2020 - 2021

Artwork entries received by the [Missionary Childhood Association](#), Archdiocese of Philadelphia, by the February 1, 2021 deadline will automatically be considered for both National and Archdiocesan recognition.

Nationally, twenty-four winners will be selected from entries from dioceses across the United States. Winning artwork will be displayed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. during Advent and Christmas 2020. Two grand prize winners will be selected and their artwork reproduced as the official Christmas cards of the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, Father Andrew Small, OMI. Contest winners will be notified in Spring, 2020. All winners receive a commemorative plaque.

Within the *Archdiocese of Philadelphia*, several entries will be selected for Archdiocesan recognition on World Mission Sunday, October 24, 2021. Winning artwork will appear on the website www.phillymissions.org, and in publications of the *Pontifical Mission Societies* in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. All winners will receive a certificate of award.

To enter, please complete this entire form and attach it *[with tape]* to the back of each student's entry. Please type or print. Artwork will not be accepted without this form. Please note, artwork cannot be returned. Artwork that does not conform to the guidelines will be disqualified.

Deadline for entries is February 1, 2021.

**Mail entries to: [Missionary Childhood Association](#), Archdiocese of Philadelphia
222 N. 17th Street, Room #823, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

STUDENT NAME _____

PLEASE CIRCLE: Boy Girl Grade _____

PLEASE CIRCLE: Catholic School Parish Religious Ed/CCD Home School

NAME OF SCHOOL OR RE/CCD _____

PRINCIPAL / DRE _____

PRINCIPAL / DRE E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL OR PARISH ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL OR PARISH PHONE # _____

STUDENT'S HOME ADDRESS _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN _____

STUDENT'S HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

2020-2021 GUIDELINES

GENERAL

- Contest is open to young Catholics in grades K-8. Entries must be postmarked or received by no later than **February 1, 2021.**
- All entries become the property of the MCA Archdiocesan and national office, which reserves the right to depict all or part of the selected illustrations. It is not possible for the national office to offer any compensation for entries or to return them.

ARTWORK SPECIFICATIONS

- Artwork must be on an 8.5" x 11" sheet of WHITE paper — no construction or lined paper. White card stock is okay (Digital copies are permitted)
- **The illustration must be depicted HORIZONTALLY.**
- Students must illustrate one of the subjects listed under the heading "Subjects."
- Acceptable media includes crayons, pastels, markers, tempera or watercolor paints. **PLEASE — NO LEAD OR COLOR PENCILS.**
- Artwork must be the child's own. Tracings and direct copies of other art cannot be considered. Students selected as finalists will be asked to validate the originality of their artwork.

SUBJECTS

- *The Nativity (a manger scene, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, animals)*
- *Three Wise Men (presentation of gifts or following the star)*
- *Shepherds (with sheep, in fields, seeing the angel, or visiting the manger)*
- *Mother and Child (Mary with her infant son)*
- *Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem*
- *Newborn Jesus in manger*
- *The Angel Gabriel*

HELPFUL HINTS

- Use a lot of eye-catching color. Bolder colors reproduce best. Lightly colored artwork will not show up well if reduced.
- Be careful to erase or cover pencil outlines.
- Do not include text or lettering on the drawing.
- Fill up most of the page, being careful not to let the main parts of the drawing get too close to the edges of the paper.
- Make sure facial features on people and animals are bold (e.g. nose, eyes, lips, etc.) so they will reproduce well.

Mission Prayers for each week of **ADVENT**

Click [HERE](#) to access a
virtual Advent Wreath to
light with your students
each week



Parishioners in Manila still celebrating Mass and asking for God's help in the midst of the pandemic

**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 only pink candle.
This 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 and we hope that someone can provide for all their needs. Thank you for the joy we feel as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.

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

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 darkness 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



Above, all the parts of Jesus' Nativity are numbered. On 12 days leading to Christmas, fill in this coloring page according to the numbers. Before you color each day, write on the back of this page 12 ways you **can help children in the Missions in the New Year**. Think of things which include prayer, giving up something to help others and encouraging others to do the same. Coloring each **day** will be a reminder to complete this activity and help Mission children during Advent, Christmas and each day next year.

Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas, a Christian Bishop, provided for the poor and sick and is the basis for the popular character of Santa Claus. **He may not be remembered for his work as a Missionary, he is a great example to all Missionary children because of his great example of giving.**

Saint Nicholas was born circa 280 in Patara, Lycia, an area that is part of present-day Turkey. He lost both of his parents as a young man and reportedly used his inheritance to help the poor and sick. A devout Christian, his faith journey led him to be named Bishop of Myra.

There are many legends about Saint Nicholas of Myra. One story tells how he helped three poor sisters. Their father did not have enough money to pay their dowries and thought of selling them into servitude. Three times, Saint Nicholas secretly went to their house at night and put a bag of money inside. The man used the money so that one of his daughters could marry. On the third visit, the man saw Saint Nicholas and thanked him for his kindness. He also reportedly saved three men who were falsely imprisoned and sentenced to death.

Saint Nicholas is believed to have died on December 6, 343. Over the years, stories of his miracles and work for the poor spread to other parts of the world. He became known, as should be no surprise, as the protector of children and was associated with gift-giving.

As Missionaries, we too can be like Saint Nicholas, and give to the Missions. It is important that during the Advent season, we call to mind the importance of sacrifice for others, especially when so many others tend to only get excited about **receiving gifts** on Christmas.

Prayer and Sacrifice for the Missions, is the best gift that we can give Missionary children around the world, who need our love and support the most.

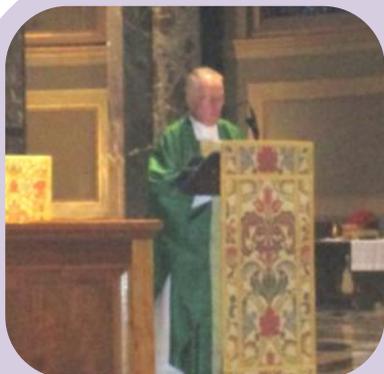


Feast Day: December 6th

Patron of: Children, Sailors, Fishermen, Merchants and Bakers

FUN FACT: Saint Nicholas was recognized as a Saint long before the Roman Catholic Church adopted canonization procedures in the late 10th century *[at that time local Bishops canonized Saints; in the late 1100's canonization in the Roman Catholic Church became the responsibility of the Pope]*. Therefore, Saint Nicholas does not have a specific date for which he was canonized. Instead, records show a gradual spread of reverence until stories of him became widespread and he was recognized everywhere.

Mission Focus: Bring Comfort & Peace to Kenya this Advent



Monsignor Arthur Rodgers, Director of the **Pontifical Mission Societies**, inspired the congregation with his homily on World Mission Sunday, reminding each of us, of our responsibility, as the faithful, **to be Missionary**.

He also reminded us how blessed we are to have the most basic needs, especially this year, as we are faced with the pain and suffering of the pandemic . . . *“we have been blessed with hospitals, doctors, nurses, being able to find and wear masks, being able to wash our hands and maintain our distance for safety.”*

He emphatically continued, *“We are all able to do all of this so readily . . . but there are so many Missionaries around the world who do not have - doctors, nurses, masks . . . and are not able to even wash their hands because they have no running water.”*



A example of this is seen In Kenya. Missionaries are doing their best to support personal hygiene amongst poor and vulnerable young girls in small rural towns, empowering those that encounter various forms of discrimination [*because they are women*], abuse and health challenges. Poor access to sanitation facilities further compounds and perpetuates this *“cycle of shame”*. Please help support our Missionary Brothers and Sisters in Kenya so girls can receive these most needed health resources – and be able go to school to achieve their dreams!



Throughout Kenya and most of Africa, people depend on a local rivers for water. This water source is very seasonal and, as you would expect, contaminated. The pandemic as created additional challenges, as the water has been very limited during the highest peaks of the disease and it important to practice exceptional cleanliness to keep the virus from spreading. The answer to this water dilemma are to build bore holes and . The bore hole can not only be used for cleanliness and for a source of safe drinking water, but for farming needs, as well. One bore hole alone can will benefit more than 5000 people in a Kenya community or anywhere throughout Africa.



WILL YOU...

Give \$1 to help support the health of young girls in Kenya?

Give \$5 to teach safer hygiene practices during the Pandemic?

Give \$25 to buy materials for a bore hole?

"CHILDREN NEED OUR HELP. LET'S NOT FORGET THEM!"



In many countries of the world today, **Missionary Children** celebrate the **Epiphany** by going from house to house, supervised by adults, singing carols. Three children dress as the Wise Men and follow a child carrying the Star of Bethlehem, who knocks on the door of the house. In this way, the children proclaim the *Good News of Jesus' birth* and at the same time raise funds to send to poor children through the **Missionary Childhood Association**. *The Covid-19 Pandemic is not stopping these Missionary Disciples from French speaking Switzerland from doing their part for the Missions!* Here, Missionary children carry out their activities, in accordance with health guidelines AND in a flexible and creative manner. This year, for example, the group recites the blessing outside the windows of the house and collect the offerings with a fishing net or through bank cards rather than in a piggy bank!

The Missionary Childhood Association wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

