

ADVENT RESOURCE BOOKLET

With thanks to
Missio Ireland

Advent is taken from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming” and it marks the beginning of our Church year. It starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which this year is Sunday November 28th, and ends on Christmas Eve.

For Christians the season is one of anticipation and hope. The most common themes for the four weeks of Advent are:

- Hope
- Peace
- Joy
- Love

Traditionally the primary color of Advent is purple, which reflects the fasting and waiting in the build-up to Christmas. It also represents the connection between the birth and death of Jesus (a Lenten connection). On the third Sunday of Advent the color changes to pink in anticipation of the end of fasting and the beginning of rejoicing the birth of Jesus (it is sometimes celebrated as *Gaudete Sunday*, from the Latin word for “rejoice”).

Preparation

If you don’t already have one, set up a Prayer Space. You can do this by covering a small table with a purple cloth. Have the children make an Advent Wreath with foliage from evergreen trees and holly. You will also need:

- Three Purple Candles
- One Pink Candle
- One White Candle

If you can’t find colored candles, simply use colored ribbons around white candles instead.

At the beginning of each week during Advent, light the appropriate candle in your Advent Wreath, and use the prayers in this resource book to bring the children together in prayer. Invite the children to discuss what each candle/theme means, particularly what it means to them personally.

Remember to hand out our Advent Activity Calendar and “Angels for the Missions” coloring project! Everything is also available to download for photocopying online at www.propfaithboston.org

Blessings to you all this Advent Season!

WEEK 1 Light the first purple candle. This candle represents **HOPE**

Leader: Father in heaven, we need the warmth of Your love in our hearts and the light of Your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with HOPE when Jesus comes.

Reader: Jesus said, "Let your goodness shine out like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly Father will touch the lives of others." (Matt 5:16-17)

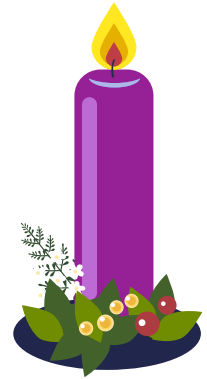
Leader: Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,

In our own little way, help us to bring hope to children who are afraid, sad, or alone. We ask You to bring hope for tomorrow.

Through us, shine your light of HOPE upon them.

Amen



WEEK 2 Light the first and second purple candles. The second purple candle represents **PEACE**

Leader: Father in heaven, very soon the birth of Your Son, Jesus, will light up the world. May His quiet coming bring us true inner peace.

Reader: To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and He will be called the Prince of Peace. His kingdom will continue to grow; His kingdom will always be at peace. (Is 9:6-7)

Leader: Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,

Help us to bring peace to those around us. Look after children who live in conflict at home, at school, and in their country. Help us to throw

Your blanket of peace around their shoulders and comfort them with our friendship.

Amen



WEEK 3 Light the first two purple candles and the pink candle. The pink candle represents **JOY**

Leader: Father in heaven, we know that you love all Your people. Your love brings the gift of joy to our hearts.

Reader: May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again, rejoice! Show a gentle attitude towards everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need with a thankful heart. (Phil 4:1-6)

Leader: Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:
*Dear God,
 We think of all the unhappy children in the world today. We ask You to bring a little joy to their hearts this Christmas. Thank You for the joy we feel as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.
 Amen*



WEEK 4 Light the three purple candles and the pink candle. The third purple candle represents **LOVE**

Leader: Father in heaven, bless our families and bring us a spirit of understanding and love. May our homes be places of peace and laughter and may Your love shine from each of us.

Reader: Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or proud. Love is not rude, selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs. Love is not happy with lies but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up. Love is forever. (1 Cor 13:1-8)



Leader: Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:
Dear God,
In everything we do and say, help us to show love to others. Today we ask Your blessing on our circle of love and prayer. Keep us forever safe in the warmth of your love.
Amen

★ CHRISTMAS EVE GOSPEL STORY

Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem to register for the census ordered by Augustus. The time came for Mary to have her baby and he was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger. On a hillside near the town, some shepherds were watching over their sheep.

Suddenly, an angel appeared and the sky was filled with God's glory. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, for I have great news for you. Today a baby has been born in Bethlehem, he is Christ the Lord. You will find him lying in a manger."



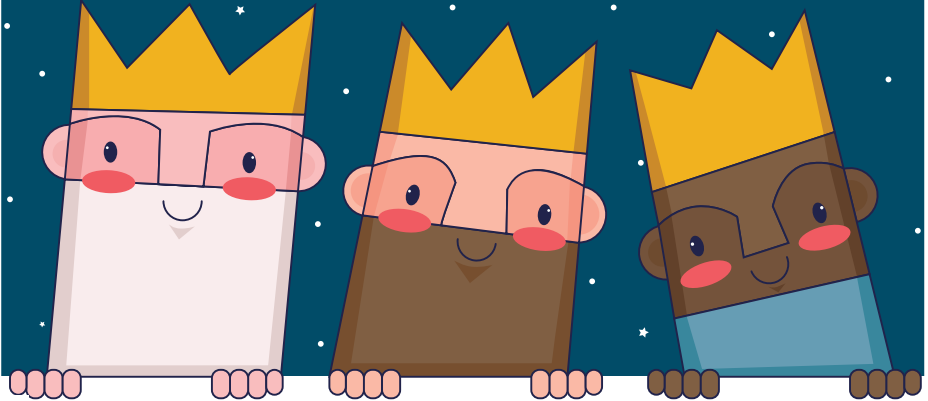
The sky was filled with the sound of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth!" The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and soon found the stable. There in the manger lay a tiny baby. They told Mary and Joseph what they had seen and heard that night, and they shared their amazement. Mary listened carefully and cherished all these things in her heart. The shepherds went back to their sheep on the hillside, singing God's praises for everything had been as the angel had said. (Luke 2:1-20)

CHRISTMAS DAY Light all the colored candles and the white candle, ask the children to light a candle at home. The white candle represents Jesus.

Prayer: *Baby Jesus, bless us today, Your special day. We light this white candle to welcome You as our Savior. As we carry You to our family creche, we think about what You have taught us. You taught us to share with others, to help one another, to be friends and, most importantly, You taught us to pray. When we look at the light of the candle we remember these important lessons. Amen.*



EPHIPHANY POEM



On Christmas Eve my mother read
The story once again
Of how the little child was born
And of the Three Wise Men.

And how by following the Star
They found Him where He lay,
And brought Him gifts;
and that is why
We keep our Christmas Day.

And when she read it all, I went
And looked across the snow
And thought of Jesus coming
As He did long ago.

I looked into the East, and saw
A great star blazing bright;
There were three men upon the
road all black against the light.

I thought I heard the angels sing
Away upon the hill...
I held my breath...it seemed as if
The whole great world stood still.

It seemed to me the little Child
Was being born again...
And very near...and THEN somehow
Was NOW...or NOW was THEN.

Grow in Love, Fourth Class



The Missionary Childhood Association is part of the Pontifical Mission Societies.
It is the Church's official charity for overseas mission.