



Symbolism and Prayers of the Advent Season 2007

Advent

Advent is the season of hope, preparation, expectation and celebration. The word advent is Latin for “a coming or arrival”. The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical year in the Western calendar. Advent is not limited to the preparation for the arrival of Christ’s birth but also a time to remind us of our redemption and of the second coming of Jesus that is to come.

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is the most recognizable symbol of this season. An advent wreath is comprised of four candles that symbolize and focus our attention on the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. The wreath may consist of any material; however, evergreen branches are symbolic and a popular choice.

Making an Advent wreath and having a simple lighting ceremony each week for four weeks leading up to birth of Christ on December 25th often is the centre for family prayer during this period of preparation. The advent wreath may be lit along with the Christmas candle (the white candle put in the middle of the Advent wreath on December 25th) throughout the Christmas season until the Feast of Epiphany, the common close of the Christmas Season.

Symbolism of the Advent Wreath

- *Circle of the Advent Wreath* – represents the endlessness of time in which God remains united with humanity.
- *Evergreens* - symbolize the freshness and vitality of the relationship among God, humanity and of creation.
- *Four Candles and colour* – represent the progressive revelation of God - fully realized in the birth and life of Jesus. Purple: lit on the first, second and fourth Sundays of Advent represent waiting and repentance. Pink: lit on the third Sunday of Advent and represents a needed break from the sombreness of the other weeks and celebrates the approaching coming of Jesus. It is a time to reaffirm our personal preparations for a meaningful Christmas season.
- *White Christmas Candle* – at Christmas a white candle is placed in the center of the wreath, which symbolizes Jesus, the light of the world.

Liturgical Focus/Theme of Each Week of Advent and Sample Prayers

Families and friends are encouraged gather and reflect on the Advent passages below to share more fully in the graces of the Advent season.

First Sunday of Advent

Advent means “coming”. Focus on Jesus’ final coming as Lord and Judge. One purple candle is lit to represent the first week of this season of longing.

Action: Look at your life, see what is not pleasing to Jesus, and start to change it now with his help.

Year ‘A’ Reflection: *The Lord Jesus is already among us to teach us his way to God, and to bring us peace and joy. We are called to live as his holy people, and not in sin and wickedness. Our day of salvation is coming closer: we are to stay awake, be ready to greet the Lord with joy.*

Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us. (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Father,
we praise you for sending your Son
to save us from our sins
and to be light in our darkness.
Bless us as we gather in his name,
and bless this wreath as a sign of his light among us.**

We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,

(All answer) ***Amen!***

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

You are light in our darkness. R.

Son of God, save us from our sins. R.

Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.

Give your peace to all nations. R.

Be the joy of all who love you. R.

Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.

Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.

May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All praise and glory are his forever.

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of “O come, O come, Emmanuel!” or another Advent Hymn.

Second Sunday of Advent

Advent is a time of waiting for Christ to grow in our lives. Focus on Jesus' final coming as Lord and Judge. The first and second purple candles are lit to represent our steady movement through this season of waiting.

Action: Make your life a straight way for the Lord by moving away from sin.

Year 'A' Reflection: Filled with God's Spirit, Jesus comes to help the good and judge the wicked. His kingdom will be one of peace and justice. God our Father helps us to follow the example of Jesus by loving other people.

Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us. (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Lord Jesus, our brother and our savior,
fill us with your Holy Spirit
and overcome evil in our lives.
Help us to build a straight road for you in our desert,
so that we may give glory with you to our heavenly Father.**

We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,

(All answer) ***Amen!***

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

You are light in our darkness. R.

Son of God, save us from our sins. R.

Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.

Give your peace to all nations. R.

Be the joy of all who love you. R.

Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.

Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

Third Sunday of Advent

Advent is an occasion. Jesus is with us now, and still to come. Pink expresses the joyfulness of anticipation of His coming. One pink and two purple candles are lit. The pink candle signifies the fast approaching feast of Christmas. Eager anticipation replaces somber longing.

Action: Thank God our Father for his gifts to you, and ask him to heal you.

Year 'A' Reflection: God's people are encouraged to rejoice, for God is coming to help us and heal us. He loves us, and listens to our prayers. Jesus is coming: are we ready to greet him?

Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us. (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Jesus, our Lord and our brother,
open our hearts to your Spirit of love.
Give us the courage to do your will,
and help us to listen to your word.**

We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,

(All answer) ***Amen!***

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.
Son of God, save us from our sins. R.
Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.
Give your peace to all nations. R.
Be the joy of all who love you. R.
Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.
Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Advent is preparation to celebrate our oneness with God in Jesus. All four candles are lit. The final purple candle is lit after the pink candle to signify the darkest hours before dawn.

Action: Show that you follow Jesus by helping another person today.

Year 'A' Reflection: Our Lord is the king of glory, holy and powerful: he is the Son of God. Sent by the heavenly Father, he became the son of the virgin Mary, to lead us to joy and peace.

Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us. (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Lord Jesus, Son of God,
our brother and our savior,
we praise you:
help us to love you and follow you each day.**

We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,

(All answer) ***Amen!***

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.
Son of God, save us from our sins. R.
Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.
Give your peace to all nations. R.
Be the joy of all who love you. R.
Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.
Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

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Advent – 28 Ways to Celebrate the Holy in the Holiday Rush. Terrance L. Schneider. Nihil Obstat: Rev. Greg Tajchman, OFM, Rev. Lawrence Mick.