

Advent

Liturgy for Week 4

Love



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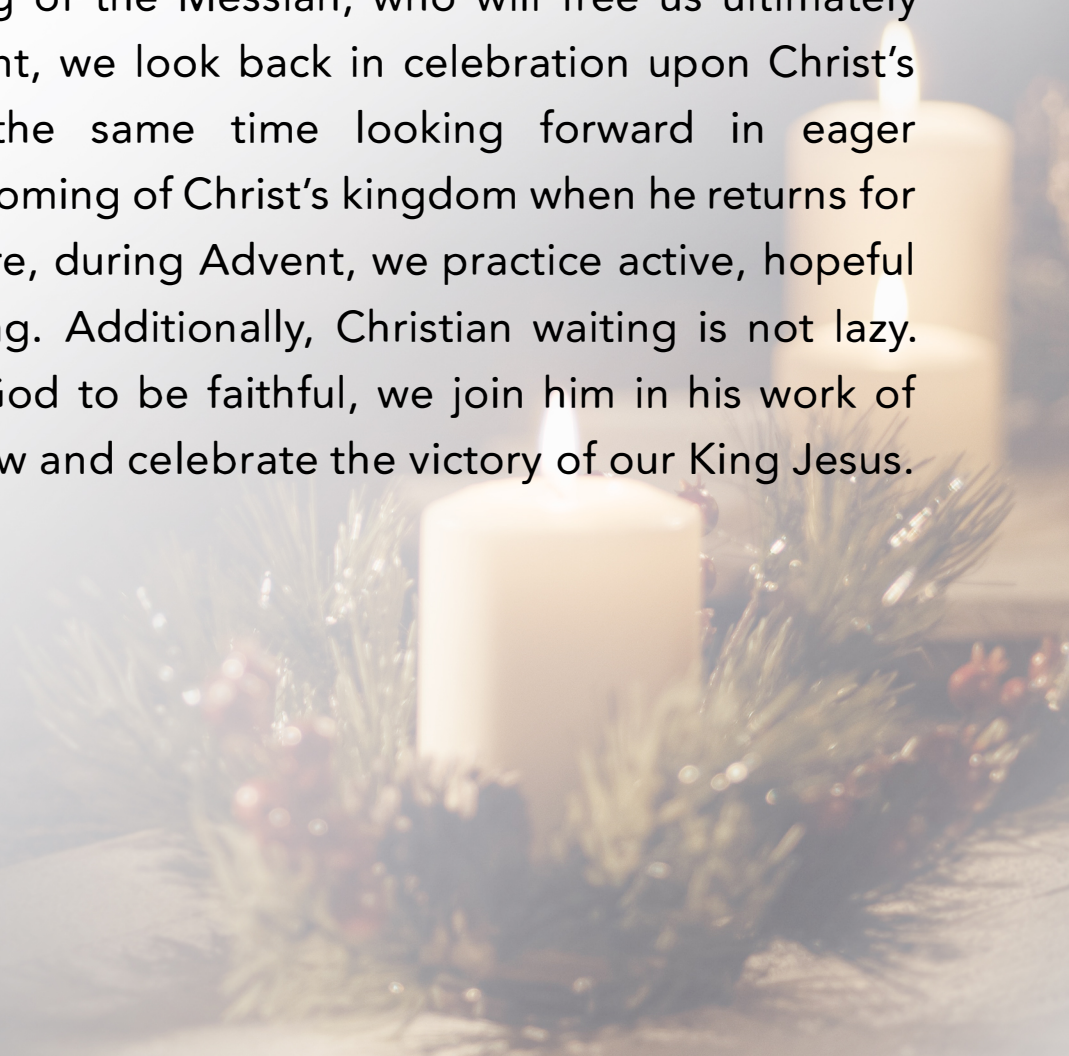
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What is Advent?

The word advent means “coming” or “arrival”. In the Christian tradition, Advent is the first season of the Christian calendar and marked by hopeful waiting for the coming messiah. During early Christian history the celebration of the first coming of Jesus was a season joined with preparation, especially for new believers as they were coming into the faith for baptism. On Christmas Day, these new converts would receive the sacrament of baptism in accordance with the arrival of Jesus into the world to make all things new. Today, Advent represents the location of the Church within these “last days” as we await the second coming of Jesus into the world. The church, like Israel before her, is in exile, awaiting the coming of the Messiah, who will free us ultimately and finally. In Advent, we look back in celebration upon Christ’s coming while at the same time looking forward in eager expectation of the coming of Christ’s kingdom when he returns for his people. Therefore, during Advent, we practice active, hopeful and prayerful waiting. Additionally, Christian waiting is not lazy. Because we know God to be faithful, we join him in his work of making all things new and celebrate the victory of our King Jesus.

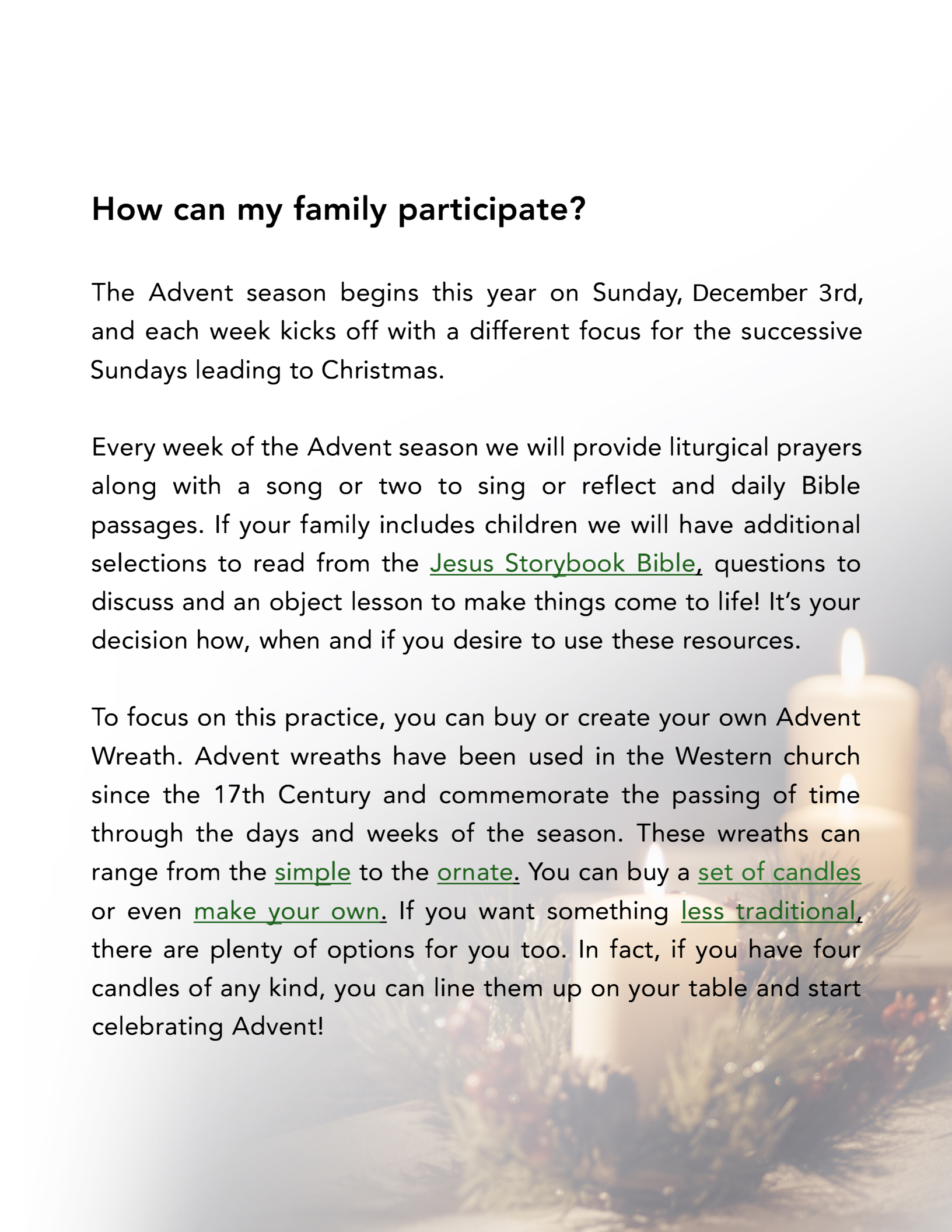


How can my family participate?

The Advent season begins this year on Sunday, December 3rd, and each week kicks off with a different focus for the successive Sundays leading to Christmas.

Every week of the Advent season we will provide liturgical prayers along with a song or two to sing or reflect and daily Bible passages. If your family includes children we will have additional selections to read from the [Jesus Storybook Bible](#), questions to discuss and an object lesson to make things come to life! It's your decision how, when and if you desire to use these resources.

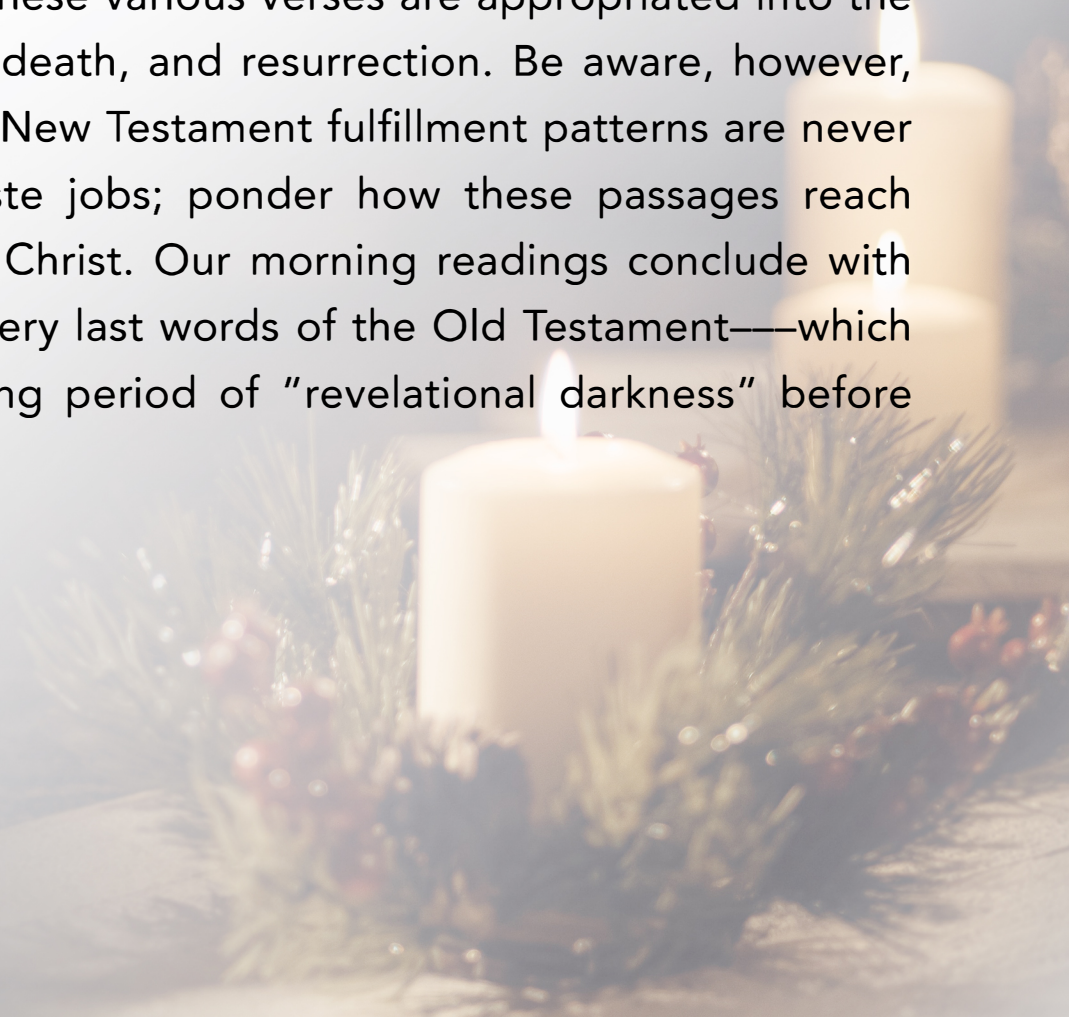
To focus on this practice, you can buy or create your own Advent Wreath. Advent wreaths have been used in the Western church since the 17th Century and commemorate the passing of time through the days and weeks of the season. These wreaths can range from the [simple](#) to the [ornate](#). You can buy a [set of candles](#) or even [make your own](#). If you want something [less traditional](#), there are plenty of options for you too. In fact, if you have four candles of any kind, you can line them up on your table and start celebrating Advent!



Advent Liturgy for Adults

Orientation to Morning Readings

One more from Isaiah, and then more ancient prophets! We didn't have space to squeeze Isaiah 61 into last week's set of Isaiah-centric morning readings, but this is a big one. Jesus himself thought so much of this passage that he used it as his own mission statement at the launch of his ministry, the kicker being that after he read it, Jesus added, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16-21). Boom! From Isaiah, journey through a tour of other prophetic texts that portend the Messiah. Find a Bible with good cross references—or click [here](#)—to see how these various verses are appropriated into the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Be aware, however, that Old Testament-New Testament fulfillment patterns are never crude copy-and-paste jobs; ponder how these passages reach their completion in Christ. Our morning readings conclude with Malachi 4:5-6, the very last words of the Old Testament—which is followed by a long period of "revelational darkness" before Jesus' dawn.



Orientation to Evening Readings

The conclusion of Advent's New Testament readings brings us out of the gospel narratives, but we're not quite finished with other types of eyewitness accounts of Jesus. The apostles John and Peter, the beginnings of whose letters we're reading this week, were among Christ's closest friends and later in their lives penned inspired reflections about their Lord. Keep that in mind when you look over the opening words of John's letter: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands. . . that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you. . ." (1 John 1:1, 3). The one writing these words has seen Jesus! Ditto Peter, who spent more hours with Christ than anyone else. Would that we have had the same experience and joy, although Peter observes that we still can, as he says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory" (1 Peter 1:8). Finally, our last reading of the season wraps up with Peter's directing of the church toward God's still-ahead "day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12). The Lord Christ has already visited us once, as we remember in Advent. Likewise, the church confesses that Christ has died; Christ is risen; and Christ will come again.

Week Four

Starting Sunday, December 24th

Morning Liturgy

(All scripture and prayers to be read out loud.)

The Call to Prayer

Love the Lord, all you his saints!

The Lord preserves the faithful

but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,

all you who wait for the Lord! (Psalm 31:23-24)

The Request for Presence

For you are my rock and my fortress;

and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.

(Psalm 31:3)

The Refrain

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,

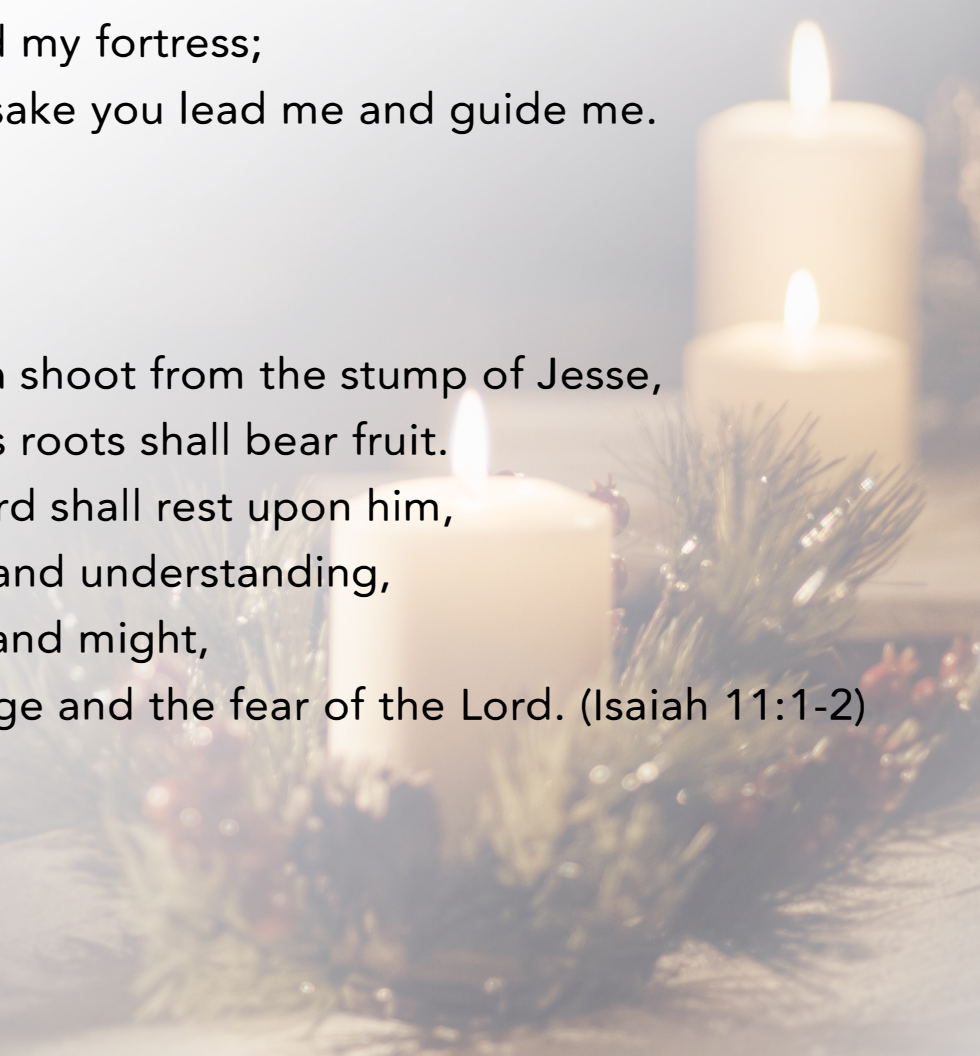
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,

the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and might,

the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)



The Morning Lesson

Sunday: Isaiah 61

Monday: Daniel 7:9-14

Tuesday: Hosea 11:1-9

Wednesday: Zechariah 9:9-13

Thursday: Zechariah 14:1-9

Friday: Micah 5:1-5a

Saturday: Malachi 3:1-4, 4:5-6

Silent Reflection and Prayer

The Refrain

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

The Cry of the Church

O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come unto you. Thanks be to God.

Prayer for the Fourth Week of Advent

Purify my conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in me a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Evening Liturgy

(All scripture and prayers to be read out loud.)

The Call to Prayer

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Doxology)

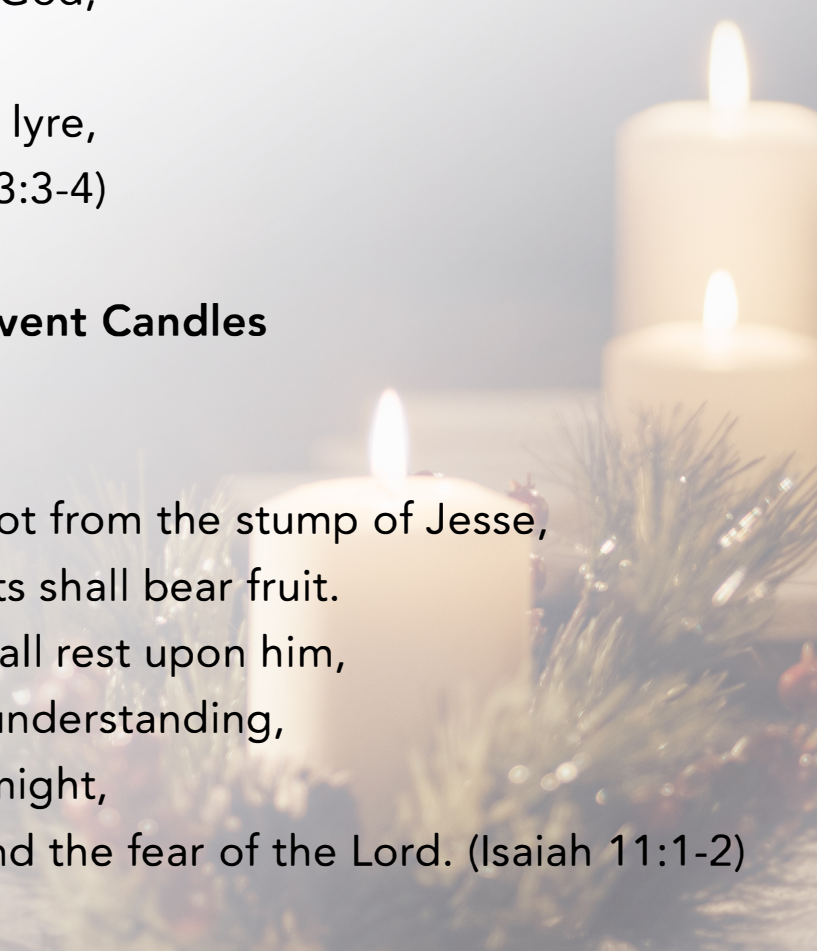
The Request for Presence

Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!
Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God. (Psalm 43:3-4)

The Lighting of All Four Advent Candles

The Refrain

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)



Advent Hymn

Away in a Manger or Go, Tell It on the Mountain

The Evening Lesson

Sunday: 1 John 1:1-4

Monday: 1 John 1:5-10

Tuesday: 1 John 2:1-6

Wednesday: 1 John 2:7-14

Thursday: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Friday: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Saturday: 1 Peter 2:1-12

Silent Reflection and Prayer

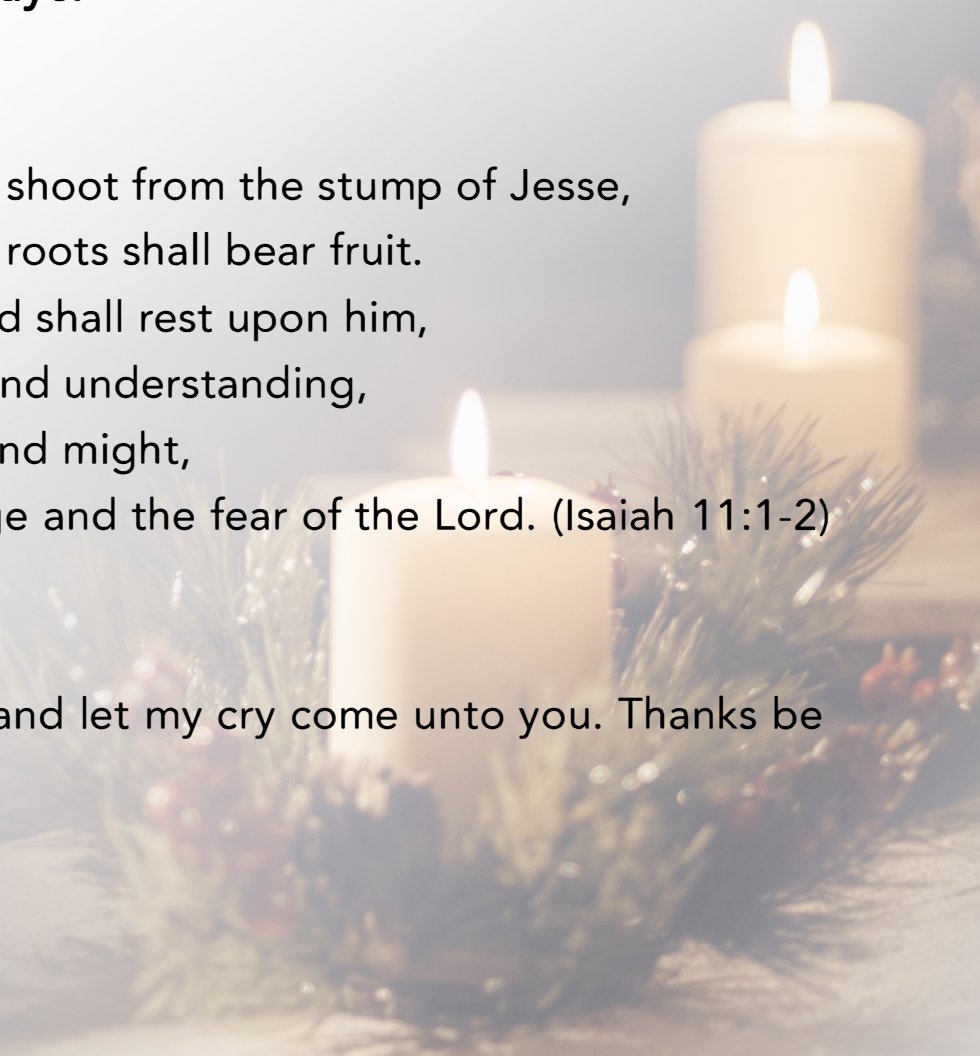
The Refrain

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

The Cry of the Church

O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come unto you. Thanks be to God.



Prayer for the Fourth Week of Advent

Purify my conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in me a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Advent Liturgy for Children & Families Week Four: Love

Starting Sunday, December 24th

Sunday Liturgy

(To be used to set the tone and introduce the week's theme)

Opening Prayer: Lord Christ, we watch and wait for your coming. Ready our hearts to receive you. Amen.

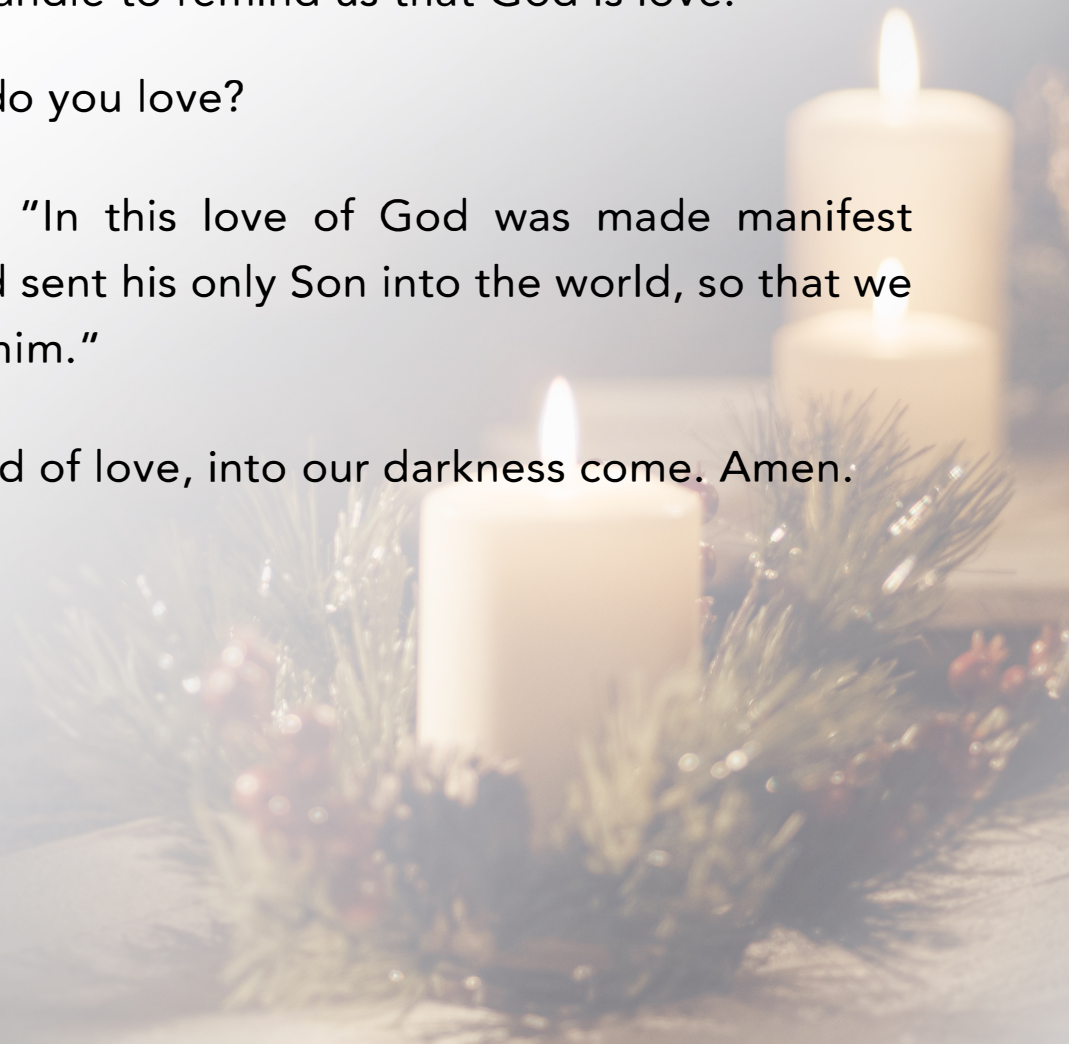
Light four candles (pink and purple).

Say: We light this candle to remind us that God is love.

Ask: Who or what do you love?

Read 1 John 4:9: "In this love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

Closing Prayer: God of love, into our darkness come. Amen.



Weekday Liturgy

(To be used each weekday to begin the deeper time of personal devotions, meditation or family study)

Opening Prayer: Before God made the morning stars to shine, before he made the seas, before he made the mountains, before he made anything at all, God loved us and chose us as his own. Christ, we watch and wait for your coming. Ready our hearts to receive you. Amen.

Light four candles (purple and pink).

Weekday Reading

(A daily scripture reading and an additional selection from the Jesus Storybook Bible)

Monday: Matthew 2:1-12 (*Daniel and the Scary Sleepover*)

Tuesday: Philippians 2:1-11 (*God's Messenger*)

Wednesday: Zephaniah 3:14-20 (*Get Ready!*)

Thursday: Psalm 139:13-18 (*He's Here!*)

Friday: John 15:9-13 (*The Light of the Whole World*)

Saturday: Revelation 22:1-5 (*The King of Kings*)

Closing Prayer: Let us live in holiness and love as we patiently await our blessed hope, the coming of our Savior, Amen.

Advent Songs of Love: *Away in A Manger* or *Go, Tell It on a Mountain*

Supplemental Activities

Liberti Kids 1 & 2

Draw one large heart and several smaller hearts on red construction paper. Help your child cut them out. Next, paste a picture of Jesus on the large heart. On the smaller hearts, paste photos of family and friends. When completed, place the large heart facedown on a table. Help your child place all the small hearts facedown in a circle around the large heart. Have your child turn over the large heart first. Explain that Jesus loves him so much that He puts people in his life — people who love him and whom he can love. When we love Jesus, it helps us to love others. All love comes from Jesus. Before your child turns over each smaller heart, say, “Jesus loves you so much, He gave you ____ (as your child turns over the heart, shout the name of the person on the photo) to love.” Continue until all the small hearts are turned over. Explain to your child that as much as all these people love him and he loves each person, Jesus loves all of us even more than that! This activity can be repeated, especially when your child has had a bad day, to show Jesus loves him no matter what.

Liberti Kids 3

Help your child create a “Love Others Like Jesus Loves” bag. Using a plain paper bag and the Scripture As you study the verses listed to read this week, have your child decorate the bag with words or pictures that show how Jesus wants us to love others. (For example, you might include the words forgiveness and

patience or use pictures that depict kindness.) While working together on the bag, explain to your child that although it's sometimes hard to forgive someone who has hurt our feelings, Jesus wants us to love others like He loves us. Place the bag in an easily accessible location. When someone does something that makes your child feel like not loving him or her, have your child write that person's name on a piece of paper. As he puts the name in the bag, prompt him to say, "I don't feel like loving [name] today because _____. Help me love [name] like You do, Jesus." At the end of the week, have your child discard the papers in the bag without reading the names. Together, ask Jesus to forgive everyone whose names were written on the collected papers. Explain to your child that Jesus forgives us and wants us to forgive others. He chooses to not remember our sins. We can choose to not remember how others have hurt us. Love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Liberti Kids 4

Have your child grab their lunch boxes (or paper bags). Ask them to think about how they'd describe love to someone who's unfamiliar with the concept. Then tell your kids to go through the house and put three things in their lunch boxes that represent what they'd say. When they return, have your tweens take turns revealing their items and telling why they could be used to describe love. Then read aloud John 13:34-35. Ask: If Jesus were

to put something in your lunch box to describe love, what do you think it would be? Why?

Read Colossians 3:13, Romans 15:7 and 12:10. Ask your kids: These Scriptures encourage us to love by forgiving, accepting and honoring others. Do the items in your lunch box reflect these verses?

Instead of a physical object, what might you do this week that could demonstrate forgiveness, acceptance and honor? When is it hard for you to follow Jesus' model of love? What can we do about that?

Wrap up with prayer, asking God to help you experience and share His love this week.

All activities adapted from focusonthefamily.com.



Christmas Day

Opening Prayer: Our waiting is over! Our darkness is filled with your light! Lord Christ, we rejoice in your coming. Amen.

Light all four candles, plus an additional white candle in the middle representing Christ.

Say: We light this candle because Jesus, the Light of the world, has been born.

Ask: How did Jesus' birth bring light to the world?

Read John 1:14: "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."

Closing Prayer: Our waiting is over! Our darkness is filled with your light! Lord Christ, we rejoice at Your coming. Amen.

