



Keeping the Christmas Season at Home

DECEMBER 25, 2018—JANUARY 13, 2019

Christmas

SEASON

CHRISTMAS DAILY PRAYER

Your gift to me, O Lord:
to grow in faith
during these holy Christmas days.

Your gift to me, O Lord:
to increase in hope
throughout the joyful days
of Christmas.

Your gift to me, O Lord:
to live in love,
beyond the days of this
Christmas season.

TABLE PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Glory to the newborn King!
Glory to the newborn King!

May this meal strengthen us
to serve you by serving others
as we acclaim your marvelous birth.

Glory to the newborn King!

May this bountiful table nourish us
to share the glad tidings
as angel voices fill the heavens.

Glory to the newborn King!

May this be a season of grace
so others will see divine love
in our celebration of love made flesh.

Glory to the newborn King!

Bless this meal, bless our lives
during these joyful Christmas days.
Amen.

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EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

Items needed: chalk and a small bottle of holy water. Gather with family members, friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the front door.

Leader: In the (+) name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: *Christus mansionem benedicat.*
May Christ bless this house, Amen.

The main doorway is signed
[20 + C + M + B + 19]

Leader (or other Reader): A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. These commandments I give you are to be in your hearts. Place them on the doorframes of your home and on your entry gate. The Word of the Lord.

Each room is sprinkled with holy water.

Living room:

Bring us to live with you one day in heaven.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Kitchen:

The celestial feast awaits us.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Dining room:

Seat us at the heavenly banquet.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bedrooms:

Be our renewal and our rest.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bathroom:

Make us clean with fresh water.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

All return to the front door to pray together.

Our Father . . .

All are sprinkled with holy water.

Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

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BETTER THAN THE INCARNATION?

"This life became visible." —1 John 1:2

St. John proclaims the Incarnation in a spectacular fashion. The God Who is outside of time and space has entered into both in order to be with us, to become flesh and make His dwelling among us (Jn 1:14). Human beings could see, touch, hear, and even eat Jesus, the Word made flesh (1 Jn 1:1-2; Jn 6:50-58). St. John never got over the marvelous truth of the Incarnation, that the majestic God of Whom he wrote could be embraced, heard, and seen. John even leaned back against Jesus and felt Jesus' Sacred Heart beating. John knew what he was talking about when he wrote of the Word becoming flesh (Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 1:1ff).

Yet Jesus told John, and us: "It is much better for you that I go" back to heaven and leave this earth (Jn 16:7). John knew that the incarnate presence of Jesus would remain with us in "a more excellent" (Heb 8:6) way through the Eucharist (Jn 6:56) and the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7-14). He tells us: "This is how we know that He remains in us: from the Spirit that He gave us" (1 Jn 3:24). Likewise, John advises us that Jesus promises that anyone who "feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in" that person (Jn 6:56).

Believe that Jesus remains with us in a "more excellent" way. With St. John, see and believe (Jn 20:8).

Prayer: Father, send the Holy Spirit to utterly amaze me at the realization that Jesus died on the cross for me.

Promise: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched — we speak of the Word of life." —1 Jn 1:1

Praise: St. John's exhortation in his old age was: "Little children, love one another" (see 1 Jn 4:7).

<https://www.presentationministries.com/obob/obob.asp?lang=en&d=12/27/2018>

KEEP CHRISTMAS IN CHRIST

"This enduring love came through Jesus Christ." —John 1:17

For hundreds of years, the coming of the Messiah had been prophesied. "They name Him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful" (Is 9:5-6). However, when the Messiah finally was born, "there was in Him no stately bearing to make us look at Him, nor appearance that would attract us to Him. He was spurned and avoided by men" (Is 53:2-3). "The inhabitants of Jerusalem and their rulers failed to recognize Him, and in condemning Him they fulfilled the words of the prophets which we read sabbath after sabbath" (Acts 13:27). "He was in the world, and through Him the world was made, yet the world did not know Who He was. To His own He came, yet His own did not accept Him" (Jn 1:10-11). Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger because there was already no room for Him in the hearts of many (Lk 2:7). Jesus, emptied of His glory (Phil 2:7), all too human, the suffering Messiah, continues to be easily rejected. He is so easily rejected that over a billion people can celebrate His birthday without giving Him a present, or even a thought. Will you be among the shepherds who notice Jesus — or even among the wise men who worship Him? Will you be like Mary and Joseph and let the Lord totally disrupt your life — all for the Baby Jesus? Will you put Christ ahead of Christmas? Reject anything in Christmas not pleasing to Christ. Accept Him as Lord and Savior of Christmas.

Prayer: Father, give me a "Mary" Christmas. May I love Jesus as Mary does.

Promise: God "has spoken to us through His Son." —Heb 1:2

Praise: Praise the Christ-Child, Love incarnate!

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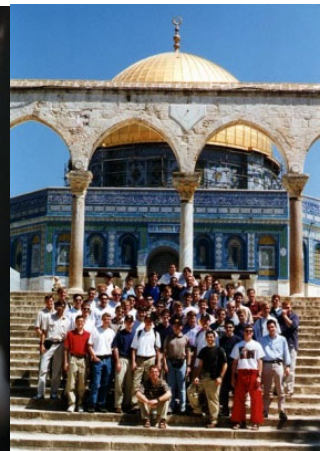
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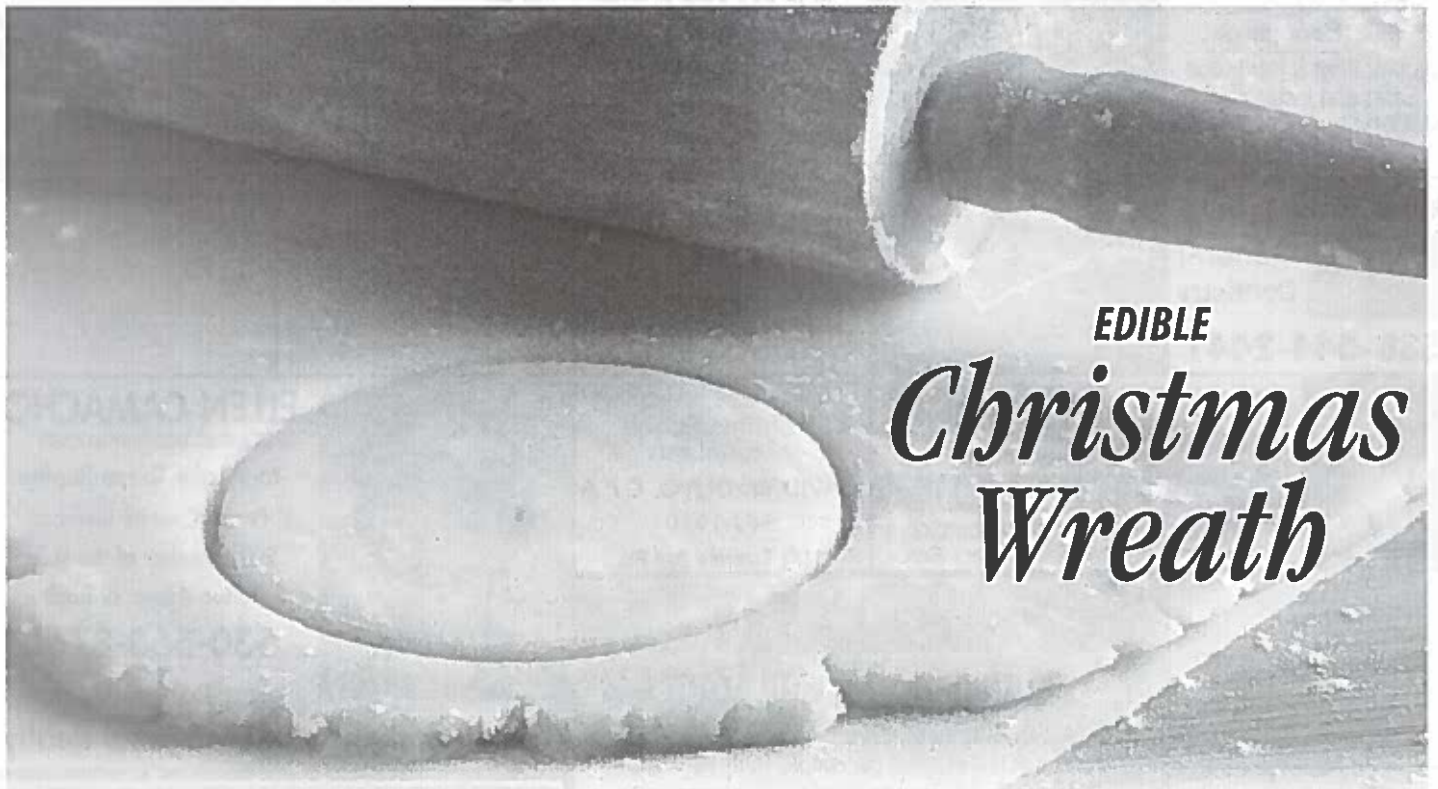
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EDIBLE
*Christmas
Wreath*

Every family has holiday dessert traditions. But if you'd like a change of pace—or a chance to explore the kitchen—try your hand at making an edible Christmas wreath.

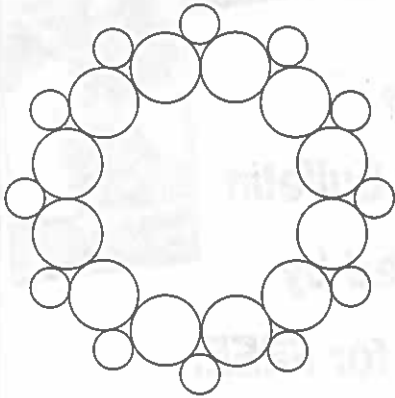


Diagram for Methods 1 & 2

Method 1: Prepare your favorite sugar cookie recipe and add green gel food coloring (which is designed to avoid changing the consistency of the dough). Roll out the dough and cut 12 small and 12 medium round cookies. Arrange them on a large baking sheet, cookies touching, in the shape of a wreath.

Bake according to directions. Line the cookie sheet with parchment paper for ease of moving the wreath afterward. Frost with green icing.

Method 2: Make chocolate sugar cookies from scratch by substituting 1/2 cup of cocoa powder for 1/2 cup of the flour. Skip the green food coloring; frost the baked wreath with green icing.

Method 3: Make cupcakes and arrange them on a serving platter in a circle, then frost liberally with green icing.


Once the cookies are cooled and frosted, work with your children to decorate each circle with a Christmas symbol. Be sure to talk through each symbol with your child. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Animal crackers to represent the manger scene
- Piped icing decorations, such as a star or an angel
- An evergreen tree, symbolizing God's undying love
- Star, manger, and angels
- Gift box, representing the gifts of the magi
- Shell, for the Baptism of the Lord
- Stick figures for the Holy Family
- Shepherd's crook made of a mini candy cane
- Crown, representing Jesus' kingship

Use your imagination, and don't worry about making your artwork internet-worthy. The point is to give your family a tactile way to connect the symbols of the season with their original meaning.

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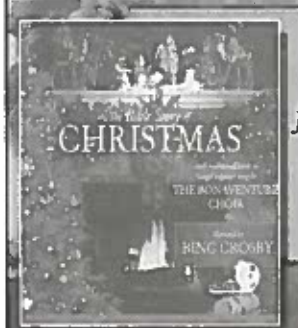
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