

Family Liturgies: Christmas

Accompanying Families



Archdiocese of Dublin
THE OFFICE FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

Follow the Star Liturgy

The 'Follow The Star' Family Liturgy, is aimed at families with smaller children who wish to spend some time in the church at Christmas. It is a short but interactive time of prayer for families and is ideal for families with smaller children or children with additional needs that might find it difficult to engage with Mass/be overwhelmed by the number of people present in the church. It could take place later afternoon/early evening before Vigil Masses.

The format of the Liturgy is below and can be lead by a Priest, Deacon, Pastoral or Faith Development Worker, or Sacramental Team Leader:

- Opening Greeting
- Blessing
- Take a Moment
- Nativity Story
- Chat
- Prayer
- Re-Cap & Final Prayer
- Good-Byes!

The bullet-point details given for each section is in a conversation style of how you might approach each section. All can be easily changed and adapted to suit the style of the person leading. The template for the stars to take home, as mentioned in the 'Chat' section can be found on page 6.

If you wish to do this Liturgy in the parish (and to receive a copy of the story previously used) and would like to ask questions, please send an email to: natalie.doherty@dublindiocese.ie

Follow the Star:

Christmas Family Liturgy

Opening Greeting

- How is everyone? Excited? Preparing?
- What are we preparing for? (Ask for answers)
- We as people of faith are preparing for something wonderful
- Does anyone know what it is? (Ask for Answers)
- Yes, it's the birth of Baby Jesus
- Why is Baby Jesus so important? (Ask for Answers)
- He's been our special friend all throughout our lives
- He lives in our hearts
- We'll spend some time in the church this Christmas to help us get our hearts ready

Blessing

- To start us off – have you got your thumb with you?
- Take it out because we need it
- Make the sign of the cross on your forehead
- Turn to who you are with and make the sign of the cross on each other's forehead

Moment of Quiet

- Take a moment to close your eyes,
- Focus on a figure, the lights of the tree, candle on the wreath
- Take in 3 deep breaths
- Leave all the madness of the day so far to the side – it'll be waiting for you on your way out the door
- Think about everything we have gone through in the year
- Stronger than we can ever know
- Maybe we didn't always show love throughout the time – take a moment to say sorry in your head for not showing love
- Now, use your inner voice, share with God what you are excited about

Follow the Star:

Christmas Family Liturgy

Nativity Story

- Follow the Star – The Three Wise Kings

Chat

- Who was in the story?
- What happened?
- Who is your favourite character?
- How might the Three Kings be feeling following the star?
- Can we follow the star today?
 - The Star was Jesus and we can follow Jesus today, can't we?
- How might we follow Jesus?
- We can show love
 - Help others – helping mam/dad at home
 - Keep the world clean and safe
 - Be kind to our friends
 - Help people in need
 - Share a toy or give money
 - Say a prayer
 - Light a candle in the church on your way home from school
- Sometimes we need a little reminder
- Star on your seat
- Bring this star home with you and let this be your reminder
- Hang it on your tree, on the fridge or in your room
- Allow it to help you follow Jesus – following Jesus means thinking something in your head, sending it to your heart to then put it into action
- We could try now by saying a prayer
- I want you to think of someone who maybe can't be with you this Christmas or something you're wishing for or someone not well etc.
- Hold the star to your head and think your prayer onto it
- Now bring it from your head and put the star on your heart
- When you go home maybe write on the back what/who it is
- Every time you see a star in the sky, think of the Wise Kings

Follow the Star: Christmas Family Liturgy

Pray – Suggested Prayers of the Faithful:

1. We pray for our parish family – Help us keep the Spirit of Christmas alive all year. Lord hear us...
2. We pray for Pope Francis and all our church leaders, that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit in all their work. Lord hear us...
3. We pray for those who have no homes to go to this Christmas, for people who cannot be home for Christmas and for people who work in important services over Christmas. Lord hear us...
4. We pray for our Common Home, the earth: that we will act now and treat the earth with respect for the people who will come after us. Lord hear us...
5. We pray for those who are on their own this Christmas – The sick and all in hospital. Help them to know you are with them. Lord hear us...

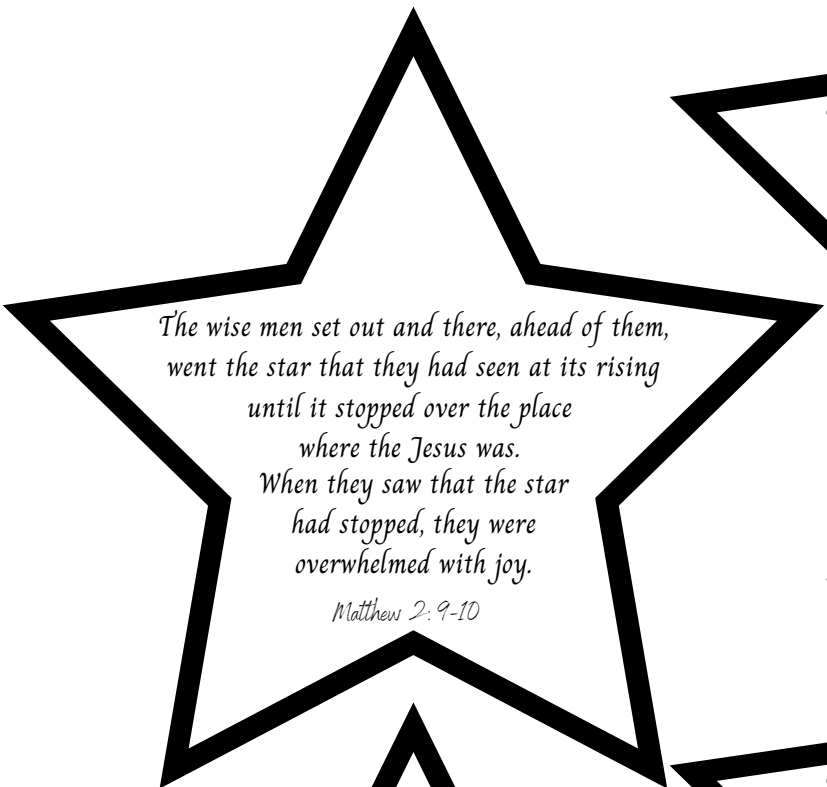
- Ask for intentions

Closing Prayer

- Re-cap over the main points – Wise Kings & we can follow the star too
- What to do at home with the star
- Final Blessing/Prayer – thumb and bless each other – do it at home with the star

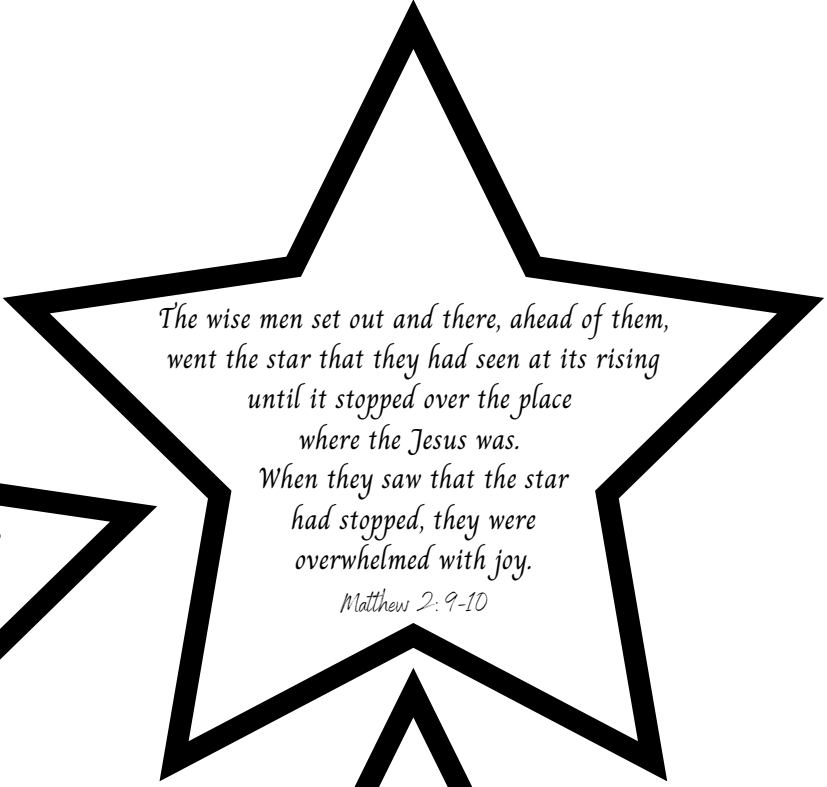
Good-bye

- Happy Christmas and see you in the new year!



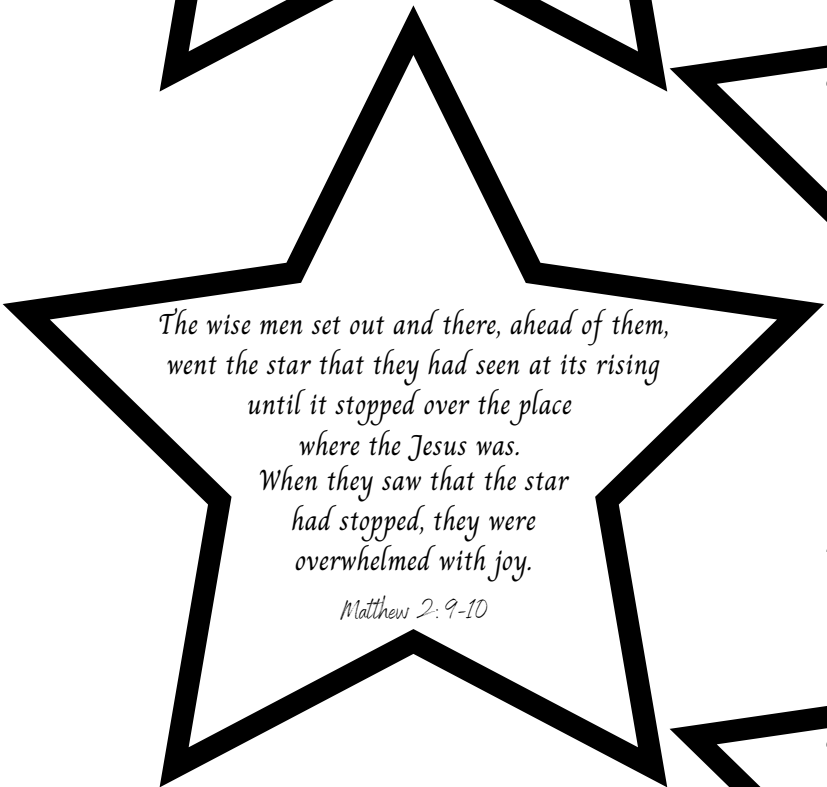
*The wise men set out and there, ahead of them,
went the star that they had seen at its rising
until it stopped over the place
where the Jesus was.
When they saw that the star
had stopped, they were
overwhelmed with joy.*

Matthew 2: 9-10



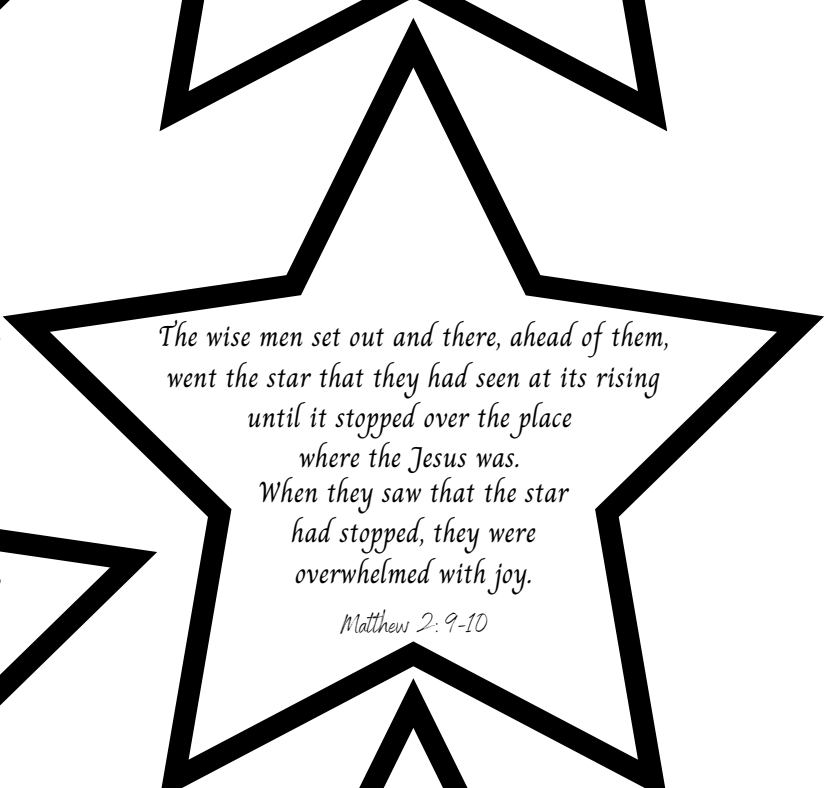
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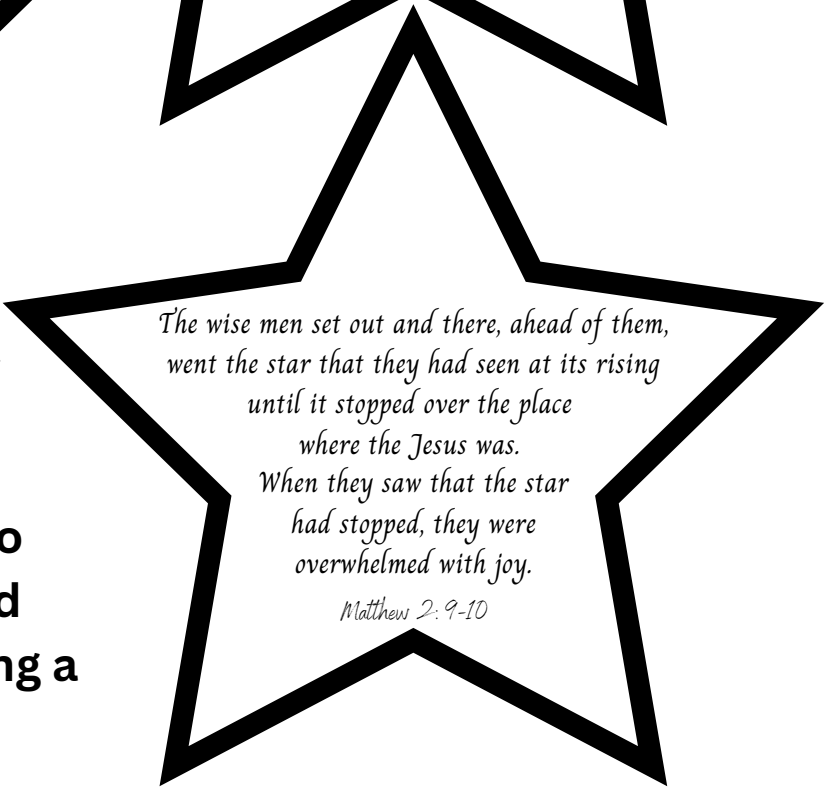
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**If you do not have time to
make the stars, you could
suggest an activity of making a
star at home**

Getting Involved

Below you will find the layout of a Family Mass and ways in which families can get involved. If there is a team in the parish, you could get them to begin organising and sourcing volunteers. It is a suggestion and can be adapted as necessary. The Readings are those set for Midnight Mass.

When	What	Who
Welcome Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read 	
Entrance Procession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross • Baby Jesus/Manger • Holy Water • Incense 	
Wreath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting of the white candle 	
First Reading Psalm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read 	
Gospel Homily		
Prayers of the Faithful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read 	
Offertory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts brought forward 	
Closing Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read 	

Christmas Eve Family Mass

Welcome:

Welcome to our Christmas Family Mass. We have spent the last 4 Sundays of Advent getting ready and waiting for Jesus to come among us. Now the wait is over. This evening we listen to the story of how Jesus was born and how the angels came to the shepherds to spread this good news. May Jesus be born in our hearts, our families, and our parish this Christmas.

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The people that walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
On those who live in a land of deep shadow
A light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
The bar across his shoulders,
The rod of his oppressor,
These you break as on the day of Midian.
For all the foot gear of battle,
Every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt, and consumed by fire.
For there is a child born for us,
A son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
And this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end,
For the throne of David and for his royal power,
Which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
The jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Christmas Eve Family Mass

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 95

Response: Today a saviour has been born to us;
 He is Christ the Lord.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
Sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name.
Response...

2. Proclaim his help day by day
Tell among the nations his glory
And his wonders among all the peoples
Response...

3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
Let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
Let the land and all it bears rejoice,
All the trees of the wood shout for joy
At the presence of the Lord for he comes,
He comes to rule the earth.
Response...

4. With justice he will rule the world,
He will judge the peoples with his truth.
Response...



Christmas Eve Family Mass

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord

PLEASE STAND TO GREET THE GOSPEL

Alleluia, alleluia!

I bring you news of great joy:

Today a saviour has been born to us,

Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!



Christmas Eve Family Mass

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together 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 a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

Christmas Eve Family Mass

Suggest Homily Notes

- We just read just a story there and it's one of my favourites
- There's 2 parts to it and lots of characters
- What characters or names can you remember?
 - Caesar Augustus
 - Quirinus
 - Mary
 - Joseph
 - David
 - Jesus
 - Shepherds
 - Angels
- Would you like to be a character in the story?
- What person/character would you like to be? (Get answers)
- Jesus is so important in the story, but if I were in the story, I'd love to be a shepherd because they are the next most important characters in the story
- Imagine being in the field and hearing the news from the angels
- What do you think it sounded like? Can we even imagine it?
- The shepherds are so important because the angel visited the shepherds in the field and said something really REALLY important:

"I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people."

- They were the first to hear the story, the good news and joy that Jesus had arrived into our world
- That story was told from person to person, from family to family, and place to place down throughout all the years
- Tonight and tomorrow, we're excited about many things like presents, spending time together and some delicious food
- But we all know that Christmas means more than that
- Christmas is about the message the shepherds heard
- And, like the way the shepherds shared the good news, it's our job to go and share the same news of great joy
- Your job this Christmas is to share the Good News of Jesus being born with at least one person you meet over these important days
- It can be hard, but I think we can do it!

*Jesus, you are good and wise
I'll pray to you each night and when I rise.
Tonight is filled with so much joy,
When we welcome you as a little boy.
Jesus, hear this prayer I send
Bless all my family and my friends.*

Amen.

Christmas Eve Family Mass

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful:

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Lord hear us...

2. We pray for Pope Francis and all our church leaders, that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit in all their work.

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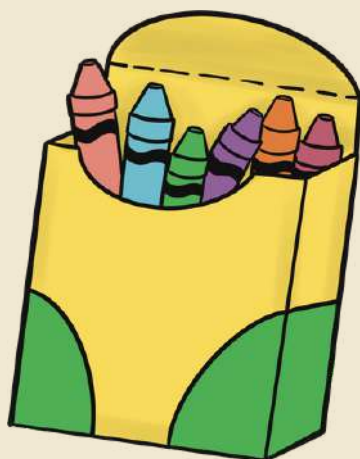
Log onto Netflix and watch the movie 'Angela's Christmas' together as a family

Christmas @ Home

Visit the 'Family Corner' of www.missionministry.ie and do some of the activities there: read a story, watch a video, make a crib



Visit the church/crib in the church & light a candle and say a prayer for someone you know.



Colour in the picture of the nativity scene and hang it somewhere important in the house to show you are celebrating Jesus being born.





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