

or hope, we may receive nothing beyond the promise that God cares and the signs of that care.

Do health and happiness make it easier to believe in God?

Do you trust God only when things go well?

How does God encourage us to live for others?

### **Prayer**

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring lamb;

If I were a wise man, I would do my part,

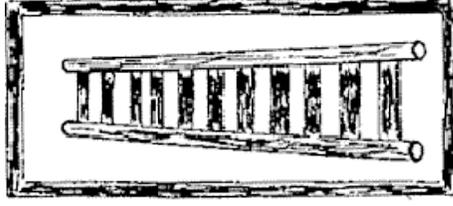
Yet, what can I give him? Give my heart.

### **First Saturday of Advent**

#### **Ladder – Jacob**

Genesis 27:41-28:22

Just as Jacob is leaving his home and everything he knows, God establishes a personal relationship with him through a dream. In this relationship, God and Jacob interact personally, are accountable to each other, and trust each other. Jacob will need this relationship to help him through the tough times ahead. (Read Gen. 32:22-32).



Do you remember your dreams?

God trusts us to do what is right. Do you trust God to

lead you to doing what is right?

How do you build your relationship with God?

### **Prayer**

God, I want to know your presence. Use my dreams and my waking thoughts, use my family, friends, and neighbors, use your holy word. Use them all to reach me. For I know your presence will sustain me on my most difficult journey, as it did Jacob.

## **Prayer**

For our foolish thoughts and desires; for words spoken in haste and passion; for our failures in self-control: forgive us, Lord, and help us to mend our ways.



### **First Wednesday of Advent Ark - Noah and the Flood**

Genesis 6:11-22 8:6-12

The story of the flood is also recorded on clay tablets found in Nineveh. Recent archeological excavations confirm wide-spread floods that almost completely wiped out the inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates river valleys. Noah's construction of the ark show how God inspires us to use inventiveness and ingenuity to preserve life even during great cataclysms. When on considers, for instance, the vast extent of the "Ice Age" it is providential that humankind survived (some forms of pre-historic animal life did not survive). Read Genesis 9:8-17 for an example of God's concern for the continued well-being of the earth.

In what ways can humans control floods today?  
Will humans find a way to prevent hurricanes?  
Name some extinct forms of animal life.

## **Prayer**

We thank you, Lord for the ability you have given humankind to share in your providential care by developing useful ways of preserving life.



### **First Thursday of Advent Tent and Camel – Father Abraham**

Genesis 12:1-7, 13:2-18

Migrations of people are caused by many factors. Abraham and his large following were called by God to move to a new land which God promised

them. Although we are not told how Abraham became aware of this call and promise, we are told the result of this awareness in his life: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go." (Hebrews 11:8)

His exceptional generosity in the division of the land with his nephew Lot is further evidence of his faith. Many must have thought that Abraham was foolish, but he had his own reasons for his generosity.

Can a person's decisions always be reasonable?  
Was Abraham wise or foolish to give Lot first choice of the land?  
Should we ever limit our generosity?

## **Prayer**

Help us, O God, to count the need, rather than the cost, in our actions for others.



### **First Friday of Advent Agnus Dei – Abraham's Sacrifice**

Genesis 22:1-14

Faith is the conviction that "the Lord will provide" even when all the evidence contradicts this conviction. Abraham loved God, but he also loved Isaac. Did he love God enough to give up his son? The New Testament answers this awful question by turning it around. God loved us enough to give up his son. On the strength of no more than this assurance, we are challenged to believe even as Abraham did on the edge of despair that "the Lord will provide."

Faith is easy when life is easy. But when life becomes hard and we need health or freedom

## **Week One of Advent Jesse Tree Scripture Verses**

### **First Sunday of Advent**

#### **The Jesse Tree - David Anointed As King**

1 Samuel 16:1-13



It is from this story that the "Jesse Tree" is derived. Jesse was the father of David who was anointed by the prophet to establish a royal family. A thousand years later Jesus was born in this royal line in Bethlehem, the ancient city of David. Because of this family tree the names of Jesse and David are often linked in poetry and song with Jesus, the "Anointed One" (this is the literal meaning of Messiah, or Christ). The Old Testament tells us for example: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). And in Advent we link this prophecy with Jesus: "O come thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny."

What do we mean by "O come, O come, Emmanuel"?

Or when we pray "Come, Lord Jesus"?

How much of your family tree can you construct?

#### **Prayer**

O come thou rod of Jesse once again, and save the whole family of humankind.

### **First Monday of Advent**

#### **The World - Creation – The Birth of Life**

Genesis 1:24-28



"When I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have established." Marveled the poet in Psalm 8, "what are we that you art mindful of us, or the children

of man that you don't care for us?" Indeed, what are we? We are part and parcel of God's creation; related to the dust under his feet and all the creatures that roam it. But we are also the crowing glory of life. As David wrote: "You have made us little less than God, and have crowned us with glory and honor. You have given us dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under our feet . . ." Truly, we are a reflection of God.

How many forms of life can you name?

In way ways do we differ from our pets?

What does it mean to be human?

#### **Prayer**

O God, from whom all life has come, teach us to love and respect life in all its forms and shapes and colors.



### **First Tuesday of Advent**

#### **Apple and the Serpent - Adam & Eve – The Fall**

Genesis 3:1-24

"a person must live," goes the popular dodge by which we often try to justify our worst actions.

Call it what you will –self-centeredness, self-

defense, self-preservation – this is the root of sin in all its forms. From the beginning of our

existence this was so, causing us to exalt our own will above God's will. Sin makes us more beast-like than God-like. It binds us to earth when we are capable of heaven. Yet, like a haunting dream, the voice of God is eternally calling us upward.

Why is temptation so glamorous and enticing?

What are the consequences of disobedience?

Why must some persons "pay a price" for foolish action while others do not?