



Nativity Blessing & Blessing of the Christmas Tree

Traditionally, the nativity scene and Christmas tree are put out on Christmas Eve, but most families will do it earlier in Advent. My family puts out our nativity scenes early in Advent; we get our Christmas tree on Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent). In some European countries, the baby Jesus is not placed in the manger until Christmas Eve; a piece of straw is placed in the manger each time the child does a good deed.

Blessing the nativity and tree are beautiful ways to remind children about what these objects mean to us as Christians.



Nativity Blessing

All make the sign of the cross as a parent says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

ALL: Who made heaven and earth.

A parent or child reads from Scripture:

Reader: In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. Luke 2:1-8

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A parent prays with hands joined:

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

ALL: Amen.



Blessing of the Christmas Tree

Decorate the tree, but don't turn on the lights yet! A Christmas carol may be sung before the blessing.

A parent makes the sign of the cross and all say "amen."

Parent: Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

ALL: Amen.

Parent prepares the family for blessing:

[Say the names of each child or family member], amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

A parent or child reads from Scripture:

Reader: But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said:

Parent: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

ALL: Lord, give light to our hearts.

Parent: That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, give light to our hearts.

Parent: That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, give light to our hearts.

Parent: That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, give light to our hearts.

After the intercessions, the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer with hands joined:

Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of
salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

A parent then concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

Parent: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

ALL Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”:

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.