

Advent Wreath Ceremony:

Week 1: Blessing of the Wreath and Lighting of the First Candle



Blessing: O God, bless our wreath and be with us as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. As we light the candle each day, help us to keep our own hearts burning with Your love.

Meditation: "So be on the watch. Pray constantly for the strength to...stand secure before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

In the First Week of Advent, we prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming into our world and into our lives. We ask, "In what area of my life do I stand at a distance from God?" We examine our relationships with family, friends, classmates, business associates, and neighbors. Is our faith reflected in each experience of human contact? Is love of God and neighbor the basis for our interaction with others? (*Light the first purple candle*)

Prayer: Almighty and loving God, we have searched our hearts and reviewed our love for Your people. Some relationships overflow with love while others have been found wanting. Yet it is our desire that You be a part of every human experience. We beg You now to fill our hearts with Your love and sharpen our awareness of Your Presence in every moment so that wherever we go and whatever we do, we will always stand secure before You. Amen.

Week 2: Lighting of the Second Candle



Meditation: "Make ready the way of the Lord. Clear Him a straight path." (Luke 3:4)

In the Second Week of Advent, we consider our relationships with ourselves and with God. We ask, "Do I always appreciate the union of the divine and the human that makes me who I am?" Are we aware of the wonder of "self," the gift bestowed upon us by our Creator? Do we appreciate and use our talents, energies, charms, and abilities for God's glory? In prayer and worship, are we in touch with the divine Presence around us? (*Light the first and second purple candle*)

Prayer: Almighty and loving God, You Who dwell within our hearts at every waking moment, keep us always close to You. Help us to recognize and appreciate the gifts and talents You have given us. Teach us to use our energies for the good of others and the glory of Your Son Jesus, Whose promise is too precious to ignore. Keep our hearts and minds ever alert to Your personal and loving Touch in every prayer, in every act of worship. Amen.

Week 3: Lighting of the Third Candle



Meditation: "He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." (Luke 3:16)

In the Third Week of Advent, we are called to respond to the gifts and graces we received in our baptism. We ask, "Does my life today fulfill the expectations and responsibilities of bearing the name of Christian?" What are we doing for the hungry, the oppressed, the sick, the lonely? Do we truly care about the needs of others? Do we accomplish cheerfully all that is expected of us in the work place or the classroom? (*Light the first two purple candles and the pink one*)

Prayer: Almighty and loving God, Your Son has taught us the way to live as Your children. We were blessed in our baptisms with special gifts and graces, and still there are times when we find it hard to be all that we should be. We ask for an increased awareness of the needs of others and for the courage to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Please, God, help us to live in Your grace that all who know us will know You and Your love. Amen.

Week 4: Lighting of the Fourth Candle



Meditation: "Blest is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled." (Luke 1:45)

In the Fourth Week of Advent, we consider Mary's trust in God's promise, her joy in His goodness to her. We ask, "Am I ready to receive and celebrate the coming of the Son of God?" We have considered our relationships, our love of God and God's love for us, and we have responded with an awakened concern for the needs of others. Now we may echo Mary's words: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit finds joy in God my Saviour." (*Light all four candles*)

Prayer: Almighty and loving God, soon the whole world will celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus. Even as we rejoice in our remembrance of His birth at Bethlehem, we find greater comfort in His promise to come again. May our preparations for this wondrous season remain with us, increase in us, and become as much a part of us as our breathing and our heartbeat. Then, may we say, "Come, Lord Jesus, we are ready." Amen.

~~ taken from a pamphlet printed by Liguori Publishing Co. A copy of this pamphlet can be obtained from them.



Blessing of the Christmas Tree

*Gather around the unlighted Christmas tree.
Begin your service by singing, "O Christmas Tree," or any favorite carol or hymn.*

Reading: "Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind." (Ez. 17:22-23)

Prayer: Creator God, Your Own Son is the tender shoot that grew to become a majestic cedar. As birds find safety in the giant branches, so we find shelter and comfort in Your Son. We thank You for sending us Jesus, our Tree of Life. Amen.

Blessing: Lord God, bless this tree in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May it remind us throughout this holy season that Jesus is our Tree of Life. (*Turn on the tree lights*)

As we turn on the lights of our tree, we are reminded that Jesus, our Tree of Life, is also the Light of our world. Amen.

~~ taken from a pamphlet printed by Liguori Publishing Co. A copy of this pamphlet can be obtained from them.



Another Advent Wreath Ceremony

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

(to be done the first Sunday of Advent)

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

All: Who has made heaven and earth.

Leader: Let us pray: O God, by Whose Word all things are made holy, pour forth Your blessings upon this wreath, and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

All: Amen.

First Week:

Leader: The Lord is our faith and our life.

All: May the Lord's peace be with us all.

Leader: And His love shine in our hearts.

All: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.



One purple candle is lit (traditionally by the youngest child; however, you may want all of your children to share in this activity, especially if the youngest is under 5 yrs. old. Please assist the very young.) During the rest of the week, this candle is relit at the evening meal or whenever the entire family gathers together.

Leader: Let us pray, that our faith may be strengthened for the coming of the Lord.

Pause for silent prayer

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of Your love and our minds are searching for the light of Your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour and give us the strength to grow in our faith so that the day of His coming may find us prepared and filled with joy.

All: Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Luke 1:26-38

Isaiah 7:10-14

Matthew 1:18-24



Second Week:

Leader: May the Lord's peace be with us all.

All: The Lord is our faith and our life.

Leader: May His love shine in our hearts.

All: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.



Two purple candles are lit and allowed to burn as before.

Leader: Let us pray, that we may experience fully the peace of Christ

Pause for silent prayer

Father in heaven, the day draws near when the birth of Your Son will make radiant the night of the waiting world. May His quiet coming fill us with true inner peace.

All: Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Micah 5:2
Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11
Isaiah 2:1-5
Matthew 3:1-6

Third Week:

Leader: The Lord's love shine in our hearts.

All: And may His peace be with us all.

Leader: The Lord is our faith and our life.

All: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.



Two purple candles and the pink one are lit and allowed to burn as before.

Leader: Let us pray, that we may grow in love for each other as the Lord comes to us.

Pause for silent prayer

Father in heaven, may we Your family who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of Your love and celebrate His birth with a new sense of love for each other.

All: Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 9:6-7
John 1:19-34
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
Philippians 2:1-11

Fourth Week:

Leader: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.

All: May His love shine in our hearts.

Leader: And may the Lord's peace be with us all.

All: The Lord is our hope and our life.



All the candles are lit and allowed to burn as before.

Leader: Let us pray, that the newborn Saviour will bring us His love which lasts forever.

Pause for silent prayer

Father in heaven, our minds and hearts are filled with hope. We long to hear the voice which tells us of the coming of the Christ Child.

All: Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Malachi 3:1-5

Romans 8:18-25

Isaiah 52:7-10

Revelations 21:1-4

~~ taken from a pamphlet published by Abbey Press; a copy of their pamphlet can be obtained from them