

Catholic Prayer: Blessing and Prayers for Advent Wreath

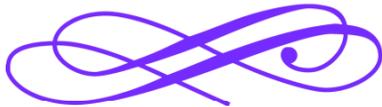
During the Advent season families should spend time together preparing for the approaching celebration of the birth of Christ. An Advent wreath can be a great focal point for family prayers and holiday celebrations.

An Advent wreath is a wreath of laurel, spruce, or similar foliage with four candles that are lighted successively in the weeks of Advent to symbolize the light that the birth of Christ brought into the world. Traditionally three of the candles are purple, the color of kings and of penance. A rose-colored candle is used to mark the Third Sunday of Advent as a time to rejoice over the closeness of Christmas and the coming of Christ.

Children love the beauty of the simple traditional ceremony. Lighting candles in an Advent Wreath is a simple way to start a tradition of family worship in the home. Those who participate will cherish the experience all their lives.

Prayer:

Each day your family should gather around the Advent wreath, generally before the evening meal. The proper number of candles are then lighted, and a prayer is said.



BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH



It starts at the evening meal on the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent with the blessing of the wreath. (The head of the household is the one designated to say the prayers, following which various members of his family light the candles. If the group is not a family, then a leader may be selected to say the prayers and others appointed to light the candles.) The following prayer can be used.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Leader: O God, by whose Word all things are sanctified, pour forth your blessing upon this wreath and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from You abundant graces. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Follow with the prayer which is said before the evening meal each night of the first week in Advent.

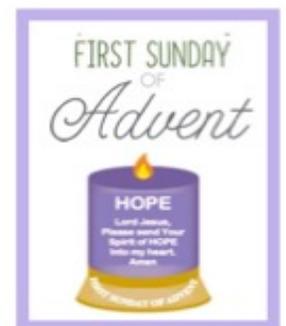
FIRST WEEK

The following prayer should be repeated each day during the first week. After the prayer, the family's youngest child lights the first purple candle. (Family members can also take turns lighting and blowing out the candles on each night.)

Leader: O Lord, stir up Thy might, we beg Thee, and come, That by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins and saved by Thy deliverance. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The candle is allowed to burn during evening meals for the first week.



SECOND WEEK

The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the second week. After the prayer, the oldest child lights the first and second purple candles.

Leader: O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Thy only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with pure minds. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The two candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the second week.



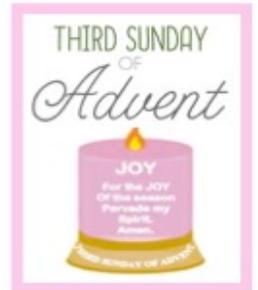
THIRD WEEK

The joyful Sunday in Advent (known as "Gaudete") is represented by rose (or pink) instead of the penitential purple color. Each night during the third week the mother of the family lights the pink, as well as the two previously burned purple candles, after the following prayer has been said.

Leader: O Lord, we beg Thee, incline Thy ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The three candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the third week.



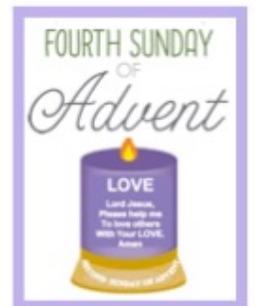
FOURTH WEEK

The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the fourth week. After the prayer, the father lights all four candles.

Leader: O Lord, stir up Thy power, we pray Thee, and come; and with great might help us, that with the help of Thy Grace, thy merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The four candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the fourth week.



After the fourth week, the penitential season of Advent is over and the time to rejoice is at hand. The Advent wreath is transformed into a Christmas wreath. Ribbon and candles are replaced with red ribbon and long red or white tapers (to be lighted at breakfast on Christmas morning) and, if desired, other festive decorations can be added. Some Advent wreaths include a white Christ candle which is lit at Christmas Eve or on Christmas day, symbolizing Jesus, the Son of God and son of Mary, born to be our Savior and Lord.



St. Stephen Church Advent Calendar 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	1-Dec	2	3	4
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT Begin your Advent journey by blessing your Advent wreath. Light the first violet candle and sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."	<u>St. Andrew, Apostle</u> Make a resolution at the start of this liturgical year that will bring you closer to Christ.	Today is Giving Tuesday! During a cold Advent season, your time and financial contributions can be vital to a food pantry or soup kitchen in your community.	Use this Advent season to ready your heart for Jesus. In what ways can you improve your relationship with him?	Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere. (Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no.106)	<u>St. Francis Xavier, Priest</u> Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, Priest. In honor of St. Francis Xavier, one of the first Jesuits, try the practice of the Daily Examination	<u>St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of the Church</u> I will be satisfied with the things I have instead of asking for more.
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Pray for those dedicated servants of Christ as you light the second violet candle on your advent wreath	<u>St. Nicholas, Bishop</u> On this feast of St. Nicholas, purchase a gift to be donated to the poor. St. Nicholas was known for abundant generosity to the poor.	<u>St. Ambrose, Bishop and</u> St. Ambrose is the patron saint of catechumens. Take time to pray for those seeking to join the Church today.	<u>On this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception</u> "Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'" Mary had complete trust in God, saying "yes" to his will. How would you describe your trust in God.	<u>St. Juan Diego</u> As couples or friends, we find that our hearts expand as we step out of ourselves and embrace others. (Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no.89) How can you embrace others today?	<u>Our Lady of Loreto</u> I will spend a few extra minutes in prayer today.	<u>St. Damasus I, Pope</u> Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation of the birth of Christ. It can be easy to lose sight of this, focusing more on gift giving and receiving. Set aside time to pray with family, even virtually, to refocus on the greatest gift.
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Today is Gaudete Sunday when we shift our reflection from "the Lord is coming" to "The Lord is near." Rejoice as you light the pink candle on your Advent wreath.	<u>St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</u> Bring Joy to someone today. Text or call a friend, help a stranger in need or share today's Gospel with your loved ones	<u>St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church</u> There are 10 days left in Advent. In honor of a saint known for his deep spirituality and compassion, reflect honestly on your own spiritual journey so far this season.	Las Posadas, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter before the birth of Jesus, traditionally begins today. Pray for migrants seeking shelter around the world.	In some areas of our cities, there is still a lively sense of neighborhood.. Where people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity. Seek out volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood this week.	"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph themselves were refugees in Egypt...with whom Christian migrants and refugees throughout the ages can identify, giving them hope and courage." (USCCB, Strangers No Longer, no 26). How can you welcome the stranger today?	What's your favorite Christmas movie? Gather your friends or family (in-person or virtually) to watch a Christmas classic.
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Bring Joy to someone today. Text or call a friend, help a stranger in need or share today's Gospel with your loved ones.	We hear of the miracle of the seven loaves and fishes. During a cold Advent season, your time and financial contributions can be vital to a food pantry our soup kitchen in your community.	<u>St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church</u> St. Francis of Assisi made the Christmas crèche, or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223. Gather your loved ones, and bless your family's crèche.	According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and remains in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. Share this blessing with your family and friends.	<u>St. John of Kanty, Priest</u> "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has come to his people and set them free." (Lk 1:68)		

