

Advent Candle Lighting

The word “Advent” comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means “coming” or “arrival.” Advent is a time of year in which Christians prepare for Christmas—the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour—the arrival of the Messiah.

The Advent wreath is a sign that says, “Do not be discouraged, be happy, have hope, the Lord is coming!”

The candles represent Christ, our coming light. The candles have little meaning unless they are lit. The flames become alive and give warmth and radiate light. As the days become shorter, at this time of year, and the hours of daylight are fewer, we begin our Advent journey. At the year’s darkest time, we light candles to drive away the darkness. We await the birth of God’s son—the Lord of light, the light of the world. In this symbolic way we remember that Jesus is living and that he is coming to give us life and light, a light the darkness has never extinguished.

The four candles represent each of the four weeks of the Advent season. The evergreen branches are symbols of everlasting life, the circle a sign that God is without beginning or end.

Advent is a time for quiet and joyful anticipation of the Lord’s coming, and a time to prepare to make room for him in our lives. *

Week 1: Hope – To Discover Hope in God’s Presence



Reader: The Prophet Isaiah proclaims to the people of his day a word of **Hope**. Despite wars and hardships that have left the people of Israel in his day broken, fearful, and in despair, despite their own unfaithfulness, God will bring about renewal. “O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand”.

Reader: In Mark’s Gospel today, Jesus tells us to be prepared. Watch for the signs of God’s coming; “Keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come.”

Reader: As we light this first candle of our Advent Wreath we do so as a sign of **Hope**. To hope is to seek the glimmer of light in the darkness. *[The first candle is lit]*

Reader: We hold in our hands the ability to bring forth light or extinguish its glow.

People: May we through our lives and actions share the light of hope. May we hold it high to light the way for others, even as we light our own pathway.

Week 2: Peace – To Hear a Message of Hope and Comfort



Reader: The Prophet Isaiah lived nearly 700 years before Jesus was born. He spoke out boldly against social injustice and the cruelty of those in positions of power and authority. He looked for the signs of the coming of a new era of peace and possibility.

Reader: He dreamed of a day when a new ruler would come and transformation would begin. “Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Reader: Today we light a candle to shine for **Peace**. Its small flame joins with the light of **Hope** to brighten the darkness that shrouds our world. *[2 candles are lit]*

Reader: John the Baptist reminds the people of a new generation that peace and possibility begin with our own willingness to live transformed lives. “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Week 3: Joy – To Rejoice in God’s Transforming Acts



Reader: Isaiah reminds us this week that Joy will be the hallmark of God’s coming. “The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, to comfort all who mourn; - to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; everlasting joy shall be theirs”.

Reader: John proclaims in his Gospel the joy in recognizing God in our midst; “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth”. There is Good News to be shared.

Reader: Today we light the Pink candle on our Advent wreath to symbolize our **Joy** in this season of waiting. *[The pink candle is lit].*

The flame of this light joins with our candles of **Hope** and **Peace**, each week the light grows stronger and brighter as we await Christ’s coming. *[2 purple candles are lit]*

People: Let us lift up our hearts in joy and thanksgiving to our God!

Week 4: Love – The Unexpected Ways God’s Purposes are Revealed



Reader: The angel Gabriel appeared to a young woman named Mary to bring her news that was both breathtaking and humbling. “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

Reader: With these words Gabriel speaks of God’s unending love. A love we will come to see and know in the Christ child’s birth.
Out of Love God comes to journey with us.

Reader: Today we light the last candle on our Advent wreath. This final candle is a reminder of God’s **Love** for us. With this candle our circle is complete, as God’s love for us is complete and, like the circle, is without beginning or end. ! Our journey through Advent and our waiting in expectation has been an act of Love for the one who first loved us. *[all 4 candles are lit]*

People: **Help us to see others as you see us, O Lord, and may there be no barriers to our love. With “hands to work and hearts for God”, may we bring God’s love into the lives of those around us.**

*adapted from www.catholiceducation.org