

Advent Wreath and Prayers

The Advent wreath itself is simply a circle of greens holding four candles. Even little children will be delighted to assist or accompany parents in buying or cutting tree boughs for the wreath. The base holding the greens can be made of just about anything -- wood, styrofoam or coat hangers bent straight and then formed in a circle. Fresh greens can be sustained for the season by providing each stem with water from tiny plastic floral vials. For the longest-lasting wreath, purchase a florists' sponge wreath form (sometimes called an "oasis wreath"); the greens need only be inserted into the sponge and the wreath can then be kept well watered. Involve children in creating the Advent wreath by asking them to help secure the greens and place the candles.

The four candles may be natural-colored, or the customary three purple and one pink. If you choose natural colored candles, the colors of the season may be represented by purple and pink ribbons during Advent, changing to white/gold or another festive color for Christmas. You may have a little crib set or Infant that can be placed reverently inside the wreath by little hands, or you can change the center decoration as the season moves on.

The Advent wreath may be used as a table centerpiece, as the candelabrum for evening prayer, or as part of the household's prayer corner.

The Advent wreath service may take place Saturday evenings. Using this time can serve to orient the children toward the Sunday Advent liturgy at the parish.

Presenting selected Advent texts to the very young child can be ideally done in the Advent wreath setting. The usual format for the presentation of scriptural texts could become the structure for the Advent wreath ceremony. Due to children's age-spread in the family, judicious flexibility will guide the choice of scriptural texts; choices should probably favor the younger child(ren).

On the first day of Advent, point out the symbolism of the wreath:

- The four candles represent the 4,000 years prior to Christ's coming and, of course, the four weeks of Advent.
- The unlighted candles represent the dark ages before Christ's coming.
- The lighted candles represent Christ, the Light of the World. Each week we light one more candle and that represents the idea that the coming of Christ is closer.
- The circular form of the wreath symbolizes that God has no beginning or end.
- The green of the boughs indicates hope -- just as the green of spring indicates new life.
- The word *Advent* means the coming or promise.

Advent Wreath Blessing

All In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Leader

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All Who made heaven and earth.

Leader

In the short days and long nights of Advent, we realize how we were always waiting for deliverance, always needing salvation by our God. Around this wreath, we shall remember God's promise.

Scripture Reading

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing.
This is the Word of the Lord.

(Alternate readings: Isaiah 63:16-17 or Isaiah 64:2-7)

All Thanks be to God.

Lord's Prayer

Leader

Let us now pray for God's blessing upon us and upon this wreath.

Lord our God, we praise you for your child, Jesus Christ:

the Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

the wisdom that teaches and guides us, the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Light the first candle.

Leader

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God. *(Making the sign of the cross)*

The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” or another advent song.

Each day in Advent, perhaps at the evening meal, light the candles: one candle the first week, two the second, and so forth.

Advent Prayers

Family members gather around the Advent wreath before the evening meal.

Family Leader: Let us begin our prayer of waiting for the Lord.

One family member lights the weekly candle(s).

All: Our hope is in the Lord. Jesus is the light of our family.

Leader continues with one of the daily prayers listed below.

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "O Lord of all creation, we are the clay and you are the potter. We are all the work of your hands." (Pause)

Let Us Pray

O Lord, thank you for the gift of life which you have given to all of us in this family. You fashioned each of us as unique individuals. Help us to prepare our hearts for Christmas by being more patient with one another. Open our eyes of faith that we might recognize You in each other.

All We wait for you Lord.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "Nations, hear the message of the Lord and make it known to the ends of the earth: Our Savior is coming." (Pause)

Let us Pray

Lord, thank you for the promise of your Son who is our salvation. Help us to prepare our hearts for Christmas by opening our ears so that we might truly listen to each other in our family. May the words that we speak to one another become the sweet music of our unique family.

All We wait for you Lord.

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: “A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse and from his roots a bud shall blossom. . . justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. . . then the wolf shall be the guest of the lamb and there shall be no harm or ruin on my holy mountain.” (Pause)

Let Us Pray

Lord, thank you for becoming one of us and for teaching us your way of faithfulness and justice. You can heal the hurts which divide us as a family. Help us to prepare our hearts for Christmas by seeking to forgive each other for the hurts which stunt our growth as a family. May we become both forgivers and acceptors of forgiveness.

All We wait for you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: “As Jesus moved on from Capernum, two blind men came after him crying out, 'Son of David, have pity on us!' Jesus said, 'Are you confident that I can do this?' 'Yes, Lord,' they replied. At that he touched their eyes and said, 'Because of your faith, you shall be cured'.” (Pause)

Let Us Pray

Lord, thank you for our gift of faith. We are confident that you can heal us as a family of all sorrows and disappointments. What gift can we give you in return? Help us to prepare our hearts for Christmas by making time to laugh as a family while remembering all the crazy and fun times we have shared through the years.

All We wait for you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: “Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.”

Let Us Pray

Lord, help us to prepare for the coming of Christ by giving new life through acts of generosity to our family members.

All We hope for you Lord.

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "I, the Lord, your God teach you what is for your good, and lead you on the way you should go."

Let Us Pray

Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Teach our family to follow your example of prayer, compassion, and service.

All We hope for you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "God who is mighty has done great things for me."

Let Us Pray

Lord, your greatness abounds in nature and in your people. Thank you for the countless blessings you give to our family. May we who have been so loved, now love others in return.

All We love you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "They shall call the savior Emmanuel, a name which means God is with us."

Let Us Pray

Lord, you loved us enough to become one of us. You are a humble God who visits your people. We invite you to come into our home this Advent season to be Lord of our home. May your peace be our peace and may we learn to share your peace and presence in our world.

All We love you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "Nothing is impossible with God."

Let Us Pray

Lord, we don't know how to love as you love. We don't know how to forgive as you forgive. We trust that whenever we call out to you, we will be filled with your overflowing love. Our wealth is your love for us; we pray for the grace to be generous and trusting enough to give it away.

All We love you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "God who is mighty has done great things for me."

Let Us Pray

Lord, your love is prayer; a power which helps us to be generous. Your love is grace which helps us to forgive. Your love is truly great. Teach us your way of love, and help us to give it away to our family, our church, and to a waiting world.

All We love you Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "All this is the work of the kindness of our God; God shall visit us in mercy..."

Let Us Pray

Lord, thank you for visiting our family. Renew our faithfulness to one another and to our church community.

All We rejoice in your coming Lord.

+ + + + +

Leader

Let us hear the word of God: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near."

Let Us Pray

You have shown your kindness throughout this season. By our thoughts, words and actions, may we be a blessing to others this day.

All We rejoice in your coming Lord.