

Family Advent Devotions

Hello families! It's time to journey through the season of Advent! It's always exciting as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Before our journey begins, you may have some questions about Advent, and we want to share some ways you can use these devotions.

WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent is the first season of the Christian church year that begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve (**for 2021 the dates are Nov. 28- Dec. 24**). Advent means "coming." During this season, Christians are preparing for the coming of Christ. We take this season to remember how the Israelites were looking forward to the coming of the Savior, a promise from God. As we celebrate the first coming of Jesus, as a baby born in a manger, we can also look forward to the second coming of Jesus, which is what He promised to us while He was here on the earth (John 14:3).

WHY DO WE USE AN ADVENT WREATH?

The Advent wreath is a tradition in the Christian church that has been around for a long time. It originated in Germany and Scandinavia and was used in homes for families to mark time. They would light a candle each night during Advent until Christmas Day. The light in their homes would greatly increase each day when they lit the candles, which symbolizes the light of Christ.

Today, we only light five candles (marking weeks instead of days). However, we still use the candles to mark time and increase the light. Each Sunday that we light a candle, the light increases, and we grow closer to the day of Christ's birth.

As Christians, we are awaiting the day written about in Revelation 21:23: "The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." One day Christ will return and His light will be all we need. But until then, we should strive each day to shine His light in this world. **

*The information on the history of the Advent wreath was taken from: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-do-the-candles-in-our-advent-wreath-mean>

WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF AN ADVENT WREATH?

The Advent wreath contains several parts and each has a meaning:

The *wreath* is in the shape of a circle which represents God's never-ending love for us.

The *evergreen* around the base of the wreath represents ever new life.

The *five candles* represent the light of Christ that came into the world. These five candles are different colors: three purple, one pink, and one big white for the center of the wreath.

The *three purple candles* represent hope, love, and peace. The pink candle represents joy.

The *white candle* represents the coming of Christ.

Ideas for Advent wreaths can be found on our PDKids resources page or at the parent resource table near the check-out area.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THESE DEVOTIONS?

The devotions can be done each Sunday in Advent and one to be done on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Each devotion focuses on the Advent wreath and what each candle on the wreath represents.

First, open your Bible and read the Scripture together.

Next, read the devotion and light one of the candles.

Then, discuss the question for the week.

At the end, close in prayer. Each candle represents the following:

Week One – *Hope*

Week Two - *Peace*

Week Three - *Joy*

Week Four - *Love*

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day - *Coming of Christ*

Our hope is that your family will have a meaningful Advent season as you journey together towards the birth of Jesus. May the light of Christ increase in your heart, and may you take His light into the world so others may know about Him.

If you miss a Sunday in Advent and don't receive a paper copy of the devotional, you can find each week's devotional on our PDKids website: discoverpd.org/advent