

Prayers for Christmas

Scripture Focus: Luke 2:1–14 (Midnight Mass, The Birth of Jesus), Luke 2:15–20 (Mass at Dawn, The Visit of the Shepherds), John 1:1–18 (Mass During the Day, Prologue to the Gospel of John)

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father . . .

Leader: At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the coming of God among us. *(Briefly summarize the reading you have chosen. The reader then reads the Scripture passage chosen from Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics.)*

Leader: This Christmas, let us make room for Jesus in our hearts. Let us pray, “Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.”

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Leader: When we prepare for your coming by our respect for our parents, guardians, and teachers,

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Leader: When we show kindness to others, especially to members of our own families,

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Leader: When we celebrate Christmas with our families and friends,

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Leader: When we remember those who are poor and in need this Christmas,

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Leader: When we participate in Holy Mass this Christmas,

All: Come to our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Gather the group in the Bible corner where a Christmas stable has been set up. All the figures should be placed there except for the Infant Jesus. Choose one person, by drawing names, to carry the Infant Jesus and to place this figure in the manger. If possible, play an appropriate Christmas carol at this time.

Leader: When we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus came to us as a poor little baby. Help us to remember that of all the gifts we receive at Christmas, Jesus is the best gift of all. Let us thank him for all that he has given to us by responding, “Thank you, Jesus.”

For family and friends,
For the joy of Christmas,
For the peace that comes from helping others,
For showing us how to live in peace and love,
For dying and rising for us,
For giving us eternal life,

Suggest that the group offer their own statements of gratitude.

Leader: Let us all say Amen and Merry Christmas!

All: Amen! Merry Christmas!



Ritual Guide

Opening Prayer

Preparation

Choose a reader to read the passage from the Gospel of Luke.

Optional: Choose an appropriate song to begin and end the prayer. (Suggestion: "Silent Night" or another Christmas carol.)

Gather

Gather the middle schoolers in the Bible corner. Distribute the prayer handouts. Briefly rehearse the prayer response.

Pray

Begin with the Sign of the Cross as indicated. Introduce the reading with the words given for the teacher or in your own words. As the closing prayer is a repetitive prayer, the group will not need to use the prayer handouts again, so they may be collected.

(An activity for Christmas can be found in chapter 10 of the *Breakthrough! Leader Guide*.)

Closing Prayer

Preparation

This prayer, while based on the activity offered for Christmas, is suitable for any activity or celebration of Christmas.

Gather

Gather the middle schoolers in the Bible corner. Explain that our closing prayer reminds us that Jesus wants us to love him, ourselves, and others. (Because this is a repetitive prayer, the handouts sheets will not be needed.) Tell the group that you will be the reader, and that they should repeat each line after you.

Pray

Lead the group in prayer.

Optional: End with the Christmas carol you chose for the opening prayer, or a different one.

