

Christmas Tree Blessing



The season of Advent signals the beginning of the church year and gives a wonderful opportunity for us to think about starting some new family traditions. Some families have incorporated an advent wreath into their advent observance, which provides a visual reminder of the coming of Jesus birth.

The Christmas Tree is another visual reminder. The custom of the Christmas tree was introduced in Germany in the 16th century. Legend tells that the evergreen was chosen and decorated with candles to represent God's creation and the gift of Jesus as "Light of the World". This tradition is continued today as we use evergreen trees, strings of lights, and ornaments to decorate the tree in our homes.

Moments that cause us to pause and shift gears like the beginning of the church year and preparing for Christmas happen once a year and sometimes come all too quickly. Providing opportunities to take a breath and find God's presence in these moments is important. This Christmas Tree Blessing has four steps – Caring conversation – Devotions – Service and Ritual.

1. Caring Conversation: once the tree is up and decorated take a moment to sit and chat with one another. Chat using one or all of the following questions.
 - a. Choose a favorite ornament on the tree. Why did you choose this ornament? Is there a story about where it came from?
 - b. For Parents and Grandparents: What is a memory you have about putting up the Christmas tree when you were a child?
 - c. Children: What do you look forward to the most as you are decorating the Christmas tree?
2. Devotions:
 - a. Read the Christmas story from a children's book and talk about your favorite part of the story.
 - b. Share the following Scripture lesson and think about or talk about how the reading relates to Christmas. Think about or talk about what it means when someone makes a promise.

Jeremiah 33:14-15 (NRSV)

¹⁴The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

3. Service: Make, in the shape of a Christmas tree, some decorations, ornaments, or cookies to give to neighbours and friends. Deliver them as a family.

4. Ritual: Just before you light the tree gather around the Tree and share this blessing together:
This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful and of God's promise. It stands in our home as a tree of light, a sign of Jesus' presence with us as the Light of the World. Let us pray: God of all Creation, we thank you for this tree. Bless us as we gather around it. May it light up our hearts with your hope, peace, joy, and love, and may the gifts placed under it remind us of the great gift of your Jesus. Amen.

Light the tree.

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