

Faith-Filled HOLIDAYS

Christmas / Advent Season

Christmas Day

Best Use

As a way to anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus and recapture the tradition of Advent in your home this Christmas season

Purpose

The word Advent comes from the Latin word that means *coming* or *arrival*. For centuries the Church has celebrated the four week Advent season by lighting candles in a wreath and reflecting on the coming of Jesus as told in Scripture. The circle of the wreath represents God's never-ending love for us, the evergreens represent Christ's gift of eternal life and the candles announce Jesus as the Light of the World.

Advance Preparation

You can find an Advent wreath and candles in the arts & crafts or holiday section of many stores. You will need some kind of simple wreath and five candles. Arrange them in the center of your table throughout the Christmas season. Use this *Advent* activity to guide your family through a brief moment of reflection during a meal or bedtime snack of the four weeks before Christmas and on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Light the candles:

Before eating, light the first four candles and remind everyone that these are the candles of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. Light the fifth candle and explain it is the candle of Christ. Traditionally, the first three candles lit are purple, the fourth is pink, and the fifth is white, but any colors will work.

Read:

Luke 2:12...16-17 – *“This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ...So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.*

Explain:

The fifth candle celebrates the arrival of Jesus. These verses tell us that Jesus came as a baby born in a manger. The Bible tells us in Philippians that even though Jesus is God and deserved to remain in heaven with God, he chose to come and be born as a baby to be our Savior. In *Week 4 – Joy*, we read how the angels had appeared to the shepherds to tell them about Jesus being born. Today we see how these shepherds responded when they finally saw Jesus for themselves – they were so excited they went and told everyone!

Discuss:

- What about Christmas makes you so excited you want to tell everyone you see? (favorite gift, house with the most lights, trip you took, etc.)
- Why were the shepherds so excited to tell everyone about Jesus? (the angels had appeared to them, Jesus was born in a manger, Jesus was the Savior they had been waiting for, etc.)
- Who are some people with whom you could share the story of Jesus coming to be our Savior?

Pray:

Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus who chose to come and be born as a baby in a manger to be our Savior. Help us to find ways to share the story of Jesus with others. Amen.