

Advent Candle Guide



Advent Candles

Advent is a season of remembrance and waiting. The word *advent* comes from a Latin word meaning “coming” or “arrival”. As believers, we live between the two advents of Christ – his first coming into this world to save us from our sins, and his future coming as the triumphant King of kings at the end of history. For hundreds of years, Christians have observed Advent by remembering the self-emptying love of Christ in his first coming, as well as anticipating the final coming of Christ to make all things right in the world.

The weekly lighting of Advent candles began in the 16th century as a simple and tangible way of observing the significance of this important season. Throughout the centuries, this practice has been observed by countless Christians around the world to help focus their hearts and minds on the true significance of the Christmas season.

How to use this guide

Our hope is that this guide will help you enter into the significance of Advent in a meaningful way that doesn't require tons of preparation or time. Advent candles are typically lit on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, while the fifth and final candle is lit on Christmas Eve. We suggest that you find a night that works for you each of the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

We've designed the guide to take no more than 10 minutes each week, so that it can be a part of a meal or simply a short, intentional time of reflection. Our hope is that you will observe this tradition with community. If you're married or have kids, participate as a family. If you're single, invite some friends. Whatever you do, it's worth the extra effort to observe this season with others. Finally, all you need is this guide, a set of candles, and a match to light them. A set of Advent candles includes three purple, one pink, and one white. Any style or size will work.

Our prayer is that this Advent season will be full of remembrance and waiting for you and your community.

ADVENT WEEK ONE

hope



Hope, def: (noun)—feeling that things will turn out best; desire with expectation (verb)—to look forward to with desire; to believe, desire, or trust

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Light one of the **PURPLE** candle, which represents hope.

◆ SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9:1-2

¹ Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan— ² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Isaiah 11:1-6

¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD— ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

◆ REFLECTION

Commentary

When Isaiah wrote these verses, the people of Israel were enslaved to the kingdom of Babylon. In a season of darkness, Isaiah was looking forward to the hope of a King from the line of David who would rescue God's people. We know today that the King Israel was hoping for is Jesus. In his first advent, Jesus defeated the darkness of sin and death with the light of his righteousness and love, and in his second advent, he will come to spread that light to every corner of the universe. As we approach Christmas, we wait with eager longing for the day he will return and complete what he started.

Question

For Adults: What are you having to wait for in this season of your life? How do you deal with the pain that waiting brings?

For Families with Children: What do you think it felt like for God's people to wait for God to send someone to rescue them? Why do you think God makes us wait for good things sometimes?

◆ PRAYER

Have someone say a prayer to thank God for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death. Pray that God would help us place our ultimate hope in the second coming of Christ.

◆ SONG

Listen and/or sing along to “Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus”. As you listen/sing, pay attention to how the lyrics cultivate a sense of longing and anticipation for the second coming of Jesus.

- ◆ *Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*
- ◆ *Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.*

ADVENT WEEK TWO

peace



Peace, def: freedom from conflict; harmony; undisturbed state of mind; calm, tranquil

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Light the purple candle from the previous week. Light a second **PURPLE** candle, which represents peace.

◆ SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ 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. ⁷ Of the greatness 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.

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

◆ REFLECTION

Commentary

Scripture calls Jesus "The Prince of Peace". Jesus came to establish peace not only between us and God, but among one another. He has also given us the Holy Spirit, who reassures us of his love and reminds us that he will come again to establish peace in every corner of the world. Take this time to reflect on Jesus as the prince who brings peace wherever he goes. In a turbulent world that tries

to offer us a false sense of security, only Jesus can truly bring the peace we long for.

Question

For Adults: What causes you the greatest amount of anxiety in this season of your life? How do you think Jesus wants to bring peace into that area of your life?

For Families with Children: Have you ever been afraid of something? Has Jesus ever helped you feel protected when you were afraid? Explain.

◆ PRAYER

Have someone say a prayer to thank God for the peace he brings to those who trust in his love for them. Pray that God would increase our longing for the day when he will usher in complete peace.

◆ SONG

Listen and/or sing along to “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”. As you listen/sing, pay attention to how the lyrics cultivate a sense of longing and anticipation for the second coming of Jesus.

- ◆ *Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!”*
- ◆ *Christ, by highest heaven adored:
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the favoured one.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, th’incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!”*
- ◆ *Hail! the heaven-born
Prince of peace!
Hail! the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die:
Born to raise the son of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!”*

ADVENT WEEK THREE

joy



Joy, def: great delight, pleasure; state of happiness

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Light the purple candles from the previous two weeks. Light the **PINK** candle, which represents joy.

◆ SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:12-20

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

John 15:11

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

◆ REFLECTION

Commentary

With all that has gone on in 2020, moments of joy may have felt few and far between. We are not the first people of God to wait. Israel had long awaited the promised Messiah. And when Jesus was born, the angel told the shepherds that his birth brought delight and happiness to ALL people, not just Israel. This news and the sight of the baby lying in a manger caused them to tell everyone they saw! They overflowed with joy.

Our joy is not dependent on our present circumstances, but that God saw fit to give us Jesus, who made a way for us to know God. We live between Jesus' comings—he came that first Christmas to pay the price for our sin, reconciling us to God. But when he comes again, all will be as he originally intended. No more sorrow, no more deadly viruses, no more injustice. We have joy in what he has already done for us, and we wait with joy for what he will do when he comes again.

Questions

For Adults: How has Jesus brought joy to your life?

For Families with Children: Imagine you are a shepherd and angels appear to tell you about Jesus' birth. What would you have seen, heard, and felt?

◆ PRAYER

Have someone say a prayer to thank God for Jesus, who brings joy. Ask God to show you moments of joy during this advent season, as we celebrate Jesus' first coming. Ask God to give you joy as you wait for Jesus' second coming.

◆ SONG

Listen and/or sing along to "Joy to the World". As you listen/sing, pay attention to how the lyrics speak of the complete joy we will have when Jesus comes again.

- ◆ *Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room; And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing; And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing*
- ◆ *Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains; Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy; Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy*
- ◆ *No more let sins and sorrows grow; Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow; Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found; Far as, far as the curse is found*
- ◆ *He rules the world with truth and grace; And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness; And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love; And wonders, wonders, of His love*

ADVENT WEEK FOUR

love



Love, def: profoundly tender toward; passionate affection for another person; benevolence, good will

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Light the purple and pink candles from the previous three weeks. Light the remaining **PURPLE** candle, representing love.

◆ SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:8b-12

^{8b}...God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

◆ REFLECTION

Commentary

Something deep in our souls knows that love and Christmas go together. Hallmark spends millions every year convincing us that we will not be complete without romantic love under the mistletoe. We seek affection from people—a spouse, a parent, friends. The problem is that we are all imperfect, and so the love we show each other will disappoint us in some way. That desire is meant to drive us toward the perfect love of God. Jesus, the Son of God, left heaven and became a human in order to show what love looks like. Today, as we wait for Jesus to come again, we know that love is more than warm fuzzy feelings by a fireplace. Love is a person, and his name is Jesus.

Question

For Adults: What makes you feel loved? How have you experienced the perfect love of Jesus?

For Families with Children: Describe a time you felt loved. How have you felt love from Jesus? How can you show the love of Jesus to others?

◆ PRAYER

Have someone say a prayer to thank God for the love he has shown through Jesus. Use specific examples if you can. Pray that you would love others the way he has loved you.

◆ SONG

Listen and/or sing along to “O Holy Night”.

- ◆ *O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, the night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy Night, O night divine!
O night, O Holy Night, O night divine!*
- ◆ *Truly He taught us to love one another
His law is love and His gospel is peace
Chains he shall break, for the slave is our brother
And in his name all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
With all our hearts we praise His holy name
Christ is the Lord! Then ever, ever praise we
His power and glory ever more proclaim!
His power and glory ever more proclaim!*

CHRISTMAS EVE

Jesus

the light of the world



Lighting of the Advent Candle: Light the purple and pink candles from the previous four weeks. Light the remaining **WHITE** candle, representing JESUS, the Light of the World.

◆ **SCRIPTURE READING**

Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

John 1: 1-5, 14

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Revelation 21:23

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

◆ **REFLECTION**

Commentary

Light illuminates the darkness so we can see. Tomorrow we celebrate the birth of Jesus, when the Light of the World changed everything forever. We praise him for the hope, peace, joy, and love his first coming brought. We adore him because he did for us what we cannot do for ourselves—he took our sin and shame on the cross.

When he rose from the dead, light defeated darkness and brought life. We worship him for the grace and truth he continues to shine in our lives. And we wait for the day when he will return to make all things new—with no more darkness, because he alone is the only light we need.

Question

For Adults: How has Jesus' first coming brought light into your life? How has the gospel been good news to you in this season?

For families: What is the best Christmas present you've ever received? How is Jesus better?

◆ PRAYER

Thank God for the gift of Jesus, our Savior. Praise God that Jesus came to redeem us. Ask Jesus to be the light in your life, and to illuminate any dark places you need him to change.

◆ SONG

Listen and/or sing along to “O Come All Ye Faithful”.

- ◆ *O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!*

- ◆ *Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
All glory in the highest
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!*

- ◆ *Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!*



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