

Mission Connections: Special Catechetical Leaders Edition

Youth Connecting in Mission

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Making Room at the Table

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

Advent is here, this precious season on the Liturgical calendar crunched between two major “feasts” on the secular one. With Thanksgiving and Christmas as bookends, this is a season of gathering. Did you know that holiday festivities are so common this time of year that the average household waste goes up by 25% between Thanksgiving and New Year’s? As we join together for a weeks long string of celebration after celebration, we often find ourselves with a plethora of nourishment—sometimes too much so—laid out before us. It is a time of feasting, a time of Table.

During this season of gathering, we tend to come together with family and extended family, those we sometimes haven’t seen very often throughout the year, perhaps those who we see only this one time each year. We get out the extra leaves, and make the table as big as possible, scrounging up chairs from all corners of the house. And together we celebrate the love, the noise, the beauty, the chaos—of being together around a common table. *There is a beautiful and profound holiness in being together at table.*

But this special season, as we wait for the coming of our LORD, I invite us to take a look around our table. Who is present? Who is missing? I’m not only talking about our families (though those are good questions to ask even among our kin), but challenge us to take a look at our “extended family”—considering our brothers and sisters in the community, and in the world. Are there those who are missing out on the necessary nourishment and basic needs of life this holiday

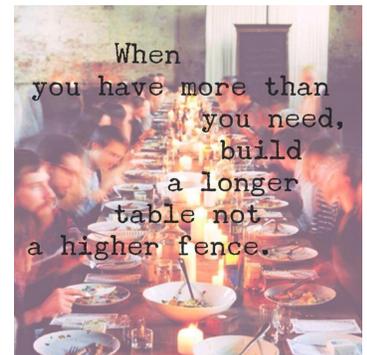
season? Are there those who are lacking the spiritual nourishment of inclusion and community? Who among us is in need of the care and justice of Table? And can we find room, or what’s more *create* a place for them? Hint: the answer to all of these, is “yes!”

This Advent let us remember that Christ too was not at the table. The Christ in the poor, the child, the “non-traditional” family, the refugee. Christ in those on the margins. There was no room for this Christ at the inn. And yet, through the incarnation, GOD came to dwell with us. Finding a chair in the oddest of corners of His home, a stable. Extending the Table out farther—to the ends of the earth. The incarnation made room for all at the common table of GOD’s Kingdom.

“The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine.... And it will be said in that day, ‘Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad.’” (Isaiah 25:6,9)

Who have we failed to include around our table—in thought, word and actions? How can we follow Christ in extending ourselves, searching new corners, and making room for more at the banquet? May this Advent challenge us to make more room, find us inviting the excluded, and continue to remind us that *there is a beautiful and profound holiness in being together at table.* Especially when it means needing more leaves!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel—find room at our Table!



Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources, projects or activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources & Ideas

Looking for meaningful activities to help create space for others this Advent? Try one of these:

Download the **MISSIO** app from the Pontifical Mission Societies where you will find Advent resources as well as mission projects you can be a part of to make a difference in our church and world. Visit <https://missio.org/resources> to learn more.

Try buying alternative gifts this year instead of shopping at the store. Visit sites such as inspiregifts.unicefusa.org or gifts.crs.org

Create a paper chain to count down the days of Advent, but on each link write the name of a different country, or a different social justice

issue or demographic of people. Then pray for that place or group each day as you rip the chain off.

Beginning with Epiphany Sunday, the Catholic Church in the U.S. celebrates National Migration Week. We recognize that similar to the Holy Family, there are many in our world forced to leave their homes and build their lives in far away places, often where little room is made for them. And like the Magi, we believe that we are called to go out in search of Christ in others, serving and gifting those in need not only with what is comfortable or “extra,” but with finest gifts—of material and of hope and peace. Visit www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week for resources to help you promote and pray this important week.

Don't Forget:



Dec 9th: Mission Office Open House & Advent sale

Dec 12th: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Dec 23rd - Jan 2nd: Mission Office closed; A blessed Christmas and New Years to all!

Jan 1st: World Day of Peace

Jan 8th to 14th: National Migration Week