



ADVENT

— 2021 —

THIRD CHURCH FAMILY MINISTRY

We know the holiday season can be very busy— filled to the brim with planning and purchasing and going from here to there. So much of that busyness is joyful, but as Christians, we tell time differently. During this Advent season, instead of consuming our lives with the presents to buy and activities to attend, we focus our minds and hearts on waiting and preparing for the coming King. Advent means “coming,” and this season calls us to take time to meditate on the two comings of Jesus: the past, when he was born as a baby, and the future, when he will return as a triumphant King!

We invite you to...

- ✓ *Set aside at least one day in each of the four weeks of Advent to use this guide with your family.*
- ✓ *Create a space where you can reflect, pray and even sing together.*
- ✓ *Use an Advent wreath if you have one, or just light a candle and follow the suggested liturgy. All you really need are five candles.*
- ✓ *Let kids take different roles— lighting or snuffing candles, reading scripture, answering and asking questions. Make sure it's participatory and your kids take leadership of the guide!*

It doesn't have to be formal, and may even be a bit chaotic, but that's okay! This is the work of formation, and it begins here.

On the last page we have included other ideas and activities to help your family set this time of Advent apart from other seasons. Simple things like candles, special dishes, or a nativity set can help set the tone and prepare your family for Advent.

We will be praying for you and your family this Advent season, that you will experience the goodness of the Lord as you wait in hope for his coming.



The Hope (*Prophecy*) Candle

WEEK 1

LIGHT ONE CANDLE THIS WEEK

PREPARING “We light this candle and think about how Jesus’ birth was planned by God long before it happened.”

INVITING “In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord.”
Isaiah 40:3

READING Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

DWELLING The prophet Isaiah is talking about the birth of a baby. I wonder who that baby was? How will his birth bring hope? Have you ever hoped for anything? What was it?

SINGING “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” or
“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

PRAYING Thank God for bringing hope into the world and pray for people who are struggling with health issues or trials in their lives.

BLESSING “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14

Additional Readings: Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 2:2-5, Jeremiah 23:5, Isaiah 40:3-5



The Bethlehem (Preparation) Candle

WEEK 2

LIGHT TWO CANDLES THIS WEEK

- PREPARING** “We light these candles and remember the long trip that Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem.”
- INVITING** “In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord.”
Isaiah 40:3
- READING** Matthew 2:4–6
- DWELLING** This passage of Scripture describes a ruler coming from Bethlehem. I wonder if people realized that ruler would be a baby? How can a little baby make a big difference for all people in the whole world?
- SINGING** “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
- PRAYING** Pray that God will show you how to prepare your heart for Advent. Ask him to help you prepare for the day Jesus will return.
- BLESSING** “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14

Additional Readings: Isaiah 11:1–3, Luke 1:26–38, Micah 5:2–4,
Luke 1:46–55, Luke 2:4–7



The Shepherd (*Joy*) Candle

(TRADITIONALLY A PINK CANDLE)

WEEK 3

LIGHT THREE CANDLES THIS WEEK

PREPARING “We light these candles as we prepare to read about the good news the shepherds received.”

INVITING “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory.” John 1:14

READING Luke 2:8–15

DWELLING How do you think the shepherds felt when the angel appeared? I wonder if they were scared or excited? What happened when they heard that the baby Jesus, the Messiah, was born?

SINGING “Joy to the World”

PRAYING Pray for people who are sad or are sick, that they would experience the joy of knowing that Jesus loves them and came to save them.

BLESSING “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14

Additional Readings: Luke 2:16–20, Isaiah 35:1–4, Psalm 146:5–10, Isaiah 35:5–10, Psalm 47



The Angel (*Peace*) Candle

WEEK 4

LIGHT FOUR CANDLES THIS WEEK

- PREPARING** “We light these candles as we prepare to read about how angels visited Mary and Joseph to tell them about Jesus.”
- INVITING** “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory.” John 1:14
- READING** Luke 1:30–33 and Matthew 1:20–21
- DWELLING** What did the angels tell Mary and Joseph about Jesus? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus came to forgive your sins? I wonder how his birth brings peace?
- SINGING** “Silent Night”
- PRAYING** Praise God for sending Jesus to save us from sin and thank God for loving us. Pray that you can shine light for Jesus to those who don’t know him.
- BLESSING** “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14

Additional Readings: John 3:16–17, 1 John 4:10, John 1:14, Revelation 21:1–5, John 16:33

Christmas Day

LIGHT FOUR CANDLES AND AN ADDITIONAL CANDLE AS THE CHRIST CANDLE

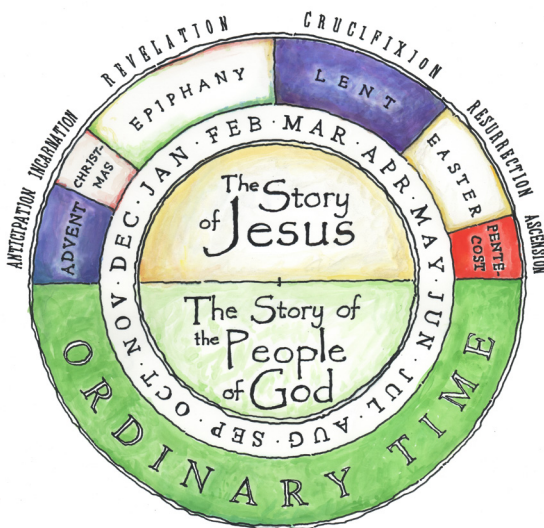
PREPARING “We light these candles with joy as we celebrate the birth of Jesus!”

READING Luke 2:1-20

SINGING “Joy to the World” and “Silent Night”

PRAYING Thank God for sending his own Son into the world to live and to die for us. Give thanks for time to celebrate this special baby!

As followers of Jesus, we “tell time differently” with a calendar shaped by the story of God’s works of salvation and renewal.



Activities and ideas to celebrate Advent

- Use special dishes
- Set up a nativity scene
- Decorate a Jesse tree (journey through the stories of Jesus' family tree) faithward.org/jesse-tree
- Make or purchase an Advent calendar
- Use purple napkins or a purple tablecloth (purple is the liturgical color of Advent)
- Make cookies for your neighbors and add a Bible verse on a card for them
- Send Christmas cards to friends and family
- Decorate a Christmas tree
- Choose a family service project
- Write a family Advent prayer
- Choose a special chapter book to read
- Make a Christmas playlist
- Read one story from the Jesus Storybook Bible each day, beginning on December 1 (use all 21 Old Testament stories and the first 3 New Testament stories)