

# Why is Christmas so important to evangelize families?

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the baby Jesus, but not just that. Christmas is the celebration of families. With the birth of Jesus came the most important family in the history of mankind for Christianity: the Holy Family.



*God wanted Jesus when he came into this world to have a family. Jesus also wanted it. For this reason, for years he lived with the Blessed Virgin and with St. Joseph as he grew in grace and wisdom (Lk 2,52).*

The fact that Jesus was born and remained with his mother and his adoptive father demonstrates the importance, nobility and holiness of the families. This is why the Church points out in the **dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium***, one of the most important texts of the Second Vatican Council, that “**It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children” (LG , 11).**

St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary were teachers of Jesus, educating him in love, as examples of giving their lives for the fulfillment of God’s purposes. So, must be all families. However, many families live as if God did not exist.

It is urgent, therefore, to evangelize families, Christmas is an indispensable opportunity for this. If during this date, the Church also celebrates the sanctity of families, why not rescue those who are estranged from God and seek to strengthen those who are already present in the communities?

But in what way? The process of evangelizing families can begin by exalting their role in the Church as the cradle of vocations – whether religious or matrimonial. Their importance should be indicated in the formation and moral and Christian education of the children so that they will be, in the future, conscious Christians, engaged in their community and so that they also form their families to the example of the Holy Family.

St. John Paul II said that the family is the sanctuary of life, and that is how they need to be treated and perceived (see Letter to Families, 11). Christmas is the opportunity to highlight the importance of a marriage whose journey leads its members to God.

**Sources:**

Holy Bible

Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium

Letter of Pope John Paul II to families – GRATISSIMAM SANE – 1994 – Year of the Family

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## **4 Practical Tips on Involving the Community in Advent and**

# Evangelization

With Advent, a new liturgical year for the Church begins. In the four weeks leading up to Christmas, we prepare for the coming of the Child God, and more than ever, the community must be ready to evangelize.



## 4 DICAS PRÁTICAS SOBRE COMO ENVOLVER A COMUNIDADE NO ADVENTO E NA EVANGELIZAÇÃO

**But, what can be done so that the community grows in evangelization during this period?**

**Tip 1: Explain the meaning of the Advent Crown to people and invite them to do it in their homes**

More than a mere Christmas ornament, the Advent Crown has a liturgical meaning, something that every parishioner should know, which enriches the Christian's faith. That is why a detailed explanation of its meaning and of what it refers to is important. The crown can also be an object that assists in the Christmas novena. Which we explain better how to motivate the community with tip 4.

**Tip 2: Encourage families to set up the Christmas crib together at home**

The Christmas crib helps the faithful, especially the children, to remember that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus our Savior. It is in the Church that we rescue the Christian values that are constantly being replaced by appealing commercial campaigns that wound the sacred for

convenience. Putting the Christmas crib at home, even of paper or making it from recyclable products, unites the family in the true sense of the advent: the wait. In addition to encouraging families to set up the Christmas crib, catechesis can be an excellent channel for children to have access to this Christmas devotion.

### **Tip 3: Encourage the Spirit of Sharing and execute the Evangelization Collect**

Every year, since 1999, the National Council of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) has been promoting the Evangelization Campaign during Advent. This campaign wants to remember that every believer in his community must be committed to evangelization. Therefore, on the third Sunday of Advent, as a concrete gesture, the Church collects for the campaign, aiming to collect and guarantee resources for evangelization and actions of solidarity to those in need. With any amount we can reach many souls for God. One suggestion would be to invite some pastoral members to give a brief testimony after Sunday Mass on the importance of evangelization.

### **Tip 4: Promote the Christmas Novena within the Parish and in the homes**

A practice that has been somewhat forgotten, but which has great value, is the Christmas novena. Promoting a Christmas novena is an opportunity to help the faithful to live a proper preparation for the birth of Christ in their lives, in their homes. A Christmas novena unites Christians around the real meaning of the Advent period: the expectation of the birth of Jesus coming to live and reign with us.

# ESPECIAL DE NATAL

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Our suggestion would be the preparation, in partnership with the Pastoral of the Communication, of a pamphlet with dates and times of the novena in the parish and/or in the houses of the families. This pamphlet can even guide the meaning of this devotion and also, as we mentioned in Tip 1, in the preparation and meaning of the Advent crown.