



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.



Advent – A Christmas Experience

Sunday, December 23rd

The Fourth Candle: meditate on **Joy**

Teaching: FULFILLMENT

God kept the promise he made through the prophets, but he didn't keep it in a way the people thought. He sent a baby who would grow into a man who would suffer and die on a cross. He wasn't the kind of powerful warrior king they wanted. He was the savior they needed. The people wanted a leader for the here and now. God wanted someone to lead us into the now and forever. God gave us something bigger, something better, and something we couldn't even imagine. In our lives he may not give us what we think we need and want. He will give us something bigger and better. All we have to do is let him.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:18, 28 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us... And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Psalms 100 "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

ACTIVITIES

Activity For Kids: Make a Wreath

A Christmas wreath made of evergreen reminds us of God's love. Just like the evergreen plant whose leaves remain green even in the dead of winter, God's love is everlasting. God's love is unfailing. Open your hands and open your heart and receive God's lovingkindness.



What you needed:

- A lot of green construction paper
- A piece of red construction paper or a red ribbon
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Optional: Glitter or glitter glue

Trace your child's hand on a piece of green construction paper and cut out the handprint. Make about 10 paper hands for each wreath. Glue the handprints together in a wreath shape, with the wrists overlapping a little bit. Glue on a red ribbon bow (or make one from red construction paper). Optional: Decorate your wreath with glitter or glitter glue.

Activity For The Family: See the Lights

While we all enjoy looking at Christmas lights because there is something special and beautiful in a majestic display. This year you can take your enjoyment to a whole new level by giving thanks to the people who go to the time and expense of making the beautiful displays for you to enjoy. Let everyone in the family write a short thank you note or two to the homeowners. Plan a drive, pack up the car, bring some hot chocolate in a spill-proof thermos and be ready to tell someone you appreciate their effort. When you see a display of lights you particularly enjoy, place one of your thank you notes in their mailbox.

PRAYER AND DEVOTION

Prayer and Devotion: For Kids

Week Four: Pray for Our Leaders

Two of the most important leaders you can pray for are the leaders of your family, your mom and dad. Your parents are responsible for taking care of you, making good decisions, working hard, taking care of the house, fixing problems, loving each other and you well. They could use your prayers. Teachers are important leaders too. Good teachers help us become the people God intended us to be. Think about the people who are responsible for leading others. Help them to be good leaders who glorify God by praying for them.

Take out your prayer hand and write the word "Leaders" on the pointer finger.

Touch your pointer finger and pray for the people charge. Do this every day.

Prayer and Devotion: For Adults

As believers we find fulfillment and joy through the Holy Spirit and, peace in the presence of God, yet we are never to be complacent in our faith. God is a creator. God loves new beginnings. God continues his works. He wants to move you to deeper, closer intimacy with him where you will find greater fulfillment, greater joy and more of his peace.

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."

Monday December 24: James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

