

Using Your Advent Wreath

Praying with your 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 holiday season.

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

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 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.

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. You will light them in the same order each time as the weeks of advent progress.



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- **Sing music:** Listen to the weekly "Traditions of Advent" provided by our parish Music Department and sing along. You can also begin by choosing an Advent song you are comfortable with, such as "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."
- **Lighting the Wreath Liturgy:** Engage in the weekly advent liturgy prayers listed below. They contain prayers, the Gospel reading, reflection questions, intercessory prayers and a prayer to light the candle each week. In your home with your family.
- **Pray in your own words:** Ask God for what you really need this season and pray for others in need. You can pray individually or together with your family. Try praying out loud and model prayer for your children.

Here is what your prayer time might look like:

- Listen to the "Traditions of Advent" and sing together.
- Engage in the weekly "Lighting the Wreath Liturgy."
- Read the Gospel and mediate on the reflection questions. Consider discussing them with your family.
- Say the lighting prayer and light candle(s).
- Pray with your family and discuss how to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

| Week 1 - Lighting the Wreath Liturgy | |
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| <p>Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. R. Amen</p> <p>Leader: Let us praise God, who enlightens every heart, now and forever. R. Amen.</p> <p>Leader: My brothers and sisters, today we begin the season of Advent. We open our hearts to God's love as we prepare to welcome Christ into our lives and homes. The candles of this wreath remind us that Jesus Christ came to conquer the darkness of sin and to lead us into the light of his glorious kingdom.</p> <p>Reader: A reading from Mark's Gospel.</p> <p>Reader: (<i>Mark 13:33-37</i>) Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"</p> <p>Reflection Questions:</p> <p>1) As each servant is given a specific task, what are you doing to prepare for Jesus' arrival?</p> <p>2) In what areas have you been asleep and are now being called to be more vigilant in?</p> <p>Intersessions:</p> <p>Leader: Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may be always ready to welcome him. R. Come, Lord Jesus.</p> | <p>Reader: That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love, we pray to the Lord. R.</p> <p>Reader: That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin, we pray to the Lord. R.</p> <p>Reader: That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ, we pray to the Lord. R.</p> <p>Reader: That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus, we pray to the Lord. R.</p> <p>Leader: With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father: All: Our Father . . .</p> <p>Leader: Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever. May the light of Christ lead us to the joy of his kingdom, now and forever. R. Amen.</p> <p><i>The first purple candle is lit as this prayer is recited:</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Leader: May Almighty God bless us our family. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. R. Amen.</p> |