

Celebrating Together

“Rejoice, you who enjoy God’s favor. The Lord is with you.” Luke 1:28

There is an art to celebrating together - especially during this season of Advent that is filled with rich traditions and rituals. Celebration truly becomes an art and not just a function or activity when we celebrate together with ENTHUSIASM! Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that: *“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm,”* and Emily Dickinson wrote very profoundly that: *“The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience.”* Both of these well known authors express a simple but important truth - the experience of celebration is linked with a spirit of enthusiasm.

Examining the derivation of the word enthusiasm, one can easily see the connection to the sacred and the holy. The source of the word is the Greek *enthousiasmos*, which comes from the adjective *entheos*, which means having God within, filled with God, or inspired by God. Jesus, a model of wisdom and enthusiasm, spoke these words: *“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete,”* (John 15:11-12). This recognition of wondrous joy as part of our faith can transform our hearts and create in us an appreciation of celebration. Our ordinary moments may become extraordinary because we are listening, hearing, and seeing with a spirit “inspired by God.”

We can enhance our celebration of Advent and make our joy complete when we place into central focus the notion that we are inspired by God and filled with God. This can be a powerful time for sharing our faith with children and emphasizing with enthusiasm the messages of peace on earth, forgiveness, and love as we prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts. Each moment, each experience, large or small, is a blessing and a reason to celebrate. Take this season as an opportunity to enhance traditions and rituals that foster celebrating together with enthusiasm!

Advent Tips for Celebrating Together with Enthusiasm:

1. Take an Advent journey with the saints. Each week select a saint on whom to focus. Suggestions are St. Nicholas, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Elizabeth, and St. John the Baptist.
2. Create an Advent wreath at home or at school and recite an Advent prayer in honor of someone you love each day.
3. Celebrate a La Posada liturgy or prayer service with symbols and costumes reflecting the journey of Mary and Joseph.
4. Ritualize the symbolism of the Christmas tree by having a family blessing for it.

5. Organize a home or classroom Bible study and find occasions when Jesus laughs, celebrates, and rejoices!



Elizabeth Gross, MA
NCEA Region 8 representative
Principal
Cathedral of the Holy Spirit School
Bismarck, North Dakota
Elizabeth.Gross@sendit.nodak.edu