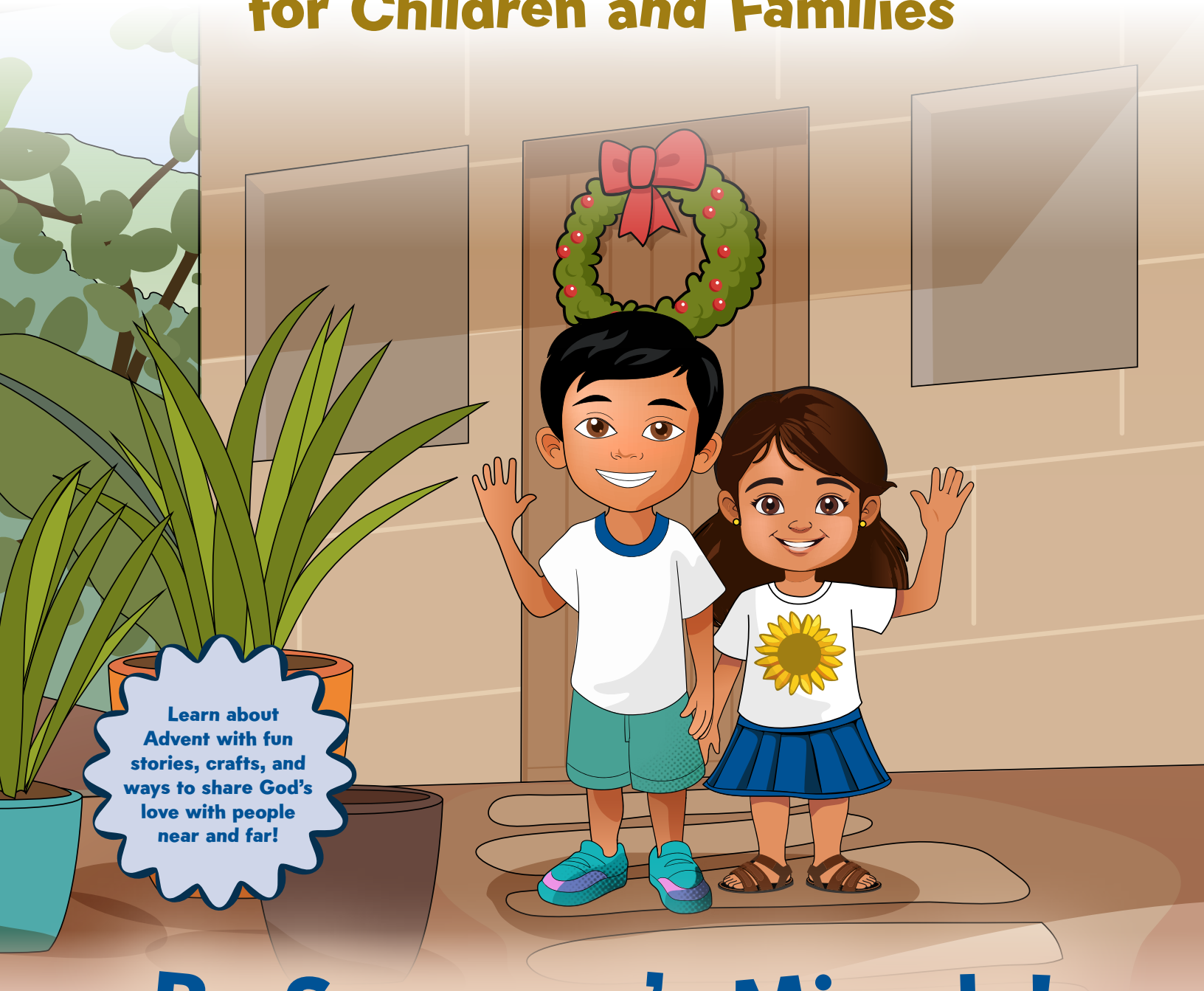
Cross Catholic OUTREACH

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope to the Poorest of the Poor

2025

Advent Activity Guide

for Children and Families



Be Someone's Miracle!

CrossCatholic.org/Advent-activity-guide

This Book Belongs To:

_____

Dear Jesus,
I love you and thank you for
this Advent season.
Help me share your hope.
Help me bring your peace.
Help me be a source of joy.
Help me love others the way
you love me.
Guide me today and every day
to be a blessing to my friends,
family and the world.
Amen.

Who We Are

Cross Catholic Outreach is a U.S.-based international poverty relief and development ministry. We link U.S. Catholics to our global network of missionary priests, sisters and lay workers in over 30 countries. Through these partnerships, faithful friends like you can sponsor projects such as building homes, feeding the hungry, drilling wells, providing medical care, and sharing the hope of our Catholic faith. Scan the code to learn more.

Dear Parents,

This activity guide is a companion to Cross Catholic Outreach's "Be Someone's Miracle" Advent campaign and will connect your family with the need for safe housing in rural Guatemala.

Weekly stories, prayers, crafts and activities focus on the pillars of the Advent season: hope, peace, joy and love. For your convenience, we've added QR codes with activity instructions. To keep the momentum going in 2026, we've included activities for the Octave of Christmas (Dec. 25-Jan. 1) and the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 4).

On behalf of all of us at Cross Catholic Outreach, thank you for making us part of your family's Advent experience!

Yours in Christ,

Michele Sagarino

Michele Sagarino, President

It is a joy to serve families like Franklin's in La Concepción, Guatemala. U.S. donors like you blessed his family with this new home.

Our Advent Adventure

Meet Eddy and Alma, who live in a farming village in Guatemala. Their big brother, Carlo, is excited to teach them about Advent as the siblings navigate the joys and challenges of life in their community. As you read their story and complete weekly activities, consider how you can help families in Guatemala — and read about the real children who've inspired our story on page 12.

Scan the code to read stories of Guatemalan families and give today.

Eddy and Alma are supposed to be asleep. But tonight, they are too excited.

Earlier that day, their big brother, Carlo, told them about a special time of year that comes before Christmas. That special season is called Advent — and it starts tomorrow!

Carlo helps Eddy and Alma set up an Advent wreath. They will light a new candle every Sunday.

“What is Advent all about?” asks Alma.

“More importantly, do we get presents?” asks Eddy.

“Don’t be silly!” laughs Carlo. “Advent is the four weeks before Christmas. It’s the time of year when we make our hearts ready for Jesus’ birthday.”

“And Jesus is the greatest gift of all!” says Alma.

First Week of Advent | Nov. 30-Dec. 6

Eddy's Advent Prayer for Hope

Dear God,
Help me think about baby Jesus.
Help me remember he is always with us in the Eucharist. And please make me ready to receive his hope when he comes into the world again.
Amen.

Did You Know?

The Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Saint Nicholas on Dec. 6! Parents can visit our website to learn all about this early Christian bishop known for giving gifts in secret.

Take Action: Advent Wreath Craft

The Advent wreath is a powerful tradition. It's a symbol of the eternal life Jesus offers us. Four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Create a kid-friendly version using construction paper, cardboard tubes and tissue paper!

Scan the code for instructions.

Eddy and Alma have homework to do. But right now, the sky has other plans.

Drip. Drip. Boom! There's a thunderstorm outside. And when it rains outside, water pours inside their house too.

Eddy and Alma's house is very different than ours. The walls and roof are made out of sticks, palm fronds and scraps of metal. The floor is made of dirt. Every time it rains, the floor turns into a messy mud puddle.

Eddy pulls out a plastic tarp. This will protect his little sister from the rain.

"We cannot stop the rain," says Eddy, "but we can choose to be kind."

Second Week of Advent | Dec. 7-13

Alma's Advent Prayer for Peace

Lord,
Make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is darkness, let me bring light. Help me share your goodness with others.
Amen.

Adapted from the *Prayer of Saint Francis.*

A Safe Home

Think about your home. How is it different from Eddy and Alma's house? In the box, draw a picture of a new, safe home for Eddy and Alma's family. You can use crayons, markers or colored pencils to add details.

Parents: Read page 13 to understand housing challenges in the siblings' village.

Take Action: Rain Activity

Scan the code for instructions.

Around the world, many families live in unsafe homes with leaky roofs and dirt floors. Learn how storms affect families in villages like Eddy and Alma's with this "rain in a cup" STEAM activity.

The third Sunday of Advent is a special day. It even has a special name: Gaudete Sunday! At Sunday Mass, Eddy and Alma noticed the priest wore rose-colored vestments.

"This week feels different!" Eddy says.

"You're right!" Carlo replies. "On Gaudete Sunday, we think about the joy that Jesus brings into the world. We become excited for Christmas!"

"In some countries, a special celebration begins this week too. It's called Las Posadas," adds Alma.

"You're right too!" says Carlo. "During Las Posadas, children dress up as Mary, Joseph and angels. We visit houses and sing carols. Las Posadas reminds us how Mary and Joseph went all the way to Bethlehem and couldn't find a place to sleep. There was no room for them at the inn, so Jesus was born in a stable."

"I think I know Eddy's favorite part about Las Posadas," smiles Alma. "It's eating tamales!"

Reading Tip: How To Say "Gaudete"

gow·DAY·tay

This Latin word means "to rejoice."

Third Week of Advent | Dec. 14-20

Eddy's Advent Prayer for Joy

Dear Lord,
In seeking you, I seek a happy life.
Let me seek you so my soul may live.
My body draws life from my soul,
and my soul draws life from you.
Amen.

Adapted from Saint Augustine's *Confessions*.

Did You Know?

The "O" Antiphons are a Catholic tradition dating back to the seventh century. Every Dec. 17-23, a special prayer is read during evening prayer. You might even be familiar with the Advent hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," which is based on the "O" Antiphon for Dec. 23! Scan the code to access the "O" Antiphons and make them part of your family's Advent journey.

Take Action: Popsicle Stick Ornament

In honor of Las Posadas, your family can make a popsicle stick Christmas ornament of a house. Let's make sure there is always room in our homes — and our hearts — for the Holy Family!

Scan the code for instructions.

Christmas is almost here! Eddy and Alma think about God's love. His love is so strong that he allowed his son, Jesus, to be born into the world.

During the fourth week of Advent, Eddy and Alma want to do something special for their big brother. They do his chores!

Alma washes clothes in a bucket. Eddy hangs up the wet clothes on a clothesline to dry in the sun.

When Carlo arrives home from school, he has a huge smile.

"Thank you, Eddy! Thank you, Alma!" he exclaims. "The best part of Advent is sharing hope, peace, joy and love with you!"

Fourth Week of Advent | Dec. 21-24

Alma's Advent Prayer for Love

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the gift of love. Thank you for loving me. Please help me share your love with my family.
Amen.

Advent Appreciation

You can share hope, peace, joy and love this fourth week of Advent. Use this space to write a kind note to someone in your family. Then, read it to that special person and see how big they smile!

Dear _____,

_____

_____

_____

Love, _____

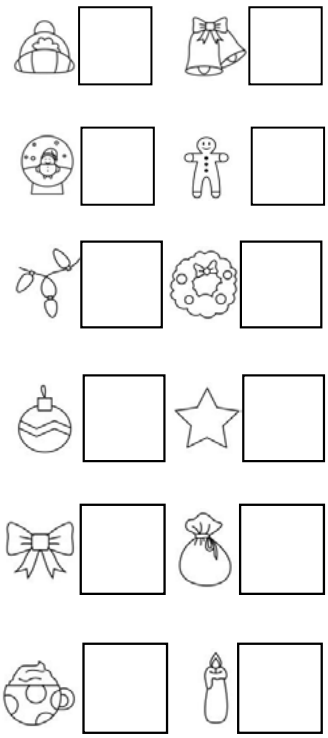
Take Action: Fingerprint Candy Cane Craft

The candy cane is much more than a Christmas tradition. It symbolizes the life and teachings of Jesus Christ! White stripes represent his life without sin, and red reminds us of the blood he shed for us on the cross. The candy cane is shaped like a "J" and also reminds us of a shepherd's staff. This fun and simple craft will help your family get excited for Christmas!

Scan the code for instructions.

I Spy Christmas

Find each item and write how many you find in the box.



Answers at bottom of page

Take Action: A Birthday Party for Jesus

Keep the focus on Christ this Christmas by planning a birthday party for baby Jesus! Bake a cake together and blow out four candles to mark the end of the Advent season.

Scan the code for instructions.

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord | Jan. 4

Thank-You Circles

Epiphany is an important feast day for Catholics around the world. On this day, we celebrate the three wise men who followed a star all the way to Bethlehem to meet baby Jesus.

Can you think of three things or people you are thankful for? Draw a picture of one in each circle.

Take Action: Chalk the Door

The Epiphany tradition of marking a doorway with chalk is a way to seek God's blessings for your home and the people inside it.

Scan the code for instructions.

Parents, Meet Our Advent Inspiration

Eddy, Alma and Carlo are more than fictional characters. They're based on real-life siblings who live in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima in southwestern Guatemala.

Jonathan and Marjorie live with their parents and big brother, Anderson, in the remote village of Laguna Seca. Anderson is a high school student attending the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic School, which was built through donations from generous U.S. Catholics. He sings in two choirs, is learning to play the flute, and is part of his school's computer programming vocational academy. On the weekends, he leads a youth faith formation group where he teaches 16 children in his village about God and the Bible.

After graduating from high school, Anderson hopes to continue his education so he can work for Caritas Santa Rosa de Lima, his diocese's social outreach ministry dedicated to the material and spiritual needs of impoverished families.

When we met Marjorie and Jonathan earlier this year, they both told us that Anderson is their role model, and they hope to be just like him when they are older!

Be Someone's Miracle

Sadly, the thunderstorm story shared during the second week of Advent is based on real conditions faced by many children in rural Guatemala. Many people, including Odilia and her children shown at right, have endured unsafe and unsanitary living conditions in which a single rainstorm would damage all of their belongings.

In honor of the Advent and Christmas seasons, you can help a family in rural Guatemala by supporting Cross Catholic Outreach's efforts to build safe homes in three deeply impoverished dioceses.

Cross Catholic Outreach has funded homebuilding projects in Guatemala since 2013. Right now, it is our goal to bless 224 families with safe homes where they can thrive in their own communities. Each simple but sturdy home will feature concrete-block walls, solid cement flooring, durable metal roofs, lockable doors and shuttered windows. A gift of any amount has the power to change lives forever!

BEFORE

Odilia and her children used to suffer from frequent illnesses in their dark, damp dwelling.

AFTER

Odilia's family now lives with greater comfort and safety inside their storm-resistant home.

Scan the code to learn how your family can be someone's miracle during the Advent and Christmas seasons with the gift of a sturdy home!

Cross Catholic OUTREACH

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope to the Poorest of the Poor

Our Mission

We mobilize the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

How We Serve

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving in developing countries. In addition to this being the most cost-effective way of helping our brothers and sisters in need, empowering these existing ministries also allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and leadership role in poor communities.

Good Stewardship

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

Platinum Transparency 2025 Candid.

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ICSC INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

BBB ACCREDITED CHARITY give.org

CFC Combined Federal Campaign

Our Promise to You!

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2026, the close of our ministry's fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

PO Box 273908 • Boca Raton, Florida 33427-3908 • **800-914-2420**

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