



ALL ABOUT ADVENT!

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How Advent Fits into the Church Calendar

The Cycle of Light - Seasons of revelation: God makes Himself known to us in Jesus

Advent - Four Sundays before Christmas

Christmas - 12 Days beginning on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

Epiphany - Jan 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, recalling Jesus' coming to the Gentiles in the visit of the Magi and ending on the Feast of the Transfiguration.

The Cycle of Life - Seasons of redemption: God rescues us from death through Jesus.

Lent - 40 days beginning with Ash Wednesday

Paschal Triduum - Passover or Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday

Easter - 49 days beginning on the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord

The Cycles of Love - The extended season to walk in Christ's light, to grow in Christ and embody Christ's love.

Pentecost - the Presence of Christ in the world through the Spirit

Ordinary Time - nonfestal part of the year

What is Advent?

During the 22-28 days leading up to Christmas, we focus on three comings of Christ: his arrival in history as a baby, his return in glory at the end of time and his intermediate entrance into our own lives.

What do we do in Advent?

Church Traditions

Our goal in sharing these Advent ideas is for our hearts to draw nearer to God and experience the wonder of Christ's incarnation - for you personally and for your family together.

- **Advent Wreaths** From Medieval Times. Light one additional candle each Sunday and read the scriptures. (Pink is the 3rd Sunday)
- **O Antiphon Prayers** Since the 7th century, these seven responses, or antiphons, that are sung or recited to introduce the canticle of Mary (the Magnificat) at evening prayer from December 17 to December 23. These antiphons are based on Isaiah's prophecies and refer to the different ancient titles given to the Messiah.
- **St. Nicholas Day Dec 6** St. Nicolas lived in the 300s in Turkey. He became a priest and a bishop and helped to write the Nicene Creed. He was imprisoned for his faith. He was a man of faith whose goodness and generosity for the poor grew out of his love for God. It enriches our understanding of Santa Claus by showing the real historical person who inspired the familiar legend and traditions. St. Nicholas' generous example of giving in secret to those in need. How can we celebrate him? Encourage children to identify a kindly "Nicholas deed" to do for someone else. Have children fill their shoes with pieces of carrot or bits of hay for his white horse or donkey and place them outside bedroom doors or on the fireplace. Fill the shoes with candy or a simple gift to appear on December 6th. StNicholasCenter.org
- **St. Lucia's Day Dec 13** St. Lucia (or Lucy) was a young devout girl in Sicily who was an early Christian martyr killed by the Romans in 304 under Emperor Diocletian. This feast day of the church is especially celebrated in Scandinavian countries, ushering in light to the world on the darkest day of the year. Children dress in white and pastries are served.

Devotionals

For Moms & Dads! There are so many wonderful adult devotionals for your personal time with Christ! Here are some favorites:

- [Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus](#), edited by Nancy Guthrie
- Christianity Today's devotional
- Every Moment Holy Advent Journal (attached)

Ideas for Young Children

- Family Ideas Handout (attached)
- [Advent Wreath Puzzle](#)
- [Felt & Velco Wreath](#)
- [Advent Cards](#)
- [Little Way Chapel](#)
- [Rain for Roots Waiting Songs](#) by Sandra McCracken

Ideas for Elementary Children

- Cathedral Church of St. Luke & St. Paul, SC Advent Devotional (attached)

- Christ Church Plano, TX Daily Advent Readings for families (attached)
- Church of the Redeemer, St. Paul, MN Daily Advent Readings for families (attached)

Ideas for Older Elementary and Up (4th Grade+)

- **Jesse Tree.** There are images from the Jesse Tree in art dating from the 12th century! It's kind of a Biblical Christmas tree. Set up a small tree and make ornaments that tell the story of God in the OT. There are tons of resources online Use Ann Voskamp's [Unwrapping the Greatest Gift](#) as a guide.
- [Good Dirt Devotional](#) for multiple ages!
- [A Christmas Carol](#) by Charles Dickens An amazing story of a changed heart and life and how that affects others! Go see a local theater production or watch the amazing Muppet video version (it's seriously great)!
- **Serving!!!** At these ages, it's time for the kids to put into action what they've learned about God's love in Christ's incarnation! They need to know why the Christmas story is good news....and they can be a part of that! Like St. Nicholas, we live out the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Consider the Community First Village of Lights or Mission Possible's [Tree of Lights Christmas Store](#), or call your nearest nursing home and see what needs they might have.