

# 1 About the Wreath

The Advent wreath was a tradition used in homes before we started using them at Mass. Your wreath can help you focus on preparing for Jesus' coming, amidst the hustle and bustle of the season.

The evergreen circle reminds us of God's love for us, which has no beginning or end. We light the candles in the dark of winter as we wait for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World.

# 2 Getting Your Own Wreath

You will need a circular wreath of evergreens and four candles (three purple and one pink) to put on it. You can purchase all of this as a set at a religious goods store, buy a wreath and candles separately, or easily make your own. If you have easy access to evergreen branches, it can be a fun family activity to make the wreath together.



## Lighting Prayers

Use one of these prayers as you light the candle(s) or one of your own.

**1st Week of Advent:** Almighty God, wake us up and remind us to be watchful and aware. As we light this candle, we ask that you help us live the way Jesus taught us to live, always doing what is right and loving. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who we know is coming soon. Amen.

**2nd Week of Advent:** God of mercy, justice and peace, help us get ready. As we light these candles, we ask that you clear a straight path to our hearts and help us see how we can live with more love. Help us move beyond everything that gets in between us and Jesus. Help us to stay watchful for his coming. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**3rd Week of Advent:** God of joy and compassion, you send glad tidings to the lowly and break through the darkness with your great light. As we light these candles, help us remember that the Good News is on its way. May we announce it in what we do and what we say. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

**4th Week of Advent:** God of new beginnings, you announced through an angel's message how you would enter the world as one of us so you could love us more deeply. As we light these candles, we reflect on Mary and how we can freely say "yes" to what you ask, just as she did. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



## Getting Started with an Advent Wreath

*This is a wonderful tradition to begin now. Your little one will be taken in by the smells and mesmerized by the candle flames. A wreath really makes this season of preparation special in your home!*



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## 3 Using Your Wreath

We suggest that you light your wreath and pray with it nightly during the Advent season, although you can use it at any time of day. Try turning down the lights so you can focus more on the candles and making this a special, prayerful time.

If you have young children, this can serve as a nice bedtime ritual, perhaps done along with bedtime stories. Make this a special family time, perhaps cuddling together on the couch, sharing how your day went, and/or discussing how to be more loving during this season.



## 4 Lighting the Candles

Be sure that the candles are in secure holders and won't fall over easily. You may wish to place some kind of cloth underneath them to catch any wax that might drip from them.

Light the candles at the beginning of your prayer time. Use one of the lighting prayers on the back of this leaflet.

You will light the candles in the same order each time:

- Starting on the 1st Sunday of Advent: Light the first purple candle.
- Starting on the 2nd Sunday of Advent: Light the first two purple candles.
- Starting on the 3rd Sunday of Advent: Light the first two purple candles and the rose/pink candle.
- Starting on the 4th Sunday of Advent: Light all of the candles.

Carefully extinguish the candles when you are done with your prayer/family time. Do not leave them unattended!

## 5 Praying with Your Wreath

There's no correct way to pray with your wreath, so decide for yourself what's best for your household. Here are some ideas:

- **Sing/play music:** Pick an Advent song such as "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Sing to a recording if you like. Just remember that Christmas carols have to wait for Christmas. During Advent we're still preparing!
- **Read from the Bible:** Choose any reading you would like. Mass readings for the day work well (<http://uscgb.org/bible/readings/>).
- **Pray in your own words:** Ask God for what you really need this season, and pray for others in need.

Your prayer time might look like this:

- Light candle(s) and say lighting prayer.
- Sing an Advent song together.
- Read a Bible passage out loud
- Everyone can offer their own prayers out loud: who and what should we pray for together?
- End the prayer with an Our Father, Hail Mary, or other prayer.
- Have some family time together.