



The four candles of Advent represent the four Sundays of Advent, symbolizing hope, love, joy, and peace.

The Advent Season is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. Beginning on Sunday, December 3, Advent encompasses the four Sundays and weekdays leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of preparation for our hearts and minds for the anniversary of the Lord and Savior's birth on Christmas.

We can celebrate Advent by creating an Advent Wreath. An Advent wreath is made up of candles and greens; each week in our homes, as well as in our worship space, we light one more candle. We encourage families to place the Advent Wreath where the family gathers most. For example, place the Advent Wreath on the center of your dining table.

The use of the wreath and candles during Advent is a longstanding tradition that was originally adopted by Christians in the Middle Ages as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas.

The wreath and candles are full of symbolism tied to the Christmas season.

- The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life.
- The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, and the gift of everlasting life in Christ.

Even the individual evergreens that make up the wreath have their own meanings that can be adapted to our faith.

- holly signifies victory over persecution and suffering
- pine signifies immortality
- cedar signifies strength and healing
- pine cones, berries or other decorations for the wreath symbolize life and the resurrection

The candles also have their own special significance. The four blue candles represent the four weeks of Advent, one candle for each Sunday. We encourage families on Christmas Eve to place a center white candle symbolizing the joy of Christ's birth.

- The first candle, symbolizes hope. It is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah.
- The second candle, represents love. It is called the "Bethlehem Candle" as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
- The third candle, symbolizes joy. It is called the "Shepard's Candle," as a reminder that the angels brought news of great joy. The third Sunday of Advent is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent.
- The fourth candle, symbolizes peace. We light the final blue candle which is called the "Angel's Candle," and it reminds us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, and good will toward all people."
- On Christmas Eve, a white candle is placed in the center of the wreath and lit. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the light of Christ. The color white is for purity—because Christ is sinless and pure. The warm light shines the love of Christ, *Emmanuel, God with us!*

Celebrating Advent is an excellent way for the Spirit to help prepare our minds and hearts for Christmas.

First Sunday of Advent – December 3 - Hope

Read: [Isaiah 9:2](#); [John 8:12](#)

The Christmas story is not only what happened near the manger one night in Bethlehem. Jesus' birth and arrival is part of larger story that stretches all the way to the beginning of time when God created the world.

The Advent and Christmas season makes up God's larger story. Within this story, we see that God loves us and has a plan to rescue us from our sin and disobedience. Throughout the whole story, we are invited to see Jesus as the Savior of the world who came to Earth as a baby. Advent is a time to focus on Christ and meditate on the story of God's love for us.

Discussion Questions:

- Describe in your own words the Christmas story.
- What has Jesus done in your life to show love for you?
- How could you show others God's love for them this Advent season?

Monday – December 4

Read: [Genesis 1:24-31](#)

Were you aware that the story of Christmas begins at the very beginning of the Bible? At the very beginning, God created everything. God created the heavens, the earth, animals, oceans, and plants. Then, God created humans and said, "Let us make them in our image."

God created us to be like God in so many ways. And the most important way God made us was to enjoy relationships. Specifically, the most important relationship for us is to enjoy a relationship with God! But we needed someone to help us build that relationship. And that's where Jesus' birth at Christmas comes into the picture.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of your favorite things about creation? Why?
- What do you think it means to be made in God's image?
- Throughout Advent, how can you remind yourself that God is the creator of the world?

Tuesday – December 5

Read: [John 18:37](#); [Hebrews 1:1-4](#)

Red and green are the customary colors when we think of Christmas. However, the traditional color for Advent season is blue and Christmas season is white. In many churches, these are reflected in the decorations and design. During the time of Christ, purple/deep blue was a royal color, worn mostly by kings and rulers. Have your children search for something they own that is purple/deep blue. The color reminds us that the birth of Christ was a royal entrance. Discuss how Jesus came into the world humbly as a baby, even though He was the King.

Discussion Questions:

- What does the color purple/deep blue represent?
- Why does this matter?
- What does this reveal about Jesus and who He is?

Wednesday – December 6

Read: [Genesis 3:1-21](#)

Imagine being in God's place of the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned. In today's scripture passage, we see how Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Because of their decisions, sin entered the previously perfect world.

The consequence of their sin? Adam and Eve had to leave the garden that God created. They could no longer be in *perfect* relationship with God. However, there was one way for them to be in relationship with God once again. And it would take the greatest sacrifice the world has ever seen. Can you make a guess at what that sacrifice is?

Discussion Questions:

- Is there anything in your life right now that feels broken or *not right*?
- Describe the last conversation you had with someone about sin or bad things in this world?
- During difficult times, where do you see God working in your life?

Thursday – December 7

Read: [Genesis 12:1-7](#)

After Adam and Eve left the garden, generation after generation went through cycles of disobeying and obeying God. Eventually, God formed a relationship with a man named Abram, who eventually was renamed Abraham.

God created a unique promise with Abraham that he would soon become the father of many nations. The catch? Abraham and his wife Sarah were super old, like great-grandparent old. And they didn't have any kids. But God keeps His promises and always has a plan.

Thousands of years later, a little baby would be born in a manger. Little did everyone know - this little baby was a generational grandson of Abraham. If God is powerful enough to overcome Abraham's doubts, how much more is he able to overcome our own doubts!

Discussion Questions:

- What doubts currently exist in your life that seem impossible?
- Do you think God is asking you to act in faith?
- How can you trust God right now?

Friday – December 8

Read: [Luke 1:26-38](#); [Matthew 1:18-24](#)

Giving and receiving gifts are an important part of the Christmas season. For Advent, prepare a small gift for each of your children. Hide the gifts in relatively easy places to find throughout your home. Have your children take turns searching for a gift, but stall for a moment before letting the youngest child go first.

Younger children may feel as if they have waited a long time, even if they haven't. While each child is waiting for his or her turn, talk about the excitement of waiting. It can be difficult to wait for something even as small as this little gift, so imagine how exciting it is to wait for and anticipate the gift of Jesus. When all the gifts are found, remind your children that you gave these gifts out of love – how much more must God love us to give us His Son, Jesus!

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think we give gifts at Christmas?
- What is a gift that you've been given recently?
- How has God given you a gift that you didn't expect or anticipate?

Saturday – December 9

Read: [Hebrews 11:1](#); [Psalm 27:14](#), [130:5](#)

Advent season is full of traditions. As you continue conversations about Advent, talk about other Christmas traditions that your family has. Perhaps you decorate with red and green, which originally came from the evergreens and holly used in older European traditions. They were used to represent ongoing life and hope that Christ's birth brought to the world.

After you've discussed your family's traditions, do one of them together today. If you don't have one, start one. Maybe you want to make apple cider, talk about past Christmases, or even share one story about what you did at Christmas as a child. Traditions help us remember things in the past as we celebrate those things today.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some traditions in your family?
- Why do you think we have traditions?
- Do you think God has any traditions? If so, what are they?

Second Sunday of Advent – December 10 - Love

Read: [John 3:16-17](#); [Mark 1:3-4](#)

As the Advent season continues, it is important to remember that this time is one of preparation. Just as a family prepares for a guest to visit, so we prepare our hearts and lives for the celebration of Christ as a child.

Have your children help clean your home as though you were expecting a very important guest. As you clean, talk with your children about cleaning their hearts through prayer and repentance. Intentional preparation of our hearts and our homes reflects the anticipation we feel as Christmas draws closer.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is someone that you would be really excited about visiting today? Why?
- Why would it be important to prepare for a visitor to arrive?
- If you knew Jesus was visiting our house tomorrow, how would you prepare for His arrival?

Monday – December 11

Read: [Genesis 37:23-28](#); [Genesis 50:15-21](#)

Have you ever felt like nothing in your life could go right? If so, you might have felt like Joseph. Throughout his life, Joseph experienced a variety of pain and difficulties. From his brothers selling him into slavery, to being unfairly locked away in prison, Joseph experienced rough times. But God had a plan for him.

God used Joseph to interpret dreams, help a whole nation prepare for famine, and save millions of lives. Earlier in Joseph's life, God made him a promise that Joseph would eventually bring God glory and save lives. Little did Joseph know that those promises would be fulfilled! Thousands of years later, there would be someone else to keep all of God's promises and save more lives than Joseph could have ever imagined. His name was Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

- What similarities do you see in Joseph's story with the story of Jesus?
- How does God take bad situations and turn them into good situations?
- Are there any hard times in your life that God has used for good?

Tuesday – December 12

Read: [Deuteronomy 32:7](#); [Deuteronomy 5:1-20](#)

Have you ever heard of the Ten Commandments? Do they ever seem like an outdated set of rules to follow? If they do, you're not alone. However, God created the Ten Commandments with a greater purpose in mind, and surprisingly enough it wasn't so that you could follow the commandments perfectly every single day of your life.

That's right. God knew from the very beginning that we could never perfectly follow the Ten Commandments or any rule that God created. That is because God cares far more about our obedience, faith, and belief, rather than our ability to follow rules. And eventually, God knew God would send God's son Jesus to fulfill the Ten Commandments and every rule ever created. Because Jesus is the only one who can perfectly follow every rule. Because of Jesus, we can have that relationship with God.

Discussion Questions:

- What's a rule or commandment that you don't like to follow all the time?
- What are some of the ways that you fail to follow your parents' rules? What about God's commands?
- Why is it important to obey God?

Wednesday – December 13

Read: [Joshua 2:1-24](#)

Have you ever needed rescue? Today's passage is about how God's people were rescued from an unlikely source – a woman named Rahab. And even though Rahab could not see it at the time, she was a part of God's greater plan.

Many years later, someone incredibly special would come from Rahab's family. That person would be Jesus, the eventual Savior of the World. The Bible says that Rahab and her family were saved because of her faith. The good news is that we can be saved by our faith in Jesus too. And this is made possible because of Jesus's birth, ministry, death, and eventual resurrection!

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever needed rescue? Or have you ever been rescued?
- How does learning about God's desire to save us give you encouragement?
- How do you think you can help others be rescued by God?

Thursday – December 14

Read: [Ruth 1:16–2:13](#)

At first glance, today's story looks like it might not connect with Advent or the story of Christmas. But in the center of Ruth and Boaz's family is one of God's promises.

Before marrying Boaz, Ruth was a widow. And in Ruth's time, widows did not have much hope for a good life. But God had a plan for Ruth. And that plan involved marrying Boaz, having a son, and eventually providing a new future and family.

Ruth and Boaz became the great-grandparents of someone named King David. Even though Ruth might not have seen God's plan, it did not mean that God wasn't working the whole time. And the same is true in our own lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever felt like things weren't going your way?
- Where do you usually find hope when things seem hopeless?
- Describe a time where you had to trust someone. How has God reminded you of His faithfulness?

Friday – December 15

Read: [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)

One of the most well-known figures throughout the whole Bible is King David. But David wasn't always a king. In fact, for most of his life, David was an overlooked shepherd boy. Until one day a prophet named Samuel visited David's family looking for someone to anoint to be king.

David was hardly perfect. But God looked beyond what everyone else saw. God saw David's character and heart. Eventually David became King over all of Israel. But David's reign as king was only a glimpse of the kingdom that would eventually come through Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

- What's the first thing you notice about someone? What do you want others to notice about you?
- What are some of the things you wish others saw in you? Do you think God sees those things?

- How can you focus more on what's inside your heart rather than what's outside your body?

Saturday – December 16

Read [John 13:34](#); [1 John 4:7-12](#)

God showed God's love for humankind through the gift of God's son. It is good to show our love for others during the holiday season, too. One of the ways that people can show their love for each other is to send Christmas cards.

Have your children make cards for their family members and friends. Enjoy the time with your children as you make cards together. Explain that Jesus commands us to love one another, just as He loves us. And ask your children to think of other ways they can show their love.

Discussion Questions:

- Describe a moment where someone did something for you that you weren't expecting?
- How does receiving something unexpected make you feel?
- What are some ways that you can surprise others?

Third Sunday of Advent – December 17 - Joy

Read: [Isaiah 44:23](#); [Romans 5:1-2](#)

Have you ever seen a movie where you knew more about what was going to happen than the main character did? What would you want to tell them? Well, this sort of thing kind of happened before Jesus' birth.

Years before Jesus was born, God used someone named Isaiah to tell people that Jesus would arrive one day. Also, Isaiah said that there would be someone to point others to Jesus. That person was John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was a messenger who "prepared the way" for Jesus's ministry. When John told people about Jesus' arrival, he spoke with joy that Jesus was coming soon! John knew that God's way was the best way for others to live, and he couldn't help share that news with everyone he met!

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think God chose John the Baptist to spread the news about Jesus?
- What does it mean to choose God's way?
- Is it ever hard for you to be joyful when choosing to obey God? Why or why not?

Monday – December 18

Read: [John 12:45-46](#); [2 Corinthians 4:5-6](#)

One of the most visible symbols in Advent is a candle. Throughout the Bible, God compares Godself to light. In some descriptions, God even refers to Christians as the light of the world. Here's an activity for your family to further illustrate how God has conquered darkness.

Gather two pieces of heavy cardboard and a flashlight. Use a table knife to poke a tiny hole through one of the pieces of cardboard and a large hole through the other piece. In the evening, turn off the lights and place the cardboard with the tiny hole against the flashlight's beam.

Have your children describe how much light they see. Compare this glimmer of light to the glimpses of God throughout the Bible before Jesus. Then, place the sheet with the large hole against the flashlight. Let your children describe what they see.

Explain that this is what Christians now get to see through Jesus. Finally, show the whole beam and compare that to Jesus' coming and our being with the Father.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus compares Himself to light?

- What does it mean to be the “light of the world”?
- How can you be a light to the world or your friends?

Tuesday – December 19

Read: [Daniel 3:1, 6-30](#)

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego might not seem like it has any connection to Advent. But, at the core of the story we can learn about how we fail to put God first in our lives, especially at a time like Christmas. In this story, King Nebuchadnezzar builds a gigantic golden image that everyone in Babylon was required to worship. Yet, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that only God was worthy of their worship. To these three followers of God, they recognized that they could not exchange their beliefs for what the world thinks.

For Christians, Christmas is more than a time for gifts and family. It is an opportunity to hear how God saves us through His gift of Jesus. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we can choose to worship God, even in a time when others might be more focused on worshipping the things of this world.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the things that our culture celebrates during Christmas?
- Are there any areas where you choose to worship other things over God?
- Is there anyone that you can share God with during this week? How can you share God’s good news this Christmas season?

Wednesday – December 20

Read: [Psalm 37:23-24](#); [Psalm 119:105](#)

The theme for the third week of Advent is joy. But this theme doesn’t only involve us. Much of the Advent season is dedicated to preparation, but it is also a time of joy to share with others.

To help us realize the abundant joy that they can share with others, consider making Christmas cookies together. Consider using a sugar cookie recipe with angel, Christmas tree, and even candle cookie cutters. Once all the cookies are complete, consider writing encouraging notes or cards to pass out to friends at school or neighbors near you.

Discussion Questions:

- Has someone ever given you a gift that you didn’t expect? How did that make you feel?
- Do you think God has given you any gifts? If so, what are those gifts?
- Is there a family member or friend that you can encourage this week?

Thursday – December 21

Read: [Esther 4:1-17](#)

Have you ever heard of a sacrifice? Throughout the Bible, different people decide to make sacrifices to glorify God and trust God’s plan. Early in the Old Testament, a young girl named Esther had a decision to make. She could either risk her life to save her people or stay silent to save herself.

Eventually, Esther chose to stand firm and trust God’s faithfulness to risk her own life to save others. Centuries before Jesus would be born, Esther trusted God’s plan for her life and generations to follow. Even though Esther couldn’t see the big picture, God could. And that big picture was gifting Jesus to the world to eventually be our hero and rescuer from sin.

Discussion Questions:

- Describe something that you had to sacrifice or a situation where someone else had to sacrifice something.
- Have you ever been in a situation where you had to choose between yourself and others? How did you respond?

- How did God make a sacrifice by sending Jesus to Earth?

Friday – December 22

Read: [Luke 1:5-25](#)

Advent takes place over a month. It may seem odd that we spend all this time preparing for one day. But Christmas and Advent are about much more than one day, or even one month. Even though we spend one month preparing for Jesus' birth and celebrating Christmas, God spent much longer preparing for this sacred and holy time.

Before Jesus was born, one couple showed great faith in God's plan even when they did not understand every single detail. Despite their extremely old age, Zechariah and Elizabeth gave birth to a baby boy named John. Eventually, John would become John the Baptist and spread the news of Jesus' arrival decades later. Little did Zechariah and Elizabeth know that God was preparing the world for Jesus' arrival. Similarly, in Advent, we prepare for a new season in our hearts and lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Advent exists? In other words, why do we celebrate Christmas for a month?
- What is one of your favorite things to do at Christmas?
- Is it ever difficult to fully trust God? Why or why not?

Saturday – December 23

Read: [Matthew 3:1-12](#)

Throughout the Bible, God uses prophets to deliver specific messages to God's people. From Isaiah to Jonah, these prophets shared God's messages to emphasize the eventual arrival of the Messiah.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist calls for people to repent from their sin in favor of following Jesus. John announced to others that they should follow Jesus instead of choosing worldly passions. John the Baptist is a part of God's larger plan to save the world from sin. And we can be a part of that plan too.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think God uses prophets to share His message?
- Is there a place for you to share God and the Gospel in your own world?
- Why do we emphasize evangelizing to others during Christmas?

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 24 – **White Christ Candle**

Read: [Luke 1:26-45, 46-55](#)

Imagine being visited by an Angel of God. Then imagine that Angel telling you that you would give birth to the Savior of the World. And you also have to name the little baby, Jesus. This is exactly what happened to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Mary certainly had a few questions for this Angel of God, and the angel Gabriel had some answers for her. One of Gabriel's answers was this: "For nothing will be impossible with God."

This statement can provide peace and hope in the most unfortunate or uncomfortable situations. Even when we are confused or hurting, nothing is impossible for God. Just as God had a plan for Mary to give birth to the Savior of the World, God has a plan for us in our lives.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think Mary felt after being visited by Angel of God?
- Do you feel like God has a plan for you? If so, what is that plan?
- How does knowing that nothing is impossible for God affect your perspective on life?

Sunday – December 24, Christmas Eve

Read: [Psalm 33:20](#); [Luke 2:15-21](#)

All of the prophecies and stories about the Messiah throughout the Bible point to Jesus' eventual birth. Even though Advent ends at midnight on Christmas Eve, the promises and hope of the Christmas story are far from over.

In response to the angels, the shepherds say, "Let us go and see this thing that has happened." And then, the shepherds joy only continues to grow once they see Jesus. The question for us on Christmas Eve is how we will continue to rejoice in the peace that God provides through the gift of Jesus. Even after the Christmas season is over.

Discussion Questions:

- Who can you pray for on this Christmas Eve?
- Is there anyone that you could invite to church for Christmas this year?
- What is one thing that you've learned about God during this Advent season?

Monday – December 25, Christmas Day

Read: [Luke 2:1-21](#)

Christmas Day today looks quite a bit different than the first one that Mary and Joseph experienced centuries ago. However, the message of good news and boundless joy has not changed.

Before you begin opening presents and celebrating with your family and friends, take a moment to pray and thank God for this good news and boundless joy.

Consider pausing to reflect on how God has blessed you and your family. Then, help one another make the connection between the presents they receive and the gift of Christ to this world. Let this Christmas Day be a celebration of the true gift that God has given to the whole world.