

Celebrating Advent

Advent means "coming" (Latin *ad-venio*, to come to, *adventus*, coming or arrival). Historically, Advent was observed as early as the 4th century by the early Christians as they prepared to celebrate the birth of Christ. Advent is the first season in the Christian church year and runs from the fourth Sunday before Christmas through Christmas Eve.

The Advent Wreath is traditionally made of evergreens and four candles (three purple and one rose). On Christmas Eve, many people place and light a large white candle in the center of the wreath for Christ's birth.

*Written by The Genda Family
Adapted With Permission*

The First Sunday in Advent (Theme: Promise)

Open in Prayer and then...

Light the First Candle: Everyone says together: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world ... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'" John 8:12

Someone Asks: Why do we light this candle?

Someone Responds: This candle reminds us of the promise of the prophets that a Message would come, bringing peace and love to the world.

Read Aloud: Isaiah 9:2, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them."

Read/Recite the Christmas Story: Luke 2:1-14

Sing Together: "Silent Night" and other favorite carols.

Read Aloud: Psalm 56:4, "I trust in God and am not afraid; I praise him for what he has promised."

The Second Sunday in Advent (Theme: Waiting)

Open in Prayer and then...

Light Two Candles: Each time a candle is lit, everyone says together: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world ... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'" John 8:12

Someone Asks: What does the second candle symbolize?

Someone Responds: The second candle reminds us that the prophets waited for a Messiah to come and save the people.

Read Aloud: Isaiah 7:14, "The Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.'"

Read/Recite the Christmas Story: Luke 2:1-14

Sing Together: "Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel" and other favorite carols.

Read Aloud: Psalm 62:1-2, "I wait patiently for God to save me; I depend on him alone. He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated."

The Third Sunday in Advent (Theme: Peace)

Open in Prayer and then...

Light Three Candle: Each time a candle is lit, everyone says together: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world ... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'" John 8:12

Someone Asks: What does the third candle symbolize?

Someone Responds: The third candle reminds us that the Christ would be called the Prince of Peace. To follow him, we too must work for peace.

Read Aloud: Micah 4:3-4, "He will settle disputes among the nations, among the great powers near and far. They will hammer their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again."

Read/Recite the Christmas Story: Luke 2:1-14

Sing Together: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" and other favorite carols.

Read Aloud: Psalm 85:8, "I am listening to what the Lord God is saying; he promises peace to us, his own people, if we do not go back to our foolish ways."

The Fourth Sunday in Advent (Theme: Hope)

Open in Prayer and then...

Light Four Candles: Each time a candle is lit, everyone says together: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world ... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'" John 8:12

Someone Asks: What does the fourth candle symbolize?

Someone Responds: The fourth candle reminds us of the hope we find in Christ.

Read Aloud: Luke 1:31-32a, "You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God."

Read/Recite the Christmas Story: Luke 2:1-14

Sing Together: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and other favorite carols.

Read Aloud: Psalm 71:5-6, "Sovereign Lord, I put my hope in you; I have trusted in you since I was young. I have relied on you all my life; you have protected me since the day I was born. I will always praise you."

Christmas Eve (Theme: Joy/Adoration)

Open in Prayer and then...

Light All Five Candles: Each time a candle is lit, everyone says together: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world ... Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.'" John 8:12

Someone Asks: What does each of the first four candles symbolize?

Someone Responds: The first candle reminds us of the promise of the prophets that a Messiah would come. The second candle reminds us of waiting for the Messiah. The third candle reminds us that Christ is the Prince of Peace. The fourth candle reminds us of the hope we find in Christ.

Someone Asks: Why do we light a fifth candle?

Someone Responds: The fifth candle shows that the waiting is over. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is born!

Read Aloud: John 1:14a, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Read/Recite the Christmas Story: Luke 2:1-14

Sing Together: "Joy to the World" and other favorite carols.

Read Aloud: Isaiah 61:10a, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God."