



## Family Advent Guide

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. This year Advent begins on December 2, 2018. By tradition five candles are used during Advent. There is one candle for each Sunday; four purple candles the color of royalty, and one candle at the center called the Christ candle for Christmas, white the color of purity and light. Advent candles are often placed in an evergreen wreath. The circle of the wreath symbolizes the eternal nature of God and the evergreen represents the everlasting life found in Christ. Each week in Advent carries its own theme to consider.

Each Sunday during Advent gather as a family and read the short teaching, light the candle(s), read the week's scripture, and pray. Complete the other activities throughout the week as you are able.



Delaware  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

# Advent – A Christmas Experience

Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

The First Candle: meditate on hope

Teaching: EXPECTATION

The Christmas story began a long, long time ago centuries before Jesus was born. God spoke to the prophets. God told the prophets about a very special man who was to come. The prophets shared God's message with the people. They told the people that this man, this very special man who was to come would save them from their enemies and bring them to a place where there would be more than enough of everything they needed and wanted. In this place, they would be safe and prosperous. They expected this man to be powerful. They expected this man to protect them. They expected this man to do all the things God said he would do. They expected this man to lead them out of bondage. They expected this man to help them conquer their enemies. They did not know his name, but they put their hope and trust in this man who was to come.

The prophets proclaimed what God had told them, and together with the people they waited with EXPECTATION and with real HOPE knowing that God would do what he promised.

## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40: 3-5

“A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

1 Corinthians 2: 9

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

## ACTIVITIES

### Activity For Kids: Make an Advent Stocking

When you think about Christmas there are many things that come mind, presents under the tree, baking and decorating cookies, hot chocolate, and holiday decorations. Things you expect to do or see or experience.

Print, color and cut out a Christmas stocking. Print out a page of stars. On each star write one of the things that make Christmas special to you. Look forward with expectation and every time you experience one of those special Christmas moments cut out its star, and glue it on your stocking. Say thank you to God for the blessing. Every day count your blessings.

### Activity For The Family: Bake Cookies

The simple act of baking cookies is a great example of having an expectation. We like Christmas cookies and when we bake we expect the cookies to look beautiful and taste great! But it is not enough to just want cookies. We can't just let the ingredients sit in the cupboard. We need to follow the recipe and bake them at the right temperature, and for the right length of time. Making cookies takes time. There is work, and a lot of changes happen before a cookie becomes a cookie.

When God makes a promise he will fulfill it, but we need to do our part too. He has a recipe for a fulfilled life if only we will follow it.

Get out all the ingredients. Look at them talk about how each one does something special to do make cookies. Without one ingredient, the cookie just wouldn't be the same, and wouldn't be as good. You may even taste a few ingredients. Though they make look very similar, they may taste very different.

What will the cookies look like, smell like, and taste like? Make the dough. Roll it. Cut it. Watch it bake in the oven. Take the cookies out, let them cool and decorate them. Talk about your expectations as you make the cookies. When you are done, enjoy your cookies. Then share your cookies with friends and loved ones.

### Activity For The Family: Watch a Movie

*"It's a Wonderful Life"* is a great movie to help us understand the difference between the expectations we may have for ourselves, and the plans and purpose God has for us. The main character knew just what he wanted to do and be when he grew up. He had plans. Those plans didn't seem to work out, but an angel helps him see that God's plans were bigger and better than anything he could have imagined! Pop some popcorn. Grab a cozy blanket and watch and discuss together.

## PRAYER AND DEVOTION

### Prayer and Devotion: For Kids

We are going to use our hands to help us pray. Trace your hand on a blank piece of paper. Write Jesus' name at the top of the paper above the hand. Draw a heart in the hand. Write your name in the heart.

Week One: Pray for the Weak

Take your paper and on the little pinky finger of your hand write, or have your parents write, "The Weak"

Jesus did not come into the world as a strong warrior. He came as a little baby and like everyone else he needed someone to help him as he grew. There are people in the world who need help. One way you can help them is to pray for them. Think about who is weak, talk about it. Who needs your help? No matter how young you are, when you connect to Jesus through the Holy Spirit, there is power in your prayers.

Touch your little finger and pray for the weak. Do this every day.

(Save this prayer hand to use in the weeks to come.)

### Prayer and Devotion: For Parents

To have the best Christmas ever, you are encouraged to spend this first week of Advent aligning your expectations to the plan and purpose God has for your Christmas and your life. Then no matter what twist or turn your holiday or your life may take, you will be able to trust that you are, in all circumstances, right where God wants you in order to enjoy his very best.

1. Take a deep breath. Quiet your heart. Check your body. Do you feel open and ready to receive?
2. Pray and ask God to be present with you. Invite the Holy Spirit to come to teach and guide you into truth.
3. Read a short section of scripture. Read the passage again slowly.

What phrase or word(s) caught your attention?

\*circle or underline that word or phrase.

Reread the passage do you notice anything?

\*what are you feeling? \*what thoughts are forming?

4. Meditate on what God is showing you: How is God inviting you to become like Christ?
5. Pray: respond to God's invitation – honestly, openly. Will you accept, reject, or postpone your response... how can he help you?
6. Contemplate: Sit with God, feel his presence, let the Holy Spirit guide and direct you into truth in the presence of God's light.

You may choose to begin with the following prayer.

"I know God that you are here present. Take any stray thoughts from my mind. Help me to understand the truths that you wish to teach me in our time together. Help me, merciful God, to do what you ask and go where you lead me, and not merely hear and thereby deceive myself. Speak, dear Lord, to my soul."

### DAILY SCRIPTURE

Monday December 3: **Jeremiah 29: 11** "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Tuesday December 4: **John 10: 10** "The thief comes only to kill, steal and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Wednesday December 5: **Romans 10: 9** "For if you confess with our mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your hearts God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Thursday December 6: **1 John 1: 9** "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Friday December 7: **Philippians 4:6** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, present your requests to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus"

Saturday December 8: Revisit the scripture that was the most meaningful to you. Commit it to memory.