



# Advent

*A season of expectant hope and preparing a way for peace.*

This guide provides a few different activity and discussion options for your family this Advent season.

## **Advent Wreath (Candles)**

The Advent Wreath is a traditional way to practice anticipation for the arrival of Jesus. The wreath can have an actual evergreen wreath at the base of 4 candles or can just be a circle or line of candles without a wreath (especially if you're concerned about fire!). This tradition is historically associated with Lutherans but has been adopted by many other Christians as a visual and beautiful way to prepare a way for Jesus.

Traditionally, three candles are purple and one candle is pink. The three purple candles represent the "royalty" of Jesus and the pink candle is to symbolize the light and joy even in the midst of the physical darkness of the season and that there is joy even in the midst of the longing and anticipation. Some people also add a white candle at the center of the wreath to signify Christ (the Christ candle). This candle would be lit on Christmas Day to show that Jesus Christ was born. Although the traditional colors are purple and pink, you can also use red or blue and forego having a pink candle. You could also use any candles you have access to!

### **Supplies**

- 4 candles (5 if you want a Christ candle)
- Candle holders/safe surface for the candles to stand and melt onto
- Lighter
- Wreath or decoration

### **Instructions:**

- Choose a rhythm for you family to light the candles (usually before or after dinner and once it is already dark outside)
- On every Sunday in Advent (Dec 3-24) light 1 of the Advent Wreath candles
- Each Sunday talk about the Advent theme for the day and say a prayer (either the provided\*\* one or one of your own creation or preference)
  - Dec 3 - Hope
  - Dec 10 - Peace
  - Dec 17 - Joy
  - Dec 24 - Love

\*\* Pre-written prayers and a discussion guide are provided at the end of this PDF

## **Find the Star**

This activity is more for a fun option and has no tradition or liturgical meaning to it but is a good way to simulate the act of “searching” and the “finding” that the three magi/wise men/kings had to do as they went to find Jesus.

For this activity, you can either create a new star every week or you can make 1 sturdy star from cardboard and decorate it and use that for all 4 weeks.

### **Supplies:**

- Cardstock/thicker paper or cardboard
- Markers or kid-safe paint OR other decoration
- Sharpie (for you, the adult, to write on the star)

### **Instructions:**

- Each week you'll write the thematic word of the week on a star to hide (or add it to the more sturdy, reusable star)
- Hide the star and have your child try to find it
- After your child finds the star, sit down and talk about the word of that week's theme
  - Dec 3 - Hope
  - Dec 10 - Peace
  - Dec 17 - Joy
  - Dec 24 - Love
- Afterwards, you can pray the prewritten prayer\*\* or you can pray about something in your life or world that relates to that theme.

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## **Rising Star Advent “Calendar”**

This activity helps our kids visually see the weekly advent countdown (or up in this case) and helps us all practice the anticipation of the star rising to the top.

### **Supplies:**

- Cardstock or thick paper (or cardboard)
- Markers/other kid-safe art supplies
- Painters tape or wall-safe tape

### **Instructions:**

- Decorate a star and make 4 labels to tape on a wall or other surface in your home
- The labels should correspond to the following themes:
  - Dec 3 - Hope
  - Dec 10 - Peace
  - Dec 17 - Joy
  - Dec 24 - Love
- The lowest one should be Dec 3 and you will ascend to Dec 24th and you can add a 5th if you'd like for Christmas morning
- Tape the star near the start on Dec 3 and discuss the first theme
- Afterwards, you can pray the prewritten prayer\*\* or you can pray about something in your life or world that relates to that theme
- Repeat this each Sunday, moving the star closer to Christmas

\*\* Pre-written prayers and a discussion guide are provided at the end of this PDF

## Prayers & Discussion Questions for Advent

Prayer for **Hope** - God of Hope, we pray for all those who are longing to see change in their lives and communities. We pray that you give us strength to continue hoping even when things feel impossible. Amen

Discussion questions about Hope:

- What does it feel like to hope for something? Sometimes we have “hope” for things like toys, our favorite snack, or that our favorite team would win. What is the difference between hoping for a new game for Christmas and the hope that we pray for?
- Why do you think that some people lose hope when things get hard?
- What is 1 way we can keep our hope alive when life gets tough?

Prayer for **Peace** - God of Peace, we pray for all the people and places in our world that need peace now. We confess that keeping peace is hard and fighting/conflict is part of our daily lives. We pray that you would put love in our hearts where there is any anger. Amen

- Why do you think that keeping peace is so difficult for us (humans)?
- What is 1 way that you can help there be more peace on earth?
- Why do you think Jesus made peace part of his mission on earth?

Prayer for **Joy** - God of Joy, we thank you for all of the people, places, and activities that give us joy. We know that you are with us in more places than just church services. You are with us when we jump, when we play, when we run, and when we laugh. God grant us many more memories full of joy! Amen.

**DEFINE JOY for little ones:** Joy is that feeling we get when we are so happy and having so much fun that we cannot keep it inside. It is the energy we might feel in our body when we play, laugh, or do our favorite activity!

- Sometimes faith can sound very serious or feel like we are meant to be thinking about how to be a better person but JOY isn't about being better or serious, it's about feeling happy and having fun in our lives! Why do you think God wants to be sure we remember to feel our joy?
- What kinds of things give you joy?
- Why do you think it is good to experience joy?

Prayer for **Love** - God of Love, we thank you for the love you have shown us and we pray that we are loving towards those around us. God, help us be a light that shines love over all those we meet. Amen.

- What does it look like to be loving to others
- What is 1 thing that makes you feel loved?
- Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to Love God and Love our neighbors as ourself, why do you think Jesus put that as the greatest commandment?