

ADVENT

AWAKE

PREPARE

REJOICE

BEHOLD

Advent is the four weeks of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus. The name comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means, "coming."

The Advent Wreath: For centuries Catholics have lit the Advent wreath as part of their preparation for Christmas. The evergreen branches shaped into a circle represent everlasting life as promised to us by Jesus. The lit candles remind us that Jesus came into the world to dispel darkness and radiate the light of God's love.

Make your own Advent Wreath: You'll need four candle holders, three purple candles, one pink candle and real or artificial evergreen branches to circle the candles in the shape of a wreath. Some families like to add a white Christ candle in the center, which is lit on Christmas Eve.

Make an Advent Chain: Cut one strip of purple construction paper for each day of Advent. Use the pink strip for the third Sunday of Advent and a white strip for Christmas. Write something special to do on each strip such as "Say a Hail Mary for someone who is sick, Call Grandma today, Thank Jesus for Mom & Dad, read a story about Jesus, etc." Paste the loops together to form a chain and wrap them around your Advent Wreath. Each day take one link away and follow the message as you wait for Christmas.

1ST WEEK OF ADVENT: Light a purple candle and pray: Dear God, help each person in our family to wait patiently for the coming of Jesus. Fill us with hope. Give us your love. Amen.

2ND WEEK OF ADVENT: Light two purple candles and pray: Dear God, help each person in our family get ready to welcome Jesus at Christmas. Open our hearts and fill us with love. Amen.

3RD WEEK OF ADVENT: Light two purple candles and one pink candle and pray: Dear God, help each person in our family understand the true meaning of Christmas. Fill us with joy. Make us more loving. Amen

4TH WEEK OF ADVENT: Light all the candles and pray: Dear God, help each person in our family to experience the love of the Christ Child. Fill us with wonder and awe. Make us instruments of Your love. Amen.

Special activities to do as a family:

- Read the Christmas Story from the Bible: Matthew 1:18-23 and Luke 2:1-20
- Sing Christmas carols that celebrate the birth of Jesus
- Set up a Nativity Scene. On Christmas Eve, add Baby Jesus, the angels and the shepherds. Add the Wise men between Christmas and Epiphany (Jan 3, 2010)
- Buy Christmas gift for a needy child
- Bring food to your parish food pantry
- Visit a Nursing Home
- Bake cookies for a homebound neighbor
- Help decorate the church for Christmas

Our Sunday Visitor, Advent Take Out