

THE ADVENT WREATH

WHAT IT MEANS AND HOW TO USE IT



THE WREATH

The round shape of the wreath represents God's eternal, unending and unchanging love for us.

The evergreen boughs decorating the wreath symbolize our eternal life in Christ.

Some traditions ascribe specific symbolism to the other greenery involved, such as holly berries and pine cones.

Placing the wreath in a special place in our homes helps us connect with God's presence during Advent.

HISTORY

Candles and evergreen boughs have been part of Advent & Christmas traditions since the Middle Ages.

The Advent wreath as we know it today began as part of a German Lutheran tradition in the 16th century.

Later, it was adapted by a German pastor in the 1800s to help children count down to Christmas.

Today, Christians all over the world use Advent wreaths to build habits of prayer & peacefulness.

THE CANDLES

An Advent wreath includes four candles, one for each Sunday in Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Three candles are purple, representing Christ's royalty. One candle is pink, representing the joy of Christ.

Some Advent wreaths also include a white candle in the center known as the Christ candle.

The light of the candles represents the "light of the world" that Christ's birth brought us.

FOUR SUNDAYS

Each week in Advent has its own theme, with a corresponding candle and color.

First Sunday (purple candle): Hope

Second Sunday (purple candle): Peace

Third Sunday (pink candle): Joy

Fourth Sunday (purple candle): Love

HOW TO USE YOUR ADVENT WREATH

Some people only light their Advent wreaths on Sundays. Other people like to light the candles every evening as part of a daily practice during Advent. Decide what works best for you to connect with God during Advent.

When you light the candles, you could say a prayer, sing a song, or simply watch the flame quietly. This packet includes different prayers and other ideas for using your Advent wreath!

WEEK ONE: HOPE

On this week, light the first purple candle. The theme this week is hope. We focus on the promises of God and our trust that they will be fulfilled. We celebrate the “always already” nature of God’s presence with us.

PRAYERS

God, as we begin the Advent journey, restore us to faithfulness, and shepherd us through these weeks. Soften us and open us to trust in your love, your goodness, your guiding presence.

May we take in your word and bring it to life, giving hope to the hopeless through our words and actions. We ask this through Christ, our Savior and hope. Amen.



Lord, as we light this purple candle of hope, we remember that your light pierces the darkness and brings hope to all who trust in you. Fill our hearts with anticipation for your coming, and may we carry this hope into every corner of our lives. Amen.



God of hope, we light this candle as we prepare for the coming of your Son. Awaken our hearts to you this Advent season, so that when Christ arrives, we are ready to receive him with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our strength. Amen.



God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the center, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

This is what the Lord says—
he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters:
“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.”
(Isaiah 43:16-19)



Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
(Psalm 25:4-6)

WRITE YOUR OWN

God, I hope:

Thank you for helping me find hope by:

When I struggle to find hope, help me by:

Something I wonder about your promises is:

Help me bring hope to others by:

Amen.

WEEK TWO: PEACE

On this week, light the second purple candle (along with the first). The theme this week is peace. We focus on the quiet stillness of this Advent season and the peace we find in God's presence among us.

PRAYERS

God, Form us into your Peace-makers. Enable us to look within ourselves, to make straight our crooked hearts, to patiently and lovingly await changes in ourselves and others.

As you gather us tenderly and hold us close, may we also show that same compassion to the world. Fill our hearts with your peace, and our lives with your love, that these may flow from our lives into our world. We ask this through Christ, our Savior and peace, Amen.



God, as we light this candle of peace, we ask that you prepare our hearts for your coming. Clear the paths in our lives that keep us from you, and make room in our hearts for your peace and presence. May we welcome you with open hearts and lives prepared for you. Amen.



God of peace, during this Advent season, keep us from getting caught up in the busyness and chaos of the world around us. Help us to slow down, so that we may find rest in the Prince of Peace, your son, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for his coming, make us instruments of your peace in our homes, in our schools, in our work and in our world. Amen.



Try practicing peaceful stillness by sitting in silence or listening to a song or guided meditation while watching your Advent candle's flame.

SCRIPTURE READING

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
(Psalm 46:1-3,10)



Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:4-7)

WRITE YOUR OWN

God, I find peace in you when:

Thank you for helping me find peace by:

When I struggle to find peace, please help me by:

Help me bring peace to others by:

Amen.

WEEK THREE: JOY

On this week, light the pink candle (along with the first two purple ones). The theme this week is joy. We focus on the joy that God brings into our lives, and how we can spread that joy to others.

PRAYERS

God, In gratitude we remember you as creator of all, yet still mindful of each of your children. Grant us the patience to live in joyful hope, to trust in your abiding presence.

Open our eyes to see your healing at work in our lives that we might touch the world with tender, compassionate care.

Give us the wisdom, courage and strength to bring the joy of your love to transform the earth and to light the way to a more just and peaceful world. We ask this through Christ, our savior and our joy. Amen.



God of Joy, we light this pink candle to celebrate the joy you brought into the world through Jesus. Fill our hearts with the same joy that the shepherds felt upon seeing Christ. May we spread this joy to others, letting it shine through our words and actions. Amen.



God of joy, it is in your love that we find lasting joy. Keep us from seeking happiness in things that will not last, for we brought nothing into this world and can take nothing out of it.

Teach us instead to find joy in the gift of your Son, who came into this world with nothing, yet gave us everything. May his joy bubble up in our hearts and overflow to all we meet this Advent season. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

“Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

(Isaiah 12:4-6)



Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest secure,

because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,

nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

You make known to me the path of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

(Psalm 16:9-11)

WRITE YOUR OWN

God, I find joy in you when:

Thank you for the blessings that bring me joy! Some of the things I am thankful for are:

When I struggle to find joy, please help me by:

Help me bring joy to others by:

Amen.

WEEK FOUR: LOVE

On this week, light all four candles. The theme this week is love. We focus on the deep, amazing, wonderful love that God showed to us by sending Jesus to share our world.

PRAYERS

On this the last Sunday of Advent, as the new day dawns, may we remember how your birth lit the darkness of night with the hope of freedom. the joy of a promise fulfilled.

Be with us. Shine your light in our hearts so that we might know your wisdom, see your faithfulness, and believe in your creative, seemingly impossible ways. We ask this through Christ, our Savior and our love. Amen.



Lord, as we light this candle of love, we thank you for sending your Son, a gift of unconditional love. Let your love fill our hearts this season and help us to love others as You have loved us. May your love guide us and shine brightly through us in all we do. Amen.



God of love, you sent your Son, Jesus, to shine bright like the sun, lighting the way for all who walk in darkness. May the light of Christ's hope, peace, joy and love shine bright in us as we approach his coming, that we may be ready to welcome him on Christmas day and every day. Amen.



In the Name of Love, we have come.
In the Name of Love, we are here.
And, in the Name of Love we will go.
Knowing in our Hearts and in our Souls
that what we have experienced is truly Divine.

SCRIPTURE READING

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

(1 John 4:7-9,11-12).



The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing."
(Zephaniah 3:17)

WRITE YOUR OWN

God, I feel your love for me when:

Thank you for showing me your love by:

When I struggle to remember your love for me, please help me by:

Help me show your love to others by:

Amen.