



Celebrate Advent At Home Bringing your family close to the heart of God

Advent is celebrated on the four Sundays before Christmas Eve. It is meant to be a time of preparing our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Using an Advent Wreath is a wonderful way to turn your and your children's hearts to Christ. Week by week the candle light gets brighter as we get closer to Christmas Eve when every candle is shining.

The symbolism is rich: the winter greenery reminds us that Christ's love for us never dies; the circle shape is symbolic of God as eternal; the candles represent the light of Christ in our homes.

Each week of Advent has a theme, and is represented by one candle. On week one the first candle is lit, then on week two the first and second ones are lit and so on until Christmas Eve.

Creating Your Advent Wreath

You will need:

- **Styrofoam wreath form or four pieces of styrofoam**
 - **A sturdy plate to place this on**
 - **Five candles: three purple, one pink, one white**
 - **Fresh or artificial greenery**
- **Plastic candle cups purchased in the floral department of most craft stores (optional)**

- 1. Use a foam wreath form or form a square using four pieces of foam. Place the foam on a large plate or similar sturdy surface.**
- 2. Designate in the foam a place for four candles to be uniformly spaced around the finished wreath. Use plastic candle cups or just cut a small hole in the foam, then secure with hot glue.**
- 3. Using fresh greenery snipped from your yard, or artificial greenery if you prefer, begin to press the stems into the foam until the foam is completely covered. Be careful to maintain the shape of a circle.**
- 4. Place the candles in the wreath at their designated spots. The white one goes in the center in a separate holder.**

Using Your Advent Wreath

Week One: The first week of Advent is the week of Hope. Discuss with your spouse and children things that you hope for. What do you hope to become? How can we offer hope to the community around us? Let us look forward in hope to the coming year.

This is also the week that we remember the prophets that foretold the birth of Christ hundred of years before it happened. Discuss with your family that prophets are people who bring special messages from God.

Suggested Scripture: Micah 5:2-4, Isaiah 40:1-4, Isaiah 42:1-4

Week Two: The second week of Advent is the week of Faith. Discuss with your spouse and children what it means to be faithful to one another and to God. How can we live lives of faithfulness?

This is also the week that we take a close look at Bethlehem. The word “Bethlehem” means “House Of Bread”. In ancient days the area around Bethlehem was known for its grain fields. How perfect that the Bread Of Life was born in the House Of Bread” This town has a remarkable history in the lineage of Jesus. It is to Bethlehem that

Naomi and Ruth fled for comfort and provision after the deaths of their husbands, and where Ruth found love again.

Suggested Scripture: Reread Micah 5:2-4. It is a reminder that small things are mighty in the Hand of God. Also Luke 2:1-7 Grownups, read the entire book of Ruth to get a new perspective on Bethlehem.

Week Three: LIGHT THE PINK CANDLE! This is the week we are reminded of joy! We are also half way through Advent. Ask your children how they think joy is different from happiness. Talk about things that fill you with joy.

This is also the week that we remember the shepherds that were the first to receive the news from the angelic host of Heaven that the Christ Child had been born. They were the first to be invited to come and see Jesus face to face. Shepherds were the lowest workers on the social ladder of their day, and God brought the joyous news to them first. Jesus is for everyone!

Suggested Scripture: Luke 2:8-20

Week Four: This week we celebrate love. Discuss with your spouse and children the various types of love we experience. We love our children, our parents, our friends, our siblings, our spouses and yet each of these loves is a bit different. Talk about how God loves us and how we can return that love.

This is also the week we tell of the angels that bring us good news. Angels are special messengers from God who spend all of eternity praising Him. They have been occasionally used to bring good news to people of earth.

Suggested Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 Luke 1:8-20, Luke 1: 26-38,

Christmas Eve: This is the night we light the Christ Candle; the white candle in the center of the wreath. On this special night we remember that there was once a time in our history when the world did not know Jesus. People did not always have the example of Christ's holy life to model their own lives on. When we invite Jesus into our hearts and our homes we are creating a place in which the Spirit of God can dwell and serve all of creation. Ask your children which people they know who remind them of Jesus. Discuss how we can be more like Jesus to the people around us.

Suggested Scriptures Luke 2:1-21 For the young ones, find a picture book that tells this story. Sit quietly together before bedtime and discuss the meaning of the gifts and the celebrations. Enjoy the many blessings that you have received.

May you have the most blessed Christmas, and may God make His Face to shine in your home in the new year.

**God bless,
Teresa Auten**

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