

Advent for the Family

What is advent?

Advent is a period of time before Christmas, where believers across the globe spend time preparing for Jesus' coming. Advent means "arrival" or "coming", and Christians spend some time reflecting and anticipating the arrival of our Lord and Savior. This booklet will provide you and your family with some fun activities to try each week, as well as some questions to talk or think about.

Some fun activities to try before the first Advent Sunday (Nov. 28):

- **MAKE A PRAYER JAR**

- Decorate a glass jar. Cut out 27 small pieces of paper, and write down an individual prayer on each piece of paper. Try to get everyone in the family involved! Fold each piece of paper in half, and place inside the jar. Place the jar on your dining room table (or wherever your family eats supper). Each evening (starting on November 28), pick out a piece of paper and make sure to pray for whatever is on that piece of paper. **TIP:** encourage the individual who wrote down the prayer to pray it out loud for the family.

- **MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH** (Picture attached)

While making this craft, talk to your children about the advent wreath and why it is a symbol of Advent.

- Supplies needed for this craft:
 - 1 paper towel roll
 - 4 toilet paper rolls
 - Paint (white, purple, pink, green)
 - Green construction paper
 - Yellow and orange tissue paper
 - Cardboard
 - Glue (preferably a hot glue gun)
 - Letter stickers (or markers)
 - Paint brushes/sponges
- Directions:

- Make a circle out of cardboard (large enough to fit all 5 candles)
- Either paint it green, or use green construction paper to cover the bottom
- Trace handprints on the green construction paper, cut them out, and glue them in a circular pattern.
- Cut about 1/3 of the paper towel roll, and paint it white
TIP: If you don't have paint available, white/pink/purple paper work as well to cover the paper towel rolls and toilet paper rolls
- Paint 3 of the toilet paper rolls purple, and 1 pink
- Use stickers or markers to show what the candles represent:
Purple: hope, love, peace **Pink:** joy **White:** Christ
- Cut your tissue paper into 8x6 rectangles. Stack a different color every other sheet, and rotate the angles to create a "flame". Place the flames into the candle with the edges facing up, ensuring that none of the paper is sticking out from the top of the candle. Every Advent Sunday, "light" a candle by pulling the tissue paper up. These candles can remain "lit" the entire week!

Why do we make an advent wreath?

The circular shape of the wreath represents eternity. Just like candles give off light, Jesus is also the light of the world. We wait in anticipation for His arrival. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord.



HOPE

First Sunday of Advent- November 28

The first candle (purple) we light is also known as the prophecy candle, and represents hope. The prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus, and we wait in hope for the Messiah's coming.

READ: Isaiah 7:14

Discuss: Do you have any hopes? Are you hoping for a certain present under the Christmas tree? Perhaps making it onto a certain sports team, or scoring during your next game? Do your hopes glorify God?

Prayer:

Jesus, you are the light even in the darkest of places.

Help us to trust in You when we are lost or lonely.

Shine hope in our hearts, we pray.

Amen.

Song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Challenge: Write down your worries or fears. Pray about them throughout the week. At the end of the week, try to have a bon fire (with adult supervision). Throw your worries/fear into the fire, and pray for Jesus' light to shine in your darkest days.

TIP: This is a great activity to do with your small group, another family, your friends. Bring some hot chocolate and s'mores along.

Peace

Second Sunday of Advent- December 5

The second candle (purple) is known as the angel's candle, and represents peace. Jesus came to bring peace on earth. He came to help bring us closer to God, and to each other once again.

READ: Luke 2:13-14

Discuss: Are you at peace? What things in your life are causing you grief? Are there places in the world you can think of where peace is not evident today? Pray for peace in your heart this season.

Prayer:

Jesus, you are peace even when there is hatred.

Help us to forgive like you when we are hurt or wounded.

Bring peace into our hearts and world we pray.

Amen.

Song: Silent Night

Activity: This is one of the busiest times of the year. Set 10 minutes aside each day, to quiet your heart and mind. Some ideas: meditate, yoga, pray, listen to calming music, colour, take a walk, etc.

Challenge: Reach out to someone you have/had a disagreement with. Go for a walk, chat on the phone, write them a letter. See if peace can be restored in your relationship.

Joy

Third week of Advent- December 12

Today, we light the third candle (pink) which represents joy. Also called the Shepherd's candle, as the shepherds were overjoyed when the angels appeared in the fields to announce that Jesus, the Messiah, was born! Hallelujah!

READ: Luke 2:8-11

Discuss: What brings you joy? Can you share that joy with others? Do you always feel joyful? How can you tell if someone is feeling joy?

Prayer:

Jesus, you are joy even in the saddest times.

Help us to praise you when we are upset or grieving.

Shine joy into our hearts we pray.

Amen.

Song: Joy to the World

Activity: Choose an activity as a family this week that brings you joy. Some ideas: game night, movie night, pizza night, watch a hockey game (in person or TV), go caroling, skating, drive around to see the Christmas lights in your neighborhood.

Challenge: Spread joy to your neighbors, that may have never heard of Jesus or the joy of knowing Him. Bring along the bag of M&M's in this package, and see if you can find a family/individual that hasn't been to church in a while, or could use a little extra joy by seeing you/your family. There's a handout attached too... a fun way to share the joy of the season and having a little icebreaker to discuss the joy that is knowing Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Love

Fourth Sunday of Advent- December 19

The Bethlehem candle represents love, and it is the fourth candle we light (purple). Jesus was born in a manger, in Bethlehem and was the greatest gift of all given to us by God.

READ: Luke 2:12; John 3:16

Discuss: Who are some people in your life that you love? What are some ways you can show them that you love them? Do you love everyone? Did you know that we are to love God with all our hearts, soul, strength and mind... and to love our neighbours too! It's not always easy is it? (Luke 10:27)

Prayer:

Jesus, you are love even when we are afraid.

Help us to pray to you when we are scared or fearful.

Bring love into our hearts we pray.

Amen.

Song: Away in a Manger

Activity: Bake together your/your family's favourite recipe. Share it with someone you love (bonus points for including your recipe).

Challenge: Show someone you care and love them. Some ideas: write a card or send a Christmas card to someone you haven't seen/spoken to in a while, wash the dishes (without being told), shovel your neighbour's sidewalk the next time it snows, bring a meal to someone who is sick, hungry, or shut in.

Christ Candle

Christmas Day-December 25

Today we light the white candle, which represents purity and light and is also known as the Christ candle. We are washed of our sin when we accept Christ as our Savior, and are made whiter than snow. Christ is the light of the world, and the reason we celebrate today! Come, let us adore Him!

READ: Isaiah 1:18

Discuss: What excites you most about Christmas? Is it the presents? The food? Just like the candle we lit today is in the center of the wreath, so too should Jesus' birth be the center of our celebrations today.

Prayer:

Jesus, you came to be the light in our darkness.

Jesus, you came to bring peace in our conflicts.

Jesus, you came to be joy in our sadness,

And to bring love in our fears.

Today we celebrate your birth.

Thank you for your saving grace.

Amen.

Song: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Challenge: Know someone within your congregation who may not have been able to go home for Christmas? Or someone else that may not have any family/friends close-by? Invite them over for Christmas dinner.

Merry Christmas!



M&M Christmas Story

As you hold these candies in your hand and
turn them, you will see....

The M becomes a W, an E, and then a 3.
They tell the Christmas story it s one I m
sure you know.

It took place in a stable a long, long time ago.

E The E is for the East where the star
shone oh so bright.

m The M is for the Manger where the
baby Jesus slept that night.

3 The 3 is for the Wisemen bearing gifts,
they say they came.

w W is for Worship, Hallelujah
Praise to His name.

So as you eat these candies or share them
with a friend, remember the Spirit of
Christmas and never let it end!

Merry Christmas

