

Life to the Full:

Living faith within our families

Monthly newsletter for parents: **December 2016**

Advent – preparation or celebration?

Kathy Kielty, designer for Ten Ten, and mother of 3 tells us about Advent in her family:

Advent's a tricky one! As a Catholic, I know it's a period of joyful preparation rather than celebration. But it's hard to maintain the spirit of Advent in the household when all around us, Christmas celebrations are in full swing throughout December!

For me, it's a matter of embracing the joy of the season, but making a stand on certain things – for example, the Advent Calendar! Like most families, our kids have Advent calendars to count down the days until Christmas.

But (and this is where I have to accept the title “world’s meanest mum”) I’ve banned chocolate ones! Instead, it’s the old-fashioned traditional kind, with a Bible verse behind every window (and believe me, they’re hard to find these days!).

My stubbornness over this has become a bit of a running joke in our family. But I think it’s important to have a moment in each day where, rather than gobble down a chocolate, they’re reminded what Advent is really all about.

We hit a hitch this year, though. Despite appearances, it turns out



the religiously themed calendars we bought don't have Bible verses, simply pictures. My daughter joked, “Never mind, Mum. We can recite them all from memory by now anyway”. Can I count that as a victory for Advent?... hmmm, tricky!

A Prayer of Preparation

Dear Jesus,
As we prepare for Christmas with our friends and family, we ask you to be present in our lives. Let us know your love and forgiveness.
Give us the courage to share your message of peace with those around us.
We ask this in your name, Amen

The Wintershall Nativity

Martin O'Brien, the Artistic Director of Ten Ten, tells us about the Wintershall Nativity:

Last month, Ten Ten spent a day filming on the Wintershall Estate in a specially-constructed nativity scene, to produce three short films for children which will be used as part of Ten Ten's assemblies in January 2017. If you don't know about Wintershall already, it is an extraordinary place to visit...

A beautiful, grand, sprawling estate in the middle of the Surrey countryside, the owner, Peter Hutley, decided almost 20 years ago to use his estate for the promotion of the Gospel by staging plays which tell the story of Jesus. Making the very most of the landscape, lakes, barns, foothills and livestock, the Gospel dramas staged at Wintershall have proven to be an experiential and child-friendly way to know the person of Jesus more vividly.

Over the years, Wintershall has expanded, and you might even

have seen the production of the Life of Christ in Trafalgar Square on Good Friday or on the television.

This December, the Christmas Nativity once again takes place at the Wintershall estate in Surrey. If you are interested in taking your children to experience this unique event, and help them to understand the Nativity in a powerful and vivid way, please have a look at the website for more details:

www.wintershall-estate.com/events/wintershall-nativity-play