

## **The Longest Night remembrance for families**

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, the longest night and shortest day falls between December 20 and December 22. It's also called the winter solstice. If your family is feeling down or experiencing grief this season, the winter solstice is a good time to name that hard time or grief, to mark it, and to remember that the subsequent days will be getting longer.

The longest night doesn't last forever; the days eventually get longer and brighter.<sup>1</sup>

All you need for this practice is a candle and the words on this page. Gather everyone around a table and say:

Today, on this longest night, we remember that even though there is a lot of joy during the Advent season, sometimes there is sorrow too. We light a candle to remember that sorrow.

[Name the reasons you've decided to have this longest night prayer]

We take a moment to remember that, though the nights can feel long and dark sometimes, brighter and longer days are coming soon.

Let's pray together.

God, this candle reminds us that there is light, even in the longest night. We thank you for the opportunity to name the things that are difficult for us this season, and for the hope we have as the sun shines more and more each day. Help us to be near to one another and to you, as we lift up our prayers on this day.

[Share your prayers with each other]

Peace to our family and to our hearts. May we trust in the light that is to come. Peace, peace. Amen.

After you have prayed together, do something quiet together, enjoying each other's presence. Maybe snuggle and watch a movie, go for a drive to enjoy Christmas lights, read a story. Remember that sadness and joy can exist together.

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<sup>1</sup> This practice is adapted from *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas* by Traci Smith.