The Meaning of the Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath is one of the most meaningful Christian traditions for preparing our hearts and homes for Christmas. It is more than a Christmas decoration; it is a visible reminder of **hope, anticipation, preparation, and the coming of Jesus Christ—the Light of the world.**

Advent means *coming* or *arrival*. Throughout the four weeks of Advent, families gather around the wreath to remember Christ's first coming in humility at Bethlehem, to welcome Him into our hearts today, and to anticipate His promised return in glory.

1. The symbolism of the wreath

The evergreen branches — Everlasting life

The evergreen branches remind us of life that endures through the winter. In the midst of a cold, dark season, the evergreen remains alive. It points us to the everlasting life that is ours through Jesus Christ.

“And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” — 1 John 5:11

The circle — Eternity

The wreath is circular, without beginning or end. It reminds us of the eternal nature of God—His love, His faithfulness, and His promises, which never fail.

The candles — Christ, the Light of the world

As the weeks progress, more candles are lit, increasing the light in the wreath. This reminds us that the coming of Jesus brings light into a world of darkness, sin, sorrow, and despair.

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light.” — Matthew 4:16

A Family Advent Devotional

28 Days of Preparing Our Hearts for Christmas

Hope • Peace • Joy • Love • Christ

Advent is a season of waiting, preparation, and expectation. As we light the candles of the Advent wreath throughout these four weeks, we are reminded that God kept His promise and sent His Son into the world.

This devotional is designed to be used around the family Advent wreath each evening. Each devotion is brief enough for children and adults, yet meaningful enough to encourage conversation, prayer, and spiritual reflection.

The daily pattern is simple:

- Light the Advent candles for the current week.
- Read the Scripture passage.
- Read the short reflection.
- Discuss the question together.
- Close with prayer.

WEEK ONE — HOPE

The Promise of the Coming King

The first candle reminds us of hope. God's people waited for generations for the promised Messiah. Their hope was not wishful thinking—it was rooted in the promises and faithfulness of God.

Day 1 — God Keeps His Promises

Scripture: Genesis 3:15

Reflection: When sin entered the world, God did not abandon humanity. Even in the Garden of Eden, He promised that one day evil would be defeated. The story of Christmas begins with God's promise to rescue us. Throughout history, God has remained faithful. Jesus is the fulfilment of that promise.

Family discussion: Why is it important to know that God always keeps His promises?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for never abandoning us. Thank You for Your promise of salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Help us to trust You, even when we cannot see what lies ahead. Amen.

Day 2 — A Light in the Darkness

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2

Reflection: Isaiah spoke of a people walking in darkness who would see a great light. The world was filled with fear, sin, and uncertainty, yet God promised light. Jesus is the Light of the world. He shines into our fears, our failures, and our sadness, giving us hope and direction.

Family discussion: What are some dark or difficult things people experience in life? How does Jesus bring light into those situations?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for being our Light. Shine in our hearts and help us trust You when life seems dark. Amen.

Day 3 — The Promised Saviour

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14

Reflection: Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God gave His people a promise of a coming Saviour. God was preparing the world for the arrival of His Son. Christmas reminds us that God's plans are never forgotten and His timing is always faithful.

Family discussion: What does the birth of Jesus tell us about God's faithfulness?

Prayer: Father, thank You for preparing the way for Jesus. Help us to remember that Your promises are sure and that we can trust You every day. Amen.

Day 4 — The King Who Would Come

Scripture: Micah 5:2

Reflection: God promised that the ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem, a small and seemingly insignificant town. God often works through the humble and unexpected. Jesus was born in a little town, yet He is the King of kings.

Family discussion: Why do you think God chose a humble place like Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus?

Prayer: Lord, teach us humility. Help us recognize that Your greatest work often comes through ordinary people and ordinary circumstances. Amen.

Day 5 — Waiting Patiently

Scripture: Psalm 27:14

Reflection: Waiting is difficult. We often want answers immediately. God's people waited centuries for the Messiah. Advent teaches us patience and trust. Waiting does not mean God is absent; it means we trust Him to work in His time.

Family discussion: What is something that is difficult for you to wait for? How can you trust God while waiting?

Prayer: Lord, teach us patience. Help us to wait upon You with courage and confidence, knowing that You are always at work. Amen.

Day 6 — Preparing the Way

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3–5

Reflection: Before the coming of a king, roads were prepared. Isaiah spoke of preparing the way for the Lord. Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Jesus. We can make room for Him by forgiving others, turning away from sin, spending time in prayer, and loving those around us.

Family discussion: What might we need to change in our lives to make more room for Jesus?

Prayer: Lord, prepare our hearts for Your coming. Remove anything that keeps us from loving and obeying You. Amen.

Day 7 — Our Hope Is in Christ

Scripture: Romans 15:12–13

Reflection: Our hope is not ultimately found in money, possessions, success, or circumstances. Our hope is in Jesus Christ. Because He came, died, and rose again, we have forgiveness, new life, and a future with God.

Family discussion: What is the difference between hoping in things that can change and hoping in Jesus?

Prayer: God of hope, fill our hearts with joy and peace as we trust in Jesus. Help our hope overflow to others. Amen.

WEEK TWO — PEACE

The Prince of Peace

The second candle reminds us that Jesus came to reconcile us to God. The peace Christ gives is deeper than the absence of conflict. It is peace with God and peace that can sustain us through life's storms.

Day 8 — The Prince of Peace

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6

Reflection: Isaiah called the promised Messiah the Prince of Peace. Jesus came to bring peace between sinful humanity and a holy God. Through Him, we can be forgiven, reconciled, and restored. The peace of Christ is not dependent upon everything going well in our lives.

Family discussion: How is the peace Jesus gives different from simply having a trouble-free life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, bring peace into our hearts and our home. Help us to trust You in every circumstance. Amen.

Day 9 — Peace with God

Scripture: Romans 5:1

Reflection: Sin separates us from God, but Jesus came to restore our relationship with Him. Through faith in Christ, we are forgiven and have peace with God. Christmas is not merely the story of a baby in a manger; it is the story of God making a way for us to come home.

Family discussion: What does it mean to have peace with God?

Prayer: Father, thank You for forgiving us through Jesus. Thank You that we no longer need to live separated from You. Help us walk in the peace of Your grace. Amen.

Day 10 — Peace in Our Fears

Scripture: John 14:27

Reflection: Jesus promised His disciples peace, even as He prepared to leave them. He knew they would face uncertainty, hardship, and fear. Yet He promised that His peace would remain with them. We can bring our fears to Christ because He is faithful and He cares for us.

Family discussion: What fears or worries can we bring to Jesus tonight?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when we are afraid, remind us that You are near. Give us Your peace and help us trust You. Amen.

Day 11 — Peace Through Forgiveness

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32

Reflection: Christmas reminds us that God has forgiven us through Christ. Because we have received such mercy, we are called to forgive others. Forgiveness is not always easy, but holding on to bitterness robs us of peace. Christ helps us release our anger and show kindness.

Family discussion: Is there someone we need to forgive or someone to whom we need to apologize?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your forgiveness. Help us to forgive others as You have forgiven us. Make our home a place of kindness, grace, and peace. Amen.

Day 12 — Peacemakers

Scripture: Matthew 5:9

Reflection: Jesus said that peacemakers are blessed. A peacemaker is not someone who ignores problems, but someone who seeks reconciliation, speaks truth with love, and refuses to fuel anger or division. We can be peacemakers in our families, schools, workplaces, and communities.

Family discussion: What can we do when an argument begins? How can we bring peace instead of making things worse?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to be peacemakers. Give us gentle words, patient hearts, and the courage to make things right. Amen.

Day 13 — The Peace of God

Scripture: Philippians 4:6–7

Reflection: God invites us to bring our worries to Him in prayer. We do not need to carry every burden alone. As we pray and give thanks, God's peace guards our hearts and minds. He may not immediately change our circumstances, but He can change our hearts as we trust Him.

Family discussion: What worries can we turn into prayers of thanksgiving tonight?

Prayer: Father, we bring our worries to You. Thank You for hearing us. Guard our hearts and minds with Your peace. Amen.

Day 14 — Peace on Earth

Scripture: Luke 2:13–14

Reflection: When Jesus was born, the angels praised God and announced peace on earth. This peace begins with reconciliation to God through Christ and extends into the way we love and treat one another. The world longs for peace, and Christ calls His people to be instruments of His peace.

Family discussion: How can our family bring peace to someone who is lonely, discouraged, or hurting?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to bring peace. Help us to share His peace with those around us. Amen.

WEEK THREE — JOY

Good News of Great Joy

The third candle is traditionally rose-coloured and is often called the Gaudete candle, from the Latin word meaning *rejoice*. It reminds us that the season of waiting is filled with joyful expectation. The coming of Christ is good news for all people.

Day 15 — Good News of Great Joy

Scripture: Luke 2:8–11

Reflection: The first announcement of the birth of Jesus was made to shepherds watching their flocks. The angel proclaimed good news of great joy for all people. The Saviour had come! This joy was not reserved for the wealthy or powerful. It was a gift for everyone who would receive Christ.

Family discussion: Why is the birth of Jesus good news for every person?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the good news of great joy. Help us celebrate Jesus and share His love with others. Amen.

Day 16 — Joy in God's Presence

Scripture: Psalm 16:11

Reflection: True joy is found in the presence of God. Christmas celebrations, family gatherings, food, and gifts can bring happiness, but lasting joy comes from knowing the Lord. Even when life is difficult, we can rejoice because God is with us.

Family discussion: What things make us happy for a little while? What gives us lasting joy?

Prayer: Father, help us find our deepest joy in You. Thank You for Your presence in our lives. Amen.

Day 17 — Mary Rejoices

Scripture: Luke 1:46–49

Reflection: Mary rejoiced in God her Saviour. Though her life was about to change dramatically, she trusted God's purpose and praised Him. Her joy came from knowing that God was at work and that His promises were being fulfilled.

Family discussion: How can we praise God when life does not unfold the way we expected?

Prayer: Lord, give us hearts like Mary's—humble, thankful, and trusting. Help us rejoice in Your goodness and faithfulness. Amen.

Day 18 — Joy in Giving

Scripture: Acts 20:35

Reflection: Christmas is often associated with receiving gifts, but Jesus taught us the blessing of giving. The greatest gifts are often not purchased. They include our time, kindness, encouragement, forgiveness, and love. We reflect Christ when we give generously to others.

Family discussion: What could we give someone this Christmas that would cost little or nothing but mean a great deal?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for giving Yourself for us. Teach us to be generous with our time, love, and possessions. Amen.

Day 19 — Joy in Difficult Times

Scripture: James 1:2–4

Reflection: Christian joy does not mean pretending that life is always easy. We experience disappointment, grief, illness, and hardship. Yet God is with us in these moments, strengthening our faith and teaching us to persevere. Our joy is rooted in His presence and His promises.

Family discussion: Can we think of a time God helped us through something difficult?

Prayer: Lord, when life is hard, help us to trust You. Strengthen our faith and remind us that You never leave us. Amen.

Day 20 — The Joy of Salvation

Scripture: Psalm 51:12

Reflection: David prayed for the joy of God's salvation to be restored. Sometimes we become distracted, discouraged, or spiritually weary. Christmas reminds us to return to the Lord and rejoice in the forgiveness and new life He offers through Jesus.

Family discussion: Why is forgiveness such a wonderful gift? How can we keep our hearts close to God?

Prayer: Father, thank You for the joy of being forgiven. Renew our hearts and help us walk faithfully with You. Amen.

Day 21 — Rejoice Always

Scripture: Philippians 4:4

Reflection: Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always. Our circumstances may change, but Jesus does not. We rejoice because He is faithful, because He loves us, and because He has promised us eternal life. Christmas gives us a reason to rejoice every day.

Family discussion: What are three things for which we can thank God tonight?

Prayer: Lord, help us to rejoice in You every day. Fill our home with gratitude, laughter, kindness, and the joy of Christ. Amen.

WEEK FOUR — LOVE

The Love of God Revealed

The fourth candle reminds us of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Christmas is the greatest demonstration of God's love. He did not merely tell us He loved us—He sent His Son into the world to save us.

Day 22 — God So Loved the World

Scripture: John 3:16

Reflection: The story of Christmas begins with the love of God. He saw our need and sent His Son to rescue us. Jesus came not simply to be admired as a baby in a manger but to become our Saviour. His birth was the beginning of the earthly journey that would lead to the cross.

Family discussion: How does the birth of Jesus demonstrate God's love for us?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us so much that You gave Your Son. Help us never to take the gift of Jesus for granted. Amen.

Day 23 — Love Came Down

Scripture: 1 John 4:9–10

Reflection: God's love is not simply an idea or a feeling. His love was demonstrated when He sent Jesus into the world. Christ came to live among us, bear our sins, and open the way to everlasting life. The manger is a reminder that God came near to us.

Family discussion: What does it mean that God came near to us in Jesus?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for coming near to us. Help us to receive Your love and share it with everyone we meet. Amen.

Day 24 — Love One Another

Scripture: John 13:34–35

Reflection: Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: love one another as He had loved them. Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to show that love through kindness, patience, generosity, and forgiveness. The world should see the love of Jesus in the way His people treat one another.

Family discussion: What is one practical way we can show the love of Jesus to someone tomorrow?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach us to love as You love. Help us to be patient, kind, forgiving, and generous. Amen.

Day 25 — Joseph's Faithfulness

Scripture: Matthew 1:18–24

Reflection: Joseph faced a situation he could not fully understand. Yet when God spoke to him, Joseph obeyed. He trusted God and accepted the responsibility of caring for Mary and the child Jesus. His quiet faithfulness reminds us that love often involves sacrifice, obedience, and doing what is right when no one is watching.

Family discussion: What can we learn from Joseph about trusting and obeying God?

Prayer: Father, help us to be faithful like Joseph. Give us courage to obey You even when we do not understand everything. Amen.

Day 26 — Mary’s Obedience

Scripture: Luke 1:26–38

Reflection: Mary was given an extraordinary responsibility. She did not know all that the future would hold, but she trusted God and responded in faith. Her words, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord,” demonstrate a heart willing to surrender to God's purposes.

Family discussion: What does it mean to say, “Lord, Your will be done”?

Prayer: Lord, help us to trust You as Mary did. Give us willing hearts and the courage to follow Your plans. Amen.

Day 27 — The Gift of Jesus

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:15

Reflection: The apostle Paul speaks of God's indescribable gift. Jesus is the greatest gift ever given. He cannot be wrapped in paper or placed beneath a tree. He is God's gift of forgiveness, salvation, hope, and eternal life. Everything else we receive at Christmas is secondary to Him.

Family discussion: If Jesus is God's greatest gift, how should that change the way we celebrate Christmas?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your indescribable gift. Help us keep Jesus at the centre of our Christmas celebrations. Amen.

Day 28 — Love That Never Ends

Scripture: Romans 8:38–39

Reflection: God's love is stronger than death, greater than our fears, and more enduring than our circumstances. Nothing can separate those who are in Christ Jesus from the love of God. As Christmas approaches, we remember that the baby born in Bethlehem came to secure our everlasting hope.

Family discussion: What gives us confidence that God's love will never leave us?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for a love that never ends. Help us live each day secure in Your grace and share Your love with others. Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE:

THE LIGHT HAS COME

The Waiting Is Over

Scripture: Luke 2:1–20

Tonight we arrive at the manger. For generations, God's people waited for the promised Messiah. The prophets spoke, the people hoped, and the world waited. Then, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem—not in a palace, but in a humble stable. The angels announced His birth to shepherds, and heaven rejoiced.

The child in the manger is the eternal Son of God. He came to save His people from their sins. He is the Light shining in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome Him.

Family discussion

- Why did Jesus come into the world?
- Why do you think God chose a humble manger for the birth of His Son?
- What does Jesus mean to our family?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, tonight we remember the wonder of that first Christmas. Thank You for sending Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. Thank You for the hope, peace, joy, and love that we find in Him. May His light shine in our home, and may our hearts always make room for Him. Amen.

Suggested hymn: *O Holy Night* or *Silent Night*

CHRISTMAS DAY:

JESUS, THE WORD MADE FLESH

Scripture: John 1:1–14

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” — John 1:14

Reflection

Christmas morning is the celebration of the greatest gift ever given.

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, entered our world. He took upon Himself our humanity and lived among us. He came to reveal the Father, to bear our sins, to defeat death, and to bring us into the family of God.

The baby in Bethlehem is the King of kings. The manger points toward the cross, and the cross points toward the empty tomb. Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter are all part of God's great story of redemption.

Today we celebrate not merely that a child was born, but that **a Saviour was given**.

The Advent wreath has brought us through four weeks of anticipation. The candles of hope, peace, joy, and love remind us of the blessings that are ours in Jesus Christ. The light that began with one candle has grown brighter, reminding us that Christ has come into the world.

And yet, our Advent journey does not end here. We continue to live in anticipation of Christ's promised return, when He will make all things new.

Family discussion

- What has been the most meaningful part of our Advent journey?
- What have we learned about Jesus during these four weeks?
- How can we keep Christ at the centre of our lives throughout the coming year?

Christmas prayer

Heavenly Father,

We praise You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for the miracle of His birth, the goodness of His life, the sacrifice of His cross, and the glory of His resurrection.

Thank You for hope when we are discouraged, peace when we are troubled, joy when we are weary, and love that never fails.

As we celebrate Christmas, help us to remember that Jesus is the reason for our joy. May our home be filled with His presence, our hearts with His love, and our lives with His grace.

Help us to carry the light of Christ into the world—to love others, forgive freely, serve faithfully, and live in expectation of His coming again.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

A Christmas Blessing for the Family

A final thought for your family

Perhaps the greatest blessing of an Advent wreath is not simply that it helps us count down the days to Christmas, but that it teaches us to **wait for Jesus together**.

Children may forget some of the presents they received. They may forget the meals, decorations, and celebrations. But they may remember sitting with their family in the soft glow of candlelight, hearing God's Word, praying together, and singing *Silent Night*.

That is a tradition worth passing down through generations.

The candles will eventually burn out. Christmas decorations will be put away. The season will pass. But Christ remains.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” — Hebrews 13:8

May your family have a blessed Advent and a Christ-centred Christmas.