

# Gather

## Innovative + Interactive + Insightful Experiences for Families to Gather

*Gather* has been created to support Churches and Schools in offering engaging family experiences. Each gathering is meant for the whole family. All of the activities are hands-on and experiential, and the teachings connect faith to families' everyday lives. Today's families don't want more, but they do want experiences that are meaningful.

Each gathering is organized into stations. This offers directors and principals the chance to use the activities from start to finish, or to pick and choose the ones that best fit their needs. We have tried to include everything (and more!) to make this resource as streamlined for you to use as possible.

The ultimate goal is for families to have a positive experience at Church or School while sharing their faith together. All of these experiences have been successfully completed with real families in all types of Church and School settings.

Welcome - we are so glad you have joined us!

FAITH + FAMILY  
*collective*

[www.faithandfamilycollective.com](http://www.faithandfamilycollective.com)

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# UNWRAPPING THE GIFT

*an Advent-Focused Family Gathering*

This Advent Gathering focuses on Jesus being the best gift we receive each Christmas. The activities point us to the excitement of Jesus's upcoming Birthday. This is experienced through family conversations, prayer, activities, and practical reflections. It is our hope that families leave this event with their eyes and hearts focused on the deeper meaning of Christmas as they begin to anticipate the glory and joy the gift of Jesus brings.

## BEST PRACTICES + TIPS

- + We suggest 1.5-2 hours for this event.
- + Gather a team together to help support you with this event. You will need people to help with marketing, environment, hospitality, check-in, hosting a station, set-up, and clean-up.
- + Provide hospitality - cake or snacks, birthday party/celebration decor, Advent wreath, and a welcoming environment.
- + Consider investing in your families this Advent season by sending home an Advent Family Activity Kit with each family. This will help the message from the event live on in their homes. Click here: [Advent Family Activity Kits](#)

## PREPARATION FOR EVENT

### PREPARATION:

Each station includes a supply list and preparation tasks to be completed before the event. A station script is also provided to help the team members who will be leading the activities.

### PRAYER TABLE:

Consider creating a prayer table at the front or center of your gathering space. You may decide to include an Advent wreath, candles, purple cloth, a cross, etc.

### ADDITIONAL DECOR AND SUPPLIES:

- + Frames or easels for Station Names
- + Advent Family Activity Kits (optional):  
*Click here to learn more: [Advent Family Activity Kits](#)*

### STATIONS:

We recommend choosing four stations depending on your time frame, space, and number of people. We have included five stations so that you may choose based on budget, location, needs, etc.

### NAMES OF STATIONS:

1. The Invitation
2. Time to Prepare
3. Who We Celebrate
4. Candles and Cake
5. The Gift

## EVENT SCRIPT

### PREPARATION:

- +Gather a few presents you have received and put them in boxes.
- +Place the manger at the front/center of the gathering space.

### SUPPLY LIST:

- +Straw (Have enough for each person to have a few pieces)
- +Manger
- +Candles
- +Bags (One per family to carry their creations from the event)
- +Instrumental music for prayer experience

### OPENING COMMENTS:

Welcome to our celebration! We are thrilled that your family has joined us. We are getting ready to meet baby Jesus, who will soon be born into our lives again this Christmas. We call this time of preparation—Advent. The word Advent means “coming” or “waiting.”

### OPENING PRAYER:

*To be read by a family*

Jesus, We are excited to prepare for your birth today! Thank you for this time with other families who have come to be close to you. Help us to remember that you are the greatest gift we will receive this Christmas. Amen.

Today we will be using the theme “Unwrapping the Gift” as we participate in different activities pointing us to Jesus’s birth. We can think of this time similar to that of preparing for a Birthday party for someone we love. We have all been invited to this joyous event that takes place on December 25, Christmas day! Let us each begin to prepare ourselves to be part of celebrating the birth of our greatest gift, Jesus.

December is also a time of buying and receiving gifts. We begin to notice presents wrapped under our Christmas trees. Many of these gifts we will play with for a while and then eventually tire of. We are lucky if some of these gifts make it to the next year. *(Open up some boxes with clothes, a board game, perfume, etc. and talk about how excited you first were to receive each of them and yet it went out of style, you got tired of it, or you grew out of it, etc.)*

But the best gift we receive, the one born on Christmas Day, will be with us forever. The wrapping paper this gift came in wasn’t fancy— *(bring out a manger, some straw, and light a few candles)*—and this gift will always be with us. In the simple manger surrounded by candlelight, we will begin our evening by each adding a few pieces of straw to soften the bed of the gift we will soon unwrap.

*Have each family come forward quietly and add a few pieces of straw to the manger. Consider playing some instrumental music.*

We will now be breaking into stations as we prepare for Jesus’s arrival. At each station you will participate in a short, hands-on activity. Please stay with your family. You will be put in a small group of families that you will continue to journey with throughout the event. There is no “order” so you will start at a station and then move to the next one with your group, eventually participating in all stations.

*(Divide the group into groups of about 10 families—either by last name, location in the room, etc.—and give each family a bag to carry their creations from the various stations).*



# STATION 1

## THE INVITATION

### PREPARATION:

+Print the gift tags provided. We suggest two sheets per family, so each person has multiple to create. If possible, print them on cardstock paper.

### SUPPLY LIST:

- +Gift tags (provided)
- +Markers, colored pencils, crayons
- +Paper hole punch (multiple)
- +Ribbons
- +Cardstock paper
- +Glue

### STATION SCRIPT:

A birthday party begins with an invitation. Our invitation to Christmas began a very long time ago as an angel appeared to a young woman named Mary and asked her to be the mother of Jesus. She must have been excited, a little afraid, and very unsure—but she said “yes” for all of us! Her whole life pointed us to the Son she loved so much.

### *Activity:*

We, too, can point others to Jesus and invite them into the celebration of his birth this Christmas. We will take some time to make gift tags with a Christ-filled message. Tying these onto gifts we give to others during this season is a way to share the true message of Christmas, and invite others to share in that joy!

We have provided various gift tags that can be colored and backed with cardstock paper, hole punched, and tied with ribbons. We invite you to get creative!

### QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AS YOU CREATE YOUR GIFT TAGS:

- +An invitation requires a response. How do you accept Jesus as an important part of your life?
- +Do you find it difficult sometimes to make Jesus a priority in your life? If so, why?
- +During the holidays it can be hard to stay focused on Jesus’s birth. What are a few simple things you can do as a family to keep Jesus at the center?
- +It’s always fun to brighten someone’s day!  
What are a few simple things you can do for others this Advent?

# SAMPLE SCHEDULE

## UNWRAPPING THE GIFT

### SAMPLE SCHEDULE AND TIME FRAME:

\*Please Note: We recommend doing four stations. These stations will last ten minutes each. Approximately ten families at a station, at a time. If you have a very large group, consider having two groups per station, or offering this event twice.

6:30pm:	Event Begins
6:30pm-6:35pm:	Families check-in, fellowship, and hospitality
6:35pm:	<b>Opening</b> - All families sit in chairs in the center of the room for a short introduction. Divide the group into groups of ten families (either by last name, location in the room, etc.). This will depend on how many stations you choose to do and how many families you have in attendance. One family will read the opening prayer, then everyone will move to their station.
6:45pm:	Move to first station
6:50pm:	<b>Stations Begin</b>
6:50-7:00pm:	Station #1 Families move to next station
7:05-7:15pm:	Station #2 Families move to next station
7:20-7:30pm:	Station #3 Families move to next station
7:35-7:45pm:	Station #4 Families move to closing
7:50pm-8:00pm:	<b>Closing</b> - Short closing in the center with a family reading the closing prayer.

## EVENT FLYER + NEWSLETTER/ BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

We have included an editable flyer. The flyer is editable through Canva:

<https://tinyurl.com/4zcmzfn>

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

Join us for “Unwrapping the Gift,” an Advent Family Gathering. Advent invites us to prepare for the best birthday ever, the birth of baby Jesus! It begins with a simple invitation to Mary that extends to all of us. Our gift is not wrapped in fancy paper, but swaddling cloth. Come celebrate this joyous arrival through crafts, games, prayer, food, and fellowship. Bring your entire family to enjoy this fun, hands-on, and meaningful event that will prepare your hearts for the Advent season.

*(Include date, time, location)*





## PHOTOS OF EACH STATION

Photos of sample set-ups for each station for inspiration.





## PRINTABLES INCLUDED:

1. Event Flyer
2. Station Names
3. Welcome Sign
4. Gift Tags
5. Game Board
6. Baby Jesus Ornament
7. Gift Reflection Card
8. Decor

SACRED HEART SCHOOL  
JOIN US FOR



# UNWRAPPING THE GIFT

*an Advent Family Gathering*

**Friday, December 6  
6:30 - 8:00 PM  
Church Hall**

Advent invites us to prepare for the best birthday ever, the birth of baby Jesus! It begins with a simple invitation to Mary that extends to all of us. The gift is not wrapped in fancy paper, but swaddling cloth. Come celebrate this joyous arrival through crafts, games, prayer, food, and fellowship. Bring your entire family to enjoy this fun, hands-on, and meaningful event that will prepare your hearts for the Advent season.

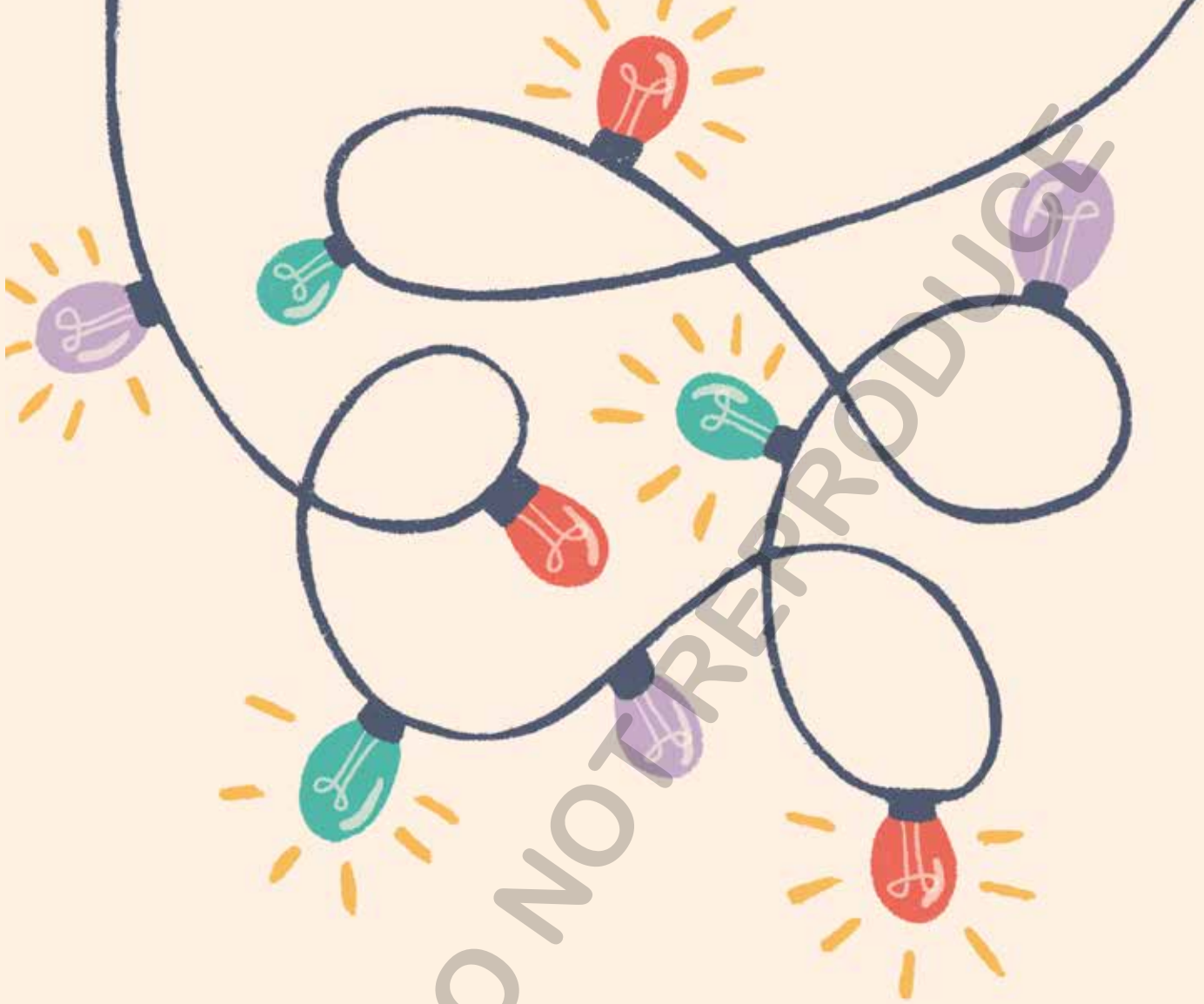
**BRING YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY!**

RSVP to Mary Smith by December 1



# *The* INVITATION





*Time to*  
**PREPARE**

Happy Birthday  
Jesus!



To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_



Jesus is  
OUR GREATEST GIFT!

YOU ARE LOVED!

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_

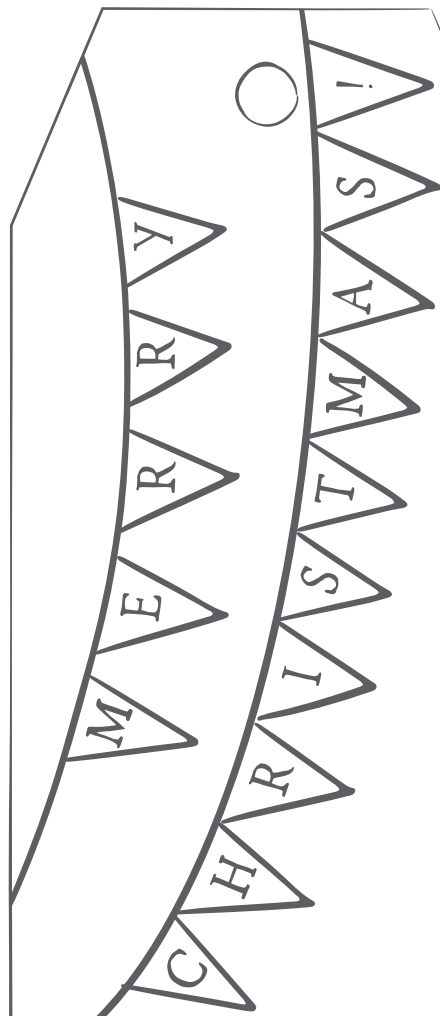


COME *let us*  
ADORE HIM!



To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_

Joy to the  
World!



To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_



WHAT DOES THE WORD  
"ADVENT" MEAN?

WHAT ARE YOU  
MOST EXCITED FOR  
THIS CHRISTMAS?

WHERE IS THE  
FURTHEST PLACE  
YOU HAVE  
TRAVELED TO?

WHAT IS YOUR  
FAVORITE  
CHRISTMAS  
SONG?

WHO IS SOMEONE  
YOU COULD PRAY  
FOR EACH NIGHT  
THIS ADVENT?

WHAT ARE THE  
NAMES OF  
JESUS'S  
PARENTS?

WHAT DOES THE  
NAME "JESUS"  
MEAN?

WHAT IS THE  
NAME OF THE  
TOWN THE HOLY  
FAMILY TRAVELED  
TO?

WHAT WAS THE  
IMAGE THAT LED  
PEOPLE TO VISIT  
BABY JESUS?

WHO DO YOU KNOW  
THAT COULD USE  
EXTRA KINDNESS  
THIS ADVENT  
SEASON?

THIS JOURNEY  
ENDED IN JOY.  
WHAT BRINGS  
YOU JOY?



start

End



Dear Jesus,

As I prepare for your birthday this Christmas I am  
feeling \_\_\_\_\_

Please come into my heart and help me \_\_\_\_\_

I want to share your love with others. One way I  
think I can do this is \_\_\_\_\_

One thing I wanted to tell you this Christmas is  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for being my greatest gift!

Love, \_\_\_\_\_





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