



advent INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARE YOUR HEART

The season of Advent is such a special time for those who trust in Jesus. It's a time for us to anticipate and prepare for the coming of Jesus, the hope of the world. Lighting the Advent wreath at home each Sunday of Advent is such a simple way for us to take a moment from our busy Christmas preparations to remember the real meaning of Christmas. We can't encourage you enough to begin this tradition and celebrate by lighting a candle of the Advent Wreath at home, each Sunday. As you light each candle and prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child, may the readings and prayers also remind you to anticipate with joy Christ's glorious return.

We can say from personal experience that setting aside this time for you and your family to focus on Jesus will help you celebrate Christ's coming in a special way and create meaningful family traditions, too. We pray you enjoy the Advent season together with a renewed focus on the coming of Christ as a baby, and as a returning King!

Pastor Sarah & Pastor Gabe

INSTRUCTIONS & SUPPLIES

In the days before Advent (which are the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day), gather a few supplies to build your Advent Wreath. Don't let starting this tradition add stress to your Christmas preparation. Your Advent Wreath can be as big and grand as you want it to be, or a simple collection of candles.

For a traditional Advent Wreath, gather an evergreen or decorative wreath to place around a circle of candles. The circle of evergreen reminds us of God's eternal love, a love with no beginning and no end. Then, gather a collection of five candles: three purple (or blue) candles, one pink candle, and a large white candle. The circle of candles will begin and end with a purple candle, and the pink candle should sit in the spot for lighting on the third week. A large white candle will sit in the middle of the circle as the Christ Candle. There should be five candles altogether.

Each Sunday of Advent, you light one candle as you read scripture and pray. Each candle represents a different aspect of Jesus. You will light the candles consecutively (purple, purple, pink, purple) so that by the end of Advent, all four candles in the circle are lit.

The large white candle sitting in the center of the wreath will be lit on Christmas Day. On Christmas Day, you may want to take a moment during your celebration to read

the account of Jesus' birth and sing "Joy to the World," or simply pause and say "Thank You" for the arrival of the Savior.

When you light your Advent wreath, you might want to sing a favorite carol or take turns choosing who will pray, who will light the candle, and who will read the Scripture. Feel free to modify your Advent celebration to meet your family's needs. You might want to add songs, or scriptures, or invite other friends and family to join you.

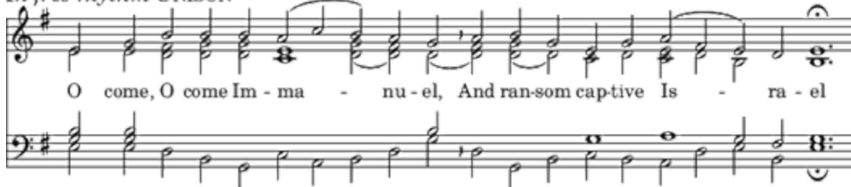
If you have time, feel free to make the evening special, light the Advent wreath together, grab some snacks, and then watch a favorite Christmas movie. Or, if your Sunday's are busy with Christmas activity and obligation, carve out five minutes to pause, breathe, and light the Advent wreath. The important thing is to take a moment to focus on the coming of Christ with those you love!

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

sing

You and your family may choose to close each Advent candle lighting by singing the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," an old, sacred hymn that longs for Christ's coming.

In free rhythm UNISON



REFRAIN



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

hope

Say:

The first candle is called the candle of HOPE. It invites us to thank God for the hope we have in Jesus, the prophesied Messiah.

Read: Isaiah 60:1-3

"Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The nations shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising."

We light this candle as a symbol of Christ, our HOPE.
(Light the first purple candle.)

Pray:

May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation.

May this light give warmth and hope to each person we meet this holy season.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.
Amen.

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

peace

Say:

The second candle is called the candle of PEACE.

It invites us to thank God for giving us the Prince of Peace.

Read: Isaiah 9:6-7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

We light this candle as a symbol of The Prince of PEACE.
(*Light two purple candles.*)

Pray:

We light this candle as a symbol of the Prince of Peace. May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God, make us ready for the coming of Jesus, the author of peace. O come, O come Emmanuel.
Amen.

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

joy

Say:

The third candle is called the candle of JOY. It invites us to thank God for the announcement of joy that came from the angels; good tidings of great joy that shall be for all people!

Read: Isaiah 35:10

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

We light this candle as a symbol of Christ, our JOY.

(Light the first and second purple candles, and the third pink candle.)

Pray:

May the joyful promise of your presence, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation. May our faces radiate your joy so that everyone we meet will know Him and the gift of life He brings.

O come, O come Emmanuel.

Amen.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

love

Say:

The fourth candle is called the candle of LOVE. It invites us to thank God for the love that only Christ can bring, a love that saves the world.

Read: Luke 3:3-6

"John went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

We light this candle as a symbol of Christ the WAY: the way of LOVE. (*Light all four candles.*)

Pray:

May the Word sent from God through the prophets lead us to the way of salvation. May the love of Christ give us the time for sharing, the time for caring, and the time for rejoicing in Christ, the way of love.

O come, O come Emmanuel.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS

eve

You may choose to light the four candles of your Advent wreath for a moment tonight. Then, take a few minutes to gather around and read the account of Christ's birth.

Read: Luke 2:1-20

Pray:

Lord, prepare our hearts this night, to receive the message of your arrival, to prepare with joy for your holy birth, and your presence with us.

O come, O come Emmanuel.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS day

(This Sunday, you will light all four candles *and* the center Christ candle. You may want to consider reading Mary's Song and Zechariah's Song from Luke, Chapter 1, to rejoice in the arrival of the Christ Child.)

Say:

The middle candle is called the Christ Candle.

It calls us to celebrate Christ's arrival as the light of the world.

Read: John 1:9-14

"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

(Continued on following page.)

Pray:

We light this candle rejoicing that the Light of Christ has come! As Christ gives light to our hearts with the hope, love, joy, and peace he gives, may we generously offer the light of Christ to the world. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the
government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be
called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace."

Merry Christmas!

