ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2025 GIFT IDEAS & EVENTS

For Young Children Through Young Teens, Young Adults

Gracie Jagla, *If the Pope Had a Puppy*. Illustrated by Sara Ugolotti. Our Sunday Visitor Inc., OSV Catholic Bookstore, 2025, $9.48. **Ages 3-7.**
… "Travel all through Rome with the pope as he chases after his puppy in this fun, imaginative, "if, then" story. With vivid imagery of Vatican and Roman landmarks, including the Sistine Chapel and the Colosseum, this book will help children appreciate the long and rich history of the Church in Rome. The pope's adventure demonstrates that joy and wonder are at the heart of being Catholic…"
https://www.osvcatholicbookstore.com/if-the-pope-had-a-puppy.html

Gracie Jagla, *The Night the Saints Saved Christmas*. Illustrated by Michael Corsini. Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., OSV Catholic Bookstore, 2021. $8.48, reduced from $16.95. **For ages 3-7.**
"What happens when Saint Nick awakes on Christmas Eve with a sore throat and itchy nose? Find out in a Christmas story families and little ones will treasure: ***The Night the Saints Saved Christmas…"***
https://www.osvcatholicbookstore.com/the-night-the-saints-saved-christmas.html

Matthew Mehan, *The Handsome Little Cygnet*, illustrated by John Folley. TAN Books, 2021. $10.97. **Ages 3-8.**
…"this wonderful and surprising revision of the Ugly Duckling will please the whole family with beautiful prose and page after page of lush watercolor illustrations. Even enjoy a seek-n-find in the back of the book, learning about the landmarks and wildlife of Central Park, among other amusing mysteries."
https://tanbooks.com/products/books/the-handsome-little-cygnet/

Beth Branigan McNamara, Sue Robinson and Anne E. Neuberger, eds., *Big Book of Catholic Customs and Traditions*. The Catholic Company, $28.95, for children **ages 3 to 8.**
https://www.catholiccompany.com/products/the-big-book-of-catholic-customs-and-traditions

Brian Wildsmith, *The Road to Bethlehem*. Sophia Institute Press, 2016, 2025 revisions. **Ages 4-9**.
… "When Mary and Joseph set out on their long journey to Bethlehem, they leave behind their loyal companions — a cat and a dog — with their neighbor. But love knows no bounds. Determined to find their beloved Mary, the two animals embark on an adventure across hills and valleys, encountering a colorful cast of creatures along the way: a fox, a goat, a bear, and three camels bound for a majestic mission of their own." …
https://sophiainstitute.com/product/the-road-to-bethlehem-2/?utm_campaign=eblast-11282025-black-friday&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--gU49FETs70Px-JchKaXeJwF6HPXk190QfZCL8ZbiQAr3y4-8B7orP-NabTJMeBmd6wRDnCgZPKSmENmAEoZNks9GprhiokACNABsvncTSauv54Gc&_hsmi=391947920&utm_source=Hubspot

Scott Hahn & Emily Stimpson Chapman, *Lord, Have Mercy,* Illustrated by Tricia Dugat. Emmaus Road Publishing, St. Paul Center, $10.95. Includes two downloadable coloring pages. For **ages 4 and up**.
"… Lord, Have Mercy invites young readers to see the Father's mercy and goodness as they **prepare for First Reconciliation** in the Sacrament of Confession. Beautifully illustrated pages and simple rhymes bring this important Sacrament to life."
https://stpaulcenter.com/store/lord-have-mercy

Casey Pawelek, *Look and Learn: First Words for Catholic Kids*, Toddler Edition. The Catholic Company, $10.99. **Ages 4-8.**
"… a vibrant, engaging board book with colorful illustrations designed to introduce children to the symbols and images within a church. Perfect as a gift for Catholic children, this book fosters spiritual curiosity and meaningful conversations, making church visits more engaging for kids **ages 4-8**."
Of note: "Was written by the author to help keep her own 5-year-old happy, quiet and engaged at church. It's the perfect book for a young child to bring to church week after week!"
https://www.catholiccompany.com/products/look-and-learn-first-words-for-catholic-kids-board-book?pr_prod_strat=e5_desc&pr_rec_id=78289d5e8&pr_rec_pid=10084824383797&pr_ref_pid=10084859347253&pr_seq=uniform

Anthony DeStefano, *The Sparrow Who Fell to the Ground.* Illustrated by Richard Cowdrey. Sophia Institute Press, 2025. $17.95. **Ages 4-8.**
… "At first glance, this is a delightful and humorous children's tale. But beneath the surface, it is much more. **Inspired by the Gospel of Matthew**, this book — magnificently illustrated by *New York Times* bestselling artist Richard Cowdrey — echoes the great themes of classic literature: perseverance through suffering, the paradox of strength in weakness, and the universal longing for redemption… With its engaging pace, profound message, and combination of humor and thrilling moments, *The Sparrow Who Fell to the Ground* is **destined to become a modern classic** — one that children will love, parents will cherish, and readers of all ages will never forget."
https://sophiainstitute.com/?product=the-sparrow-who-fell-to-the-ground

Maura Roan McKeegan and Scott Hahn, Ted Schluenderfritz (Illustrator), *Old and New Series Complete Set*. Emmaus Road Publishing, St. Paul Center, $49.95, six books. For home and classroom. (Individual books sold separately at $10.95). **Ages 7 and up.**
"Through rich artwork and language drawn carefully from Sacred Scripture, the award-winning Old and New series presents the people, places, and events of the **Old Testament side by side with their New Testament counterparts**, illuminating the way for readers to uncover infinite layers of meaning in the Word of God."
https://stpaulcenter.com/store/old-and-new-series-complete-set

Emily Stimpson Chapman, *The Story of All Stories: A Story Bible for Young Catholics*, Illustrated by Diana Renzina. Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, 2025. 496 pages, $49.95. **Ages 7-13.**
Also as audiobook narrated by *The Chosen*'s Jonathan Roumie, $24.95.
A **significant new and much-acclaimed book from Bishop Robert Barron's Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.**
"With Emily Stimpson Chapman's lyrical storytelling and Diana Renzina's stunning illustrations, children will experience the Bible as one sweeping narrative of God's love for them. … Each chapter offers Key Points that help kids take away concrete lessons from every story, Key Connections that highlight how the Old and New Testaments are connected, and quotes from saints, popes, and Church Fathers that help kids see where their very own Catholic faith comes from."

Thomas Salerno, *The Riddle of the Tongue-Stones*, Illustrated by Dillon Wheelock. Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, 2025. $24.95. **Ages 8-14.**
"Journey into the exciting **life of Nicolas Steno, the father of geology** whose passion for truth led him to groundbreaking scientific discovery and a deep religious devotion. Interwoven into this biography of a scientist and Catholic bishop is the story of fossils and the hidden history of

the earth beneath our feet. With an extensive glossary of scientific terms and delightful field-guide sketches, this beautifully crafted book will inspire any young person eager to learn about the natural world and its Creator." https://bookstore.wordonfire.org/products/riddle-of-the-tongue-stones?variant=42558871109689

M. & O. Malcurat. *The Carmelites of Compiègne: Martyrs of the French Revolution*. Fabrizio Russo (Illustrator). Magnificat*Ignatius Press. $16.99. Graphic Novel. **Ages 9-12.**
"During the height of the French Revolution, at the peak of the Reign of Terror, sixteen Carmelite nuns from *Compiègne* were arrested, tried, and condemned to death. On July 17, 1794, they were led to the guillotine. For months, they had offered their lives as a sacrifice for peace, steadfast in their faith. As they ascended the scaffold, they lifted their voices in singing *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, a final act of devotion. Ten days later, the Reign of Terror collapsed. Pope Francis officially declared them saints in December 2024. Their story has inspired artists for over a century — from Gertrud von le Fort's novella *The Song at the Scaffold* to Georges Bernanos's dramatic play *Dialogues of the Carmelites* to Francis Poulenc's haunting opera of the same name. A timeless testament to faith, sacrifice, and the power of peaceful resistance."

EWTN, *Kibeho: Listen My Children*, DVD, 60 minutes, docudrama, 2021. Ignatius Press. $14.95. For home, for classroom. **For teens, excellent preparation for a visit to Our Lady of Kibeho Shrine, below.**
"In the 1980s the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three young visionaries in Kibeho, Rwanda. Her dire warnings and prophetic visions foreshadowed the genocide to come if they did not heed her requests. Our Lady asked for the daily recitation of the Rosary, accepting suffering with love for the salvation of the world, and offering prayers and sacrifices for the conversion of others. This powerful docudrama chronicles the astounding miracles of healing and conversion featuring comments from best-selling author Immaculée Ilibagiza, Cardinal Antoine Kambanda and many others."
https://ignatius.com/kibeho-klmcm/?searchid=3640326&search_query=Kibeho

> ***Related, first shared in September 2025 Monthly News (9/2/25):***
> A new shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Kibeho is now open to visitors on the grounds of the **Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal** in Philadelphia (Germantown neighborhood).
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> ***To read about this new shrine and its dedication:***
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> - Catholic Philly Staff, "Our Lady of Kibeho Shrine to be Dedicated at Basilica Aug. 17," *CatholicPhilly.com,* August 12, 2025. https://catholicphilly.com/2025/08/news/events/our-lady-of-kibeho-shrine-to-be-dedicated-at-basilica-shrine-aug-17/?utm_source=CatholicPhilly+Newsletter&utm_campaign=cb74224980-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_8-15-2025&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e0d5b43f94-cb74224980-218186096
>
> - Caitlin Bootsma, "Our Lady of Kibeho Gets 1st Official Shrine in USA," *Aleteia*, August 17, 2025. https://aleteia.org/2025/08/17/our-lady-of-kibeho-gets-1st-official-shrine-in-usa/

Carlo Acutis and Giorgio Maria Carbone, ***Carlo's Simple Wisdom: Words of Hope from a Young Saint*****,** Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., OSV Catholic Bookstore, 2025. $21.95. **For teens, young adult**s.
…"The newly canonized Carlo Acutis has become one of the most well-known figures of holiness in modern times. Since his death in 2006 at the age of 15, people across the world have been captivated by Carlo's life and personality and sought his intercession. His youthful zeal and devotion to the Eucharist are well documented, and many people in his life attest to his personal holiness and fearlessness in talking about his faith and love for Jesus… For the first time, Carlo's simple and insightful words have been collected into one book. ***Carlo's Simple Wisdom*** demonstrates that it is possible even today to live in harmony with the will of God. Carlo's life was a race, fast and brief. He has reached the goal he longed for, and he wants nothing more for us than to join him in heaven."
https://www.osvcatholicbookstore.com/carlo-s-simple-wisdom-words-of-hope-from-a-young-saint.html

For Adults

Fr. Serafino Lanzetta, ***The Silent Witness of Nazareth: St. Joseph: Spouse of Mary, Powerful Intercessor, Guardian of the Church***, Sophia Institute Press, 2025. $16.99.
… "As Mary leads us to Jesus, so Joseph leads us to Mary and, in the mystery of Mary, we see St. Joseph revealed. Through his heroic courage and charity, St. Joseph became a comforter of the afflicted and terror of demons, providing an indomitable model for Christ… Fr. Serafino M. Lanzetta illuminates St. Joseph's hidden life, drawing from Scripture and Tradition, to unveil his holiness and the splendor of his skill in guarding the heavenly treasures of Jesus and Mary. In these inspiring pages, you will discover fresh and fascinating insights about St. Joseph and grow in devotion to him as never before …" https://sophiainstitute.com/?product=the-silent-witness-of-nazareth

Peter Kreeft, ***The Two Greatest Novels Ever Written: The Wisdom of The Lord of the Rings and The Brothers Karamazov*****.** 2025 (Dec. 8 release date). $24.95.
… "In this philosophical exploration, Peter Kreeft argues that *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Brothers Karamazov* are not just two of the greatest novels but simply the greatest two—and not primarily because of their distinct plots, characters, settings, and styles, but because of the metaphysical, anthropological, and moral themes that unite them. Examining the writers' treatments of good and evil, power and weakness, and virtue and vice, Kreeft shows how both Tolkien and Dostoevsky, by writing with the mind of Christ, reveal the deepest truths of reality." The author is a Professor of Philosophy at Boston College and has written more than 100 books on spirituality, theology, and philosophy, including ***God on Stage: 15 Plays That Ask the Big Questions***, also published by Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
https://bookstore.wordonfire.org/collections/bestsellers/products/the-two-greatest-novels-ever-written.
Professor Kreeft wrote about his 1960 conversion in his autobiographical ***From Calvinist to Catholic*** published by Ignatius Press. $21.95.
https://ignatius.com/from-calvinist-to-catholic-fcch/

Emily Stimpson Chapman, ***Around the Catholic Table: 100+ Simple Recipes for Family and Friends***.
Emmaus Road Publishing, St. Paul Center, 2025. $34.95.
Rich photographs, recipes for every meal, considerations for special diets and allergies, more than a dozen 30-minute meals, and essays on "aspects of hospitality and its spiritual meaning."
https://stpaulcenter.com/store/around-the-catholic-table-100-simple-recipes-for-family-and-friends

Costanza Miriano, *Blessed Is the Day "We Got It Wrong": A Guide to Marriage Renewal.* Sophia Institute Press, 2025. $17.95.
"With a razor-sharp wit and an engaging style, international bestselling author Costanza Miriano delivers a practical, profound, sometimes hilarious exposition on how not just to survive in marriage but to thrive in it."
https://sophiainstitute.com/?product=blessed-is-the-day-we-got-it-wrong

Michael Pakaluk, *The Shock of Holiness: Finding the Romance of Everyday Life*, Ignatius Press, 2025. $18.95.
The Catholic University of America professor looks at marriage, relationships, parenting, and spiritual growth.
https://ignatius.com/shock-of-holiness-sofhp/

Jennifer Stavinhoa, *Sacred Chaos: Finding Joy and Jesus in the Messiness of Motherhood*. **Illustrated by Allison Sullivan**. Ave Maria Press, 2025. $15.95.
"This restorative mini-retreat [3 weeks] is designed for moms in the trenches of family life and requires just five minutes a day. It's not just another devotional with prewritten prayers—it's a practical guide to help you rediscover how to connect with God, renew your spirit, and find peace in the midst of your beautiful, messy reality… Each week includes a QR code linking to daily playlists and a short, encouraging video that makes it easy to fit prayer into your busiest moments—whether you're folding laundry or wrangling a toddler into bed…"
https://www.avemariapress.com/collections/womens-spirituality/products/sacred-chaos

Ave Maria Press and Josh Noem, *Away in a Manger: Daily Prayers for Advent and Christmas 2025*. Ave Maria Press, $1.50.
Each day's entry of prayer and reflection ends with a QR code linking to an associated Advent or Christmas devotional hymn or other musical selection.
https://www.avemariapress.com/products/away-in-a-manger

***Jesus Thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist*.** 2024, DVD, 90 minutes. Ignatius Press, $17.95.
"This visually stunning film takes viewers on a global journey to uncover the transformative power of the Eucharist. Engaging in profound dialogue with prominent Catholic leaders, the film explores the biblical origins of the Eucharist and shares powerful personal stories of lives transformed by the Blessed Sacrament. This exploration makes it unmistakably clear that the Eucharist is not merely a symbol, but is indeed Jesus Christ Himself — fervently desiring to quench our spiritual thirst with His boundless love. Inspiring insights from **Scott Hahn, Chris Stefanik, Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Noelle Mering, Tim Gray, Fr. Donald Calloway, Eduardo Verastegui, Fr. Robert Spitzer, SJ**, and many others."
https://ignatius.com/jesus-thirsts-jthm/

Music:

Sunday 7pm Choir, *Beautiful Advent Songs: 7 Sacred Catholic Hymns & Other Christian Songs for the Advent Season*, with displayed lyrics, 24:22 minutes, **YouTube**.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeOnXrz4IR0

FOCUS, *Ten Advent Songs to Get You in The Spirit* (Updated 2025).
Advent-themed songs selected and performed by **FOCUS missionaries** and others, along with variations of each selection — as well as additional choices, such as "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Gustav Holst — performed by a dimension of artists that include Ella Fitzgerald, The Benedictines of Mary, Celtic Worship, and The Priests. **YouTube.**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeOnXrz4IR0
Inspired by Pope St. John Paul II's call to the New Evangelization, **FOCUS** (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) was founded in 1998 by Curtis Martin at Benedictine College (Kansas) and has grown to more than 1,000 missionaries who spread the Gospel message in more than 200 primarily secular colleges and universities across the country through bible studies, mission trips, conferences, volunteerism, other evangelization initiatives.

St. Paul's Cathedral Choir, *Jubilate: 500 Years of Cathedral Music*, 2018. CD, Ignatius Press, $10.95
"The renowned St. Paul's Cathedral Choir in London presents the best-loved cathedral music spanning 500 years, featuring hymns by Tallis, Rutter, Handel, Mendelssohn and more. Choristers from 49 cathedrals joined them to record in the stunning acoustics of St. Paul's Cathedral, bringing cathedral music to new heights. 19 hymns include *The Lord Is My Shepherd, O Taste and See, Ubi Caritas, A Gaelic Blessing, I Was Glad, Jubilate Deo, Salvator Mundi*, and 12 more."
https://ignatius.com/jubilate-jubd/?searchid=0&search_query=st.+paul%27s+cathedral

Andrea, Matteo and Virginia Bocelli, *A Family Christmas*, 2022. CD, Ignatius Press, $17.95.
"Produced by composer and multi-Grammy and Academy Award nominee Stephan Moccio and set to stunning new arrangements, A Family Christmas is beautiful, intimate, and warm. The Bocelli family sings to you from the sanctuary of their own sitting room, by their fire, relaxing as they momentarily switch off from the rest of the world. It is the sound of a family taking a precious moment to be with each other and celebrate what is truly important. The beautiful soundtrack of their family Christmas."
https://ignatius.com/a-famliy-christmas-abfcd/?searchid=0&search_query=NEW+MUSIC
https://book.wordonfire.org/story-of-all-stories

Events:

Christmas Concert: "Hope in the Wandering"
Cathedral Choirs and Instrumentalists
Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul
Philadelphia, Pa.
December 7, 3 p.m.
In-person and livestream tickets available for purchase.
https://cathedralphila.org/christmas-concert/

Annual Exhibition: World Nativities 2025
The Philadelphia region's most extensive annual collection of multi-dimensional nativities from around the world, exhibited by **Glencairn Museum**, the former home of Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn in the suburban Philadelphia community of Bryn Athyn. Now a **museum of religious art and history**, Glencairn Museum is located on a campus that also includes Bryn Athyn Cathedral of the Christian denomination known as New Church, which is based on the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg; Bryn Athyn College; Academy of the New Church Schools; and the Cairnwood estate**.**
November 28-January 25.
Visit https://www.glencairnmuseum.org/exhibitions for exhibition hours, parking, and other details.