



An Advent Reflection

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During Advent, all members are called to find opportunities to become more aware of how God touches our lives each day so that we can be a sign of this love in the world. Daily meditation, liturgy of the hours, scripture reading and reflection, perhaps Advent calendars or Jesse trees may be a preferred avenue of preparation for the rebirth of Christ in our lives. Let this be an opportunity to activate the principles of all members as we pray together, “Dear Lord, during this Advent season mould our hearts in preparation for your return.” Specifically, I would like to encourage the renewal of the tradition of the advent wreath. What an amazing way to refocus on the value of family prayer and channel energies and highlight our responsibility as Christians to reach out to others in need.

Create an advent wreath together: evergreen symbolizes renewal in Christ – renewal hoped for by those before Christ’s first coming and the ultimate renewal we long for in Christ’s second coming; the circular shape symbolizes the completeness of God; the candles symbolizing the light of Christ coming into the world – three purple, one rose, one white in the centre for Christmas day. Candle 1 – **Hope** (purple); Candle 2 – **Peace** (purple); Candle 3 – **Joy** (rose); Candle 4 – **Love** ((purple); Candle 5 – **Christ** (white). Each candle is lit on the appropriate Sunday of Advent and then each day as part of the family’s daily prayer routine. Gathering around the dinner table offers a wonderful way to encourage family bonding and for each member to share. After the prayer is said for the week, each member of the family could offer an individual request focusing on the theme for each week (i.e. hope, peace, joy, love). This would be an excellent opportunity to reach out to others less fortunate, focus on the presence of Christ in our world and highlight the real meaning of Christmas.

Advent Wreath Prayers

Focusing

Lighting the Advent Wreath:

Almighty God, we begin this advent season as an advent people – ready to do your will. Let your blessing come upon us as we light this wreath. May it turn our hearts to you in the days ahead.

Grant us the peace and joy we long for, as we await the coming of your Son with patient hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Scripture

“Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient.

Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (*James 5.7-8*)

Reflection

Advent is a waiting time,

*we await the celebration of the birth of Jesus,

*we await Christ’s second coming,

*but God waits for us too.

God lives today, and so ...

our first challenge is to bring Jesus to life in our own living, to become aware of his presence, the presence of the Spirit within us, prompting us, sustaining us, working through us, waiting for us.

Week One

R. Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in me a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive our prayer in the **hope** that we may do our part in God’s own work for justice. *Sharing time – what hope do we have for the world?* **R.**

Week Two

R. Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in me a hunger for **peace**: peace in the world, peace in our home, peace in ourselves. *Sharing time – how can we be an instrument of peace?* **R.**

Week Three

R. Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in me a **joy** responsive to the Father’s joy. I seek His will so I can serve with gladness, singing and love. *Sharing time – how can we be more joy filled?* **R.**

Week Four

R. Come, long-expected Jesus.

Excite in me the joy and **love** and peace it is right to bring to the manger of my Lord. *Sharing time – how can we be more loving members of the family, church, community?* **R.**

Closing Prayer

O God, open our hearts to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. Guide us in your ways of compassion so that we may extend your love and mercy to all people. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.