



KEEPING TIME

Praying
ADVENT
Throughout the School Day

SANDRA IWANSKI

saint mary's press

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DEDICATION

*For Paul,
who always believes—
in the Divine Mystery and in me.*

*I owe a special thank you to the wonderful young women, faculty, and staff at
Rosary High School who have welcomed me into their community and have
invited me to pray with them in all seasons.*

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CONTENTS

Introduction	7
First Week of Advent	9
Second Week of Advent	21
Third Week of Advent	33
Fourth Week of Advent	45
Acknowledgments	56

INTRODUCTION

There is a rhythm to life. The Genesis promise of breathing in and breathing out is brought to life in the way our Church celebrates the seasons of the year . . . and in the way we move through our days.

As a Catholic high school, we invite our school community to walk in a prayerful rhythm. The natural cadence of our day includes all the bells and classes and adjusted schedules of any high school; however, we also build in moments of pause, moments of prayer, moments to notice the breathing in and breathing out of God's Spirit.

This book offers schools a way to observe an Advent pause at the beginning of every class. As we journey through Advent, we discover the ways that not only religious studies but also science, the arts, social studies, foreign languages, business, math, physical education, English, and even after-school activities point us to the eternal truth: we are God's beloved. These prayers are offered as a way for the whole school to honor the rhythms of the day and of the season.

The format reflects a tempo that is familiar to us. The leader (teacher or student) begins with the sign of the cross:

**We begin this class as we begin all things:
In the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Each day of Advent begins with a verse from the Scriptures. The rhythm of repeating the verse throughout the day helps us remember it. A short prayer follows the Scripture verse. After reading the prayer, the leader may choose to move to the final blessing, include a prayer everyone knows by heart, or invite particular intentions from the class. The following blessing comes from the Dominican tradition and is rooted in the writings of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, later adapted by Sr. Mary Jean Traeger, OP, a Springfield Dominican. You may choose to end your prayer time with this blessing or with one that is unique to your school or order.

**May God, Creator, bless us
May God, Redeemer, heal us
May the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us all we need. Amen.**

(Adapted from Tugwell, ed., *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*, p. 153)



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

MONDAY

First Week of Advent

Opening Prayer

We begin this class as we begin all things:

In the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Scripture Reading

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.*

Isaiah 9:2

First Hour

God of day and God of darkness, be with us as we begin our Advent journey. May we discover your presence in the shapes and forms, the sounds and colors that surround us. Work through us to bring light to a troubled world.

Second Hour

God of day and God of darkness, we recall the men and women who have gone before us—the people who have seen through your eyes, noticing every bit of goodness in the hearts of your people. May their lives and their stories teach us and challenge us to be light in a shadowed world.

Third Hour

God of day and God of darkness, today let our faith rest in you, who hears each word we speak. Help us to feel the world with our heart and to see it with our soul so that we too may bring light to our corner of your creation.

Fourth Hour

God of day and God of darkness, our Advent journey leads us to a place we do not know. May our particular gifts and our way of seeing the world invite the people who share our lives to embrace a new vision for a new world.

Fifth Hour

God of day and God of darkness, dream with us this day. Dream with us that our school can light the way to a world where gentleness and kindness are the answers. Help us shape the dream of a world where love lives.

Sixth Hour

God of day and God of darkness, we pause to celebrate the sacredness of our life—and the mystery of your light living in us. Help us to see you clearly in our work and worship, prayer and play, solitude and busyness. And once we see you, enable us to share your light with the world.

Seventh Hour

God of day and God of darkness, we imagine the entire globe encircled by people with their arms outstretched! May we join with all your children in prayer as we await the coming of your Kingdom. As this school day draws to a close, may we find a way to reach out a hand to another and welcome him or her into the circle of your love.

Eighth Hour

God of day and God of darkness, we recognize that some days are shadowed times. Help us to understand that days of darkness are but a moment. Help us to be brave enough to see that we are destined to build the Kingdom.

Closing Blessing

We sign ourselves with the sign of our faith as we pray:

May God, Creator, bless us
May God, Redeemer, heal us
May the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us all we need. Amen.