

Blessing the Family Christmas Tree



Before Christianity came to be, trees that remained green all year round warded off evil spirits and were special to people during the winter. It wasn't until the sixteenth century in Germany that trees were brought inside and decorated. When does the Christmas tree go up in your home or parish? Continue the tradition by gathering together and blessing this special symbol.

You may bless the tree as soon as you put it up, or you can wait until after you have decorated it. When you are ready to do the blessing, gather everyone around the tree and designate someone to lead the following prayer.

You will need water or holy water (if available) to celebrate this blessing.

Leader: Loving God, we stand before you once again. We stand here ready to celebrate the birth of your son, Jesus. (Have everyone extend a hand in a gesture of blessing. Sprinkle water or holy water on the tree while praying the following prayer.)

Leader: Bless this tree, this sign of life and freshness and perseverance in our midst. It stands as a reminder that you are born anew in us each day. Bless our family and friends as we celebrate this joyous season. Keep us safe in our travels, kind in our conversations, and gracious in our giving and receiving. We ask you this in confidence, because we know you love us.

All: Amen.

(Join in singing a favorite Christmas carol, such as "O Christmas Tree" or "Joy to the World.")

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The Blessing of the Christmas Nativity Scene

In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time. When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord. **R/.** Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, **Luke 2:1** (lines 1-8) or **Isaiah 7:10** (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel). **Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. The leader prays...



God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior
of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

—From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers