

**Sharing Ideas – Advent and Christmas**  
**Follow-up to ZOOM meetings held November 18, 2020**

**1. LITURGY**

- **Sacrament of reconciliation**
  - Community absolution is not recommended at this time when many people are living alone and often looking for a more personal encounter.
  - Keep church doors open on Sunday afternoons to allow continuity for confessions.
  
- **Masses**
  - Several parishes are already planning to increase the number of celebrations on December 24 and 25. Although this solution will enable more of the faithful to attend, it is nevertheless recommended to keep in mind the potential fatigue for pastors, ushers, etc.
  - Recommence or continue broadcasting Masses online during the Holiday Season.
  - For RPAs or CHSLDs, find out if Masses can be broadcast via CCTV in the chapel.
  - Recommend for those who so desire that Communion be distributed at the church door.
  - Arrange as well as possible for Communion to be distributed to those who cannot attend Mass (especially those in seniors' residences).

**2. CHURCH VISITS**

Since crowded celebrations must not be held this year, encourage people to make visits to the church. All creative initiatives are to be encouraged in the effort to provide young and old with the experience of joy and light that typifies the Christmas Season.

- **Advent Wreath:** place the wreath outside or in a visible place inside the church. Set a time for prayer before the wreath.
- **Nativities:**
  - Living nativities
  - Visits to the nativity
  - Place a **cradle (manger) to inspire prayer intentions**, emphasizing the symbol of the manger (and of the nativity scene) as it evolves week by week through Advent
  - Invite families to **create a manger for the infant Jesus** (use a shoebox) and bring it to church.
- **Decorations, activities:**
  - Focus on decorations, **light**
    - Community project: put up a string of lights so that parishioners can hang personally meaningful decorations.

- **Christmas music** (performed by the choir or recorded) during visits;
- **Activities in front of the church** through the day or evening of the 24th; hot chocolate.
- **Activities on the street**, in front of the church (neighbourhood party).
- Concept of **'journey' or 'pilgrimage'** inside the church, with the manger as the focus; mini 'lectio divina' for small groups of visitors;
- During visits **hand out** texts for use one time only; a symbolic object to place in the home (e.g. a tealight candle).
- **Christmas Day**, doors open in the afternoon.

### 3. COMMUNICATION

- Find out about neighbours' projects, **think of how to collaborate and work together** in the real-life setting, parish unit.
- Make sure the **various projects and initiatives** in the parish are covered in the local newspapers.
- **Distribution of leaflets** to front doors to share information.
- **Announce that the church is open** for quiet prayer, visits to the nativity.
- In communications, employ the Biblical figures of the Magi, the shepherds (those 'from far away') and even Joseph (with his doubts) to **appeal to those who are more 'distant.'**
- Encourage sending **Christmas cards**, by mail ... or online.

### 4. SOLIDARITY

- Choose **gift cards** (for various recipients: infants in youth centres; homeless persons in the area; be open to working together with other parishes, finding resources in common - a food bank - in the local area).
  - **Keep some gift cards** from food stores as a 'Plan B' if anyone knocks on the parish door.
- St. Vincent de Paul **drive**, Christmas basket.
- **Christmas baskets** (disinfect foodstuffs or leave them a few days before delivering).
- Suggest **creating things at home to sell online** to benefit the poor in the parish.
- **Christmas trees** – fundraising:  
<https://www.merryeasychristmas.com/en/fundraising>
- Ask the children of the parish to make **Christmas cards** to add to the Christmas baskets (or add a gift card).
- **Phone tree** (set up a team); a challenge for all members of the parish (10 calls for him and her).
- **Le Pont** : Collect Christmas gifts for those seeking asylum at Le Pont:  
<https://en.appimontreal.org/pourmoipourtoi>

#### Spiritual nourishment: for the home or as a family:

- Share (by distributing virtually or handing out, at church) the **Advent calendar** available on the microsite: <https://microsites.diocesemontreal.org/microsites/avent>



## Office of the General Coordination

- Encourage people to build a crèche at home, for example:  
<https://youtu.be/nmJI8ME3Y2c>
  - Each week, give the parishioners a new challenge related to the figures.
  - (English link to follow)
- Put **something in the windows** (aside from just the rainbow).
- Challenge: to **visit**, with the family, neighbours or members of the community; go **carolling**; challenge to walk 5 km to make visits in the area;
- In **seniors' residences or in CHSLDs**:
  - Enlist the help of staff members, dressed as three kings, shepherds, angels.
  - Give out the Advent calendar.
  - Sing in the halls, the parking area.
- **Christmas novena**: for example  
<https://carmeloftraversecity.org/christmas-novena/>  
<https://www.stfrancisa2.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Advent-Christmas-Novena.pdf>
- **Spiritual renewal** :  
<https://www.villasaintmartin.org/>
- **Online retreats**:  
<https://pray-as-you-go.org/home/>  
<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html>  
<https://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer/>  
<https://praymoreretreat.org/>
- Promote the following **resources**:  
<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/>  
<https://amazingparish.org/>  
<https://divinerenovation.org/resources-for-you#DRVC>  
<https://reviveparishes.com/>