

Advent and Christmas time

Activity #1

During this Christmas time, when consumption and shopping are very popular, let us help children to refocus on what matters most: the birth of Jesus. Christmas is the big time of the year when children receive gifts; the goal of this exercise is to teach children to give them their rightful place. The important thing is not the quantity of gifts received but the love and depth of heart of those who give them and those who receive them. Around this theme and in connection with examples taken from the life of Marie-Catherine de Saint-Augustin, we therefore propose that you:



Bounce back on an axis of effort.



Contemplate the mystery of Christmas and embark on these avenues of reflection.



Ask for special graces.

The feast of Christmas



Every December 25, we celebrate the birth of the Child Jesus. He came to Earth to save us from sin and open the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

*The joy of this great day is expressed by beautiful religious services and, often, by a family reunion, pretty decorations, a good meal, as well as gifts, always eagerly awaited. These gifts are signs of affection between people who love each other. In the joy of exchanging gifts, let us never forget that **Jesus is our model**.*

In 1656, Marie-Catherine of Saint-Augustin had a vision in a dream of the Child Jesus and Mary. Listen carefully to what happened.

"Being in a large room and having suddenly noticed that the little Jesus was completely numb and seized with cold, I addressed His Holy Mother with great confidence, and said to her: "Holy Virgin, my most honored Mistress and Queen! If you would give me your very dear Son, I would warm Him. Alas, how great my pity is to see Him naked and trembling like this!" Mary answered her in a rather sad voice: "No one gives him a robe to clothe him." (Ragueneau, p.83-84)

This reminds us of how the Child Jesus was born. He came into the world in the greatest poverty, cold and darkness. He was rejected by the inhabitants of Bethlehem and He was born ignored by the world. Sister Marie-Catherine notices that the Child Jesus is cold, as on Christmas night. So, she wants to warm the little Jesus, like the donkey and the ox did; but the Blessed Virgin answers her that no one gives Him a robe to clothe him... as in Bethlehem, she sees the lack of welcome given to the Savior. The shepherds and the Wise Men have placed gifts in front of the Manger.




And me, what do I want to offer to the Little Jesus of the Manger? What would please Him?

When I do something that pleases Jesus, it is like bringing yourself clothes at the Holy Stable to warm Him!

I can offer Him:

My heart; Love Him; but also love my neighbor, starting with my brothers and sisters, my parents, my classmates, my friends; paying attention to others, to those who are alone, sick or in pain, being gentle with someone I don't love enough, forgiving someone who has hurt me... This is what would please the Little Jesus in the Manger.

 I choose a gift that I will prepare in my heart and offer to Jesus on Christmas Day:

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Christmas is also an opportunity to prepare gifts or to have special attentions towards others. Little Catherine loved to give her meals to the poor who came to the house of her grandparents with whom she lived.


To do something for others, I can:

- Donate one of my toys or clothes to an association collecting things for poor children
- Willingly lend gifts I have received
- Make small gifts for others
- Visit a sick or isolated person
- Suggest to my parents to welcome an isolated person to the family table on Christmas Day
- Pray at the foot of the Nativity Scene for those who need it: the poor, the sick, those who do not believe and do not love Jesus...

At Christmas, we will also receive signs of love from those who are dear to us: a gift, an attention, an effort, a kindness. Let us receive them with joy!

Catherine often thanked the Lord for what He had given us.

"I thanked the three Persons of the most holy and most adorable Trinity, each separately, for the love they had had for man, in the Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ." (Ragueneau, p. 122, March 1664)

 On Christmas Day, I want, like Sister Marie-Catherine, to welcome gifts with gratitude.

REFLECTION OF THE ILLUSTRATION

On the following page, you will find a coloring page.

Which characters and things I recognize on the drawing? *The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Child Jesus, Sister Marie-Catherine, the Star of Bethlehem.*

What is happening on the drawing? *Sister Marie-Catherine is kneeling in front of the Virgin Mary, holding the Child Jesus in her arms. Sister Marie-Catherine extends her hands to take the Divine Child and warm Him.*



