

Prayers Around The Advent Wreath

That time of year is here again. Advent is the season when we should take time to think about the why of Christmas. It should be a time to look within our hearts to see if there is anything that stands in the way of Jesus' coming. Let us come together as a family this Advent Season and pray that we will make straight our paths and truly prepare the way for the Lord. Make it a family project to put an advent wreath together and make it the focal point of your evening prayer. Use the wreath along with prayer to bring you and your family closer to God. The following pages contain prayers for the weeks of Advent. May God continue to richly bless you and your family with the grace of this season and throughout the year.

About the Advent Wreath:

The color green symbolizes life; the evergreen on the wreath reminds us that God's love for us never changes. The wreath is a circle because a circle has no beginning and no end. This circle means our life with God just keeps going; He keeps on loving us and we should always love Him. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Three of the candles are violet which represent sorrow. During Advent, we are sorry for not loving Jesus enough and we will try hard to do better. The pink candle, which is lit in the third week means joy or happiness and reminds us that Jesus will be coming soon. When we light the candles, we remember that Jesus is the light of the world and His teachings are our guiding light.

Wreath Blessing:

Oh God, please bless our wreath and be with us as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. As we light the candles each day, help us remember to keep our hearts lit with your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: "Expectation—waiting for something to happen" Light one candle

This first week of Advent, we begin to prepare our hearts and souls for Jesus by working on different things each day.

Sunday- We hear the glad sounds around us of people preparing for the coming of Jesus. We thank you, Jesus, for coming each year in a special way. During this month, everyone seems more loving and kind. Through prayers, help us to keep this feeling of joy all year long. God the Father has sent you to us to know, to love, and to serve you. If sometimes we forget, please help us to remember.

Monday- Thank you, God, for this beautiful world you have given us—the day and the night, the sky with its sun, moon, and stars, the earth with its trees and plants, the waters with its fish. Thank you for the animals of every kind, and for all the people you put here for us to love. When we feel sad or sick, please watch over us, and help us to remember to call upon you. We know that there are good days and bad days, happy times and sad times, sick feelings and well feelings, and that you are with us through all these times if we ask you to be. Please stay with us.

Tuesday- Dear God, help us to say we are sorry when we are wrong. Help us to say "that's OK" when someone hurts us. Help us to say, "I still like you" when someone is mean to us. Help us to say "I love you" when we know someone does not love us. All of this will be hard to do, but we will try.

Wednesday- Dear God, you send your bright dawn to light up the lives of all men and women. Please, God, help us to be strong to do what you ask. Help us to make Christ welcome when he comes this Christmas.

Thursday- Help us to be kind to others and to treat them, as we would want them to treat us. Keep us from having the feelings inside us at times to do wrong and to hurt others. Help us to not speak badly about others. Give us faith, which is believing in God and what he teaches, and peace to fight against fear. Hold us in your hand and help us to know that you are with us.

Friday- What can we give you, God? You have everything already. What do you want most of all from us? We give you what we think is most important—ourselves—our hearts, our minds, and our souls. Take them, Lord, we pray.

Saturday- O Lord, as we reach the end of our first week of Christmas preparation, we thank you for letting us know you a little better. After this whole week, we offer you our hearts, which are now cleaner and holier than they were a week ago.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT: “Hope” Light two candles

The second week of Advent has to do with “HOPE.” We are still waiting for and preparing for Jesus’ coming and hoping to make Jesus a part of our lives, not just at Christmas, but all year long. We can prepare ourselves for Jesus through prayer and turning ourselves to love, hope, faith, justice (treating people right), and kindness. Prayer opens our hearts to let God, love, and faith in, and lets out our hate and fear. Prayer is like a window through which the light of God shines through. Let us this week continue in hope and prayer to keep this window open.

Sunday- O God, thank you for this day you have made. Help us to be kinder to one another in our home and friendlier to the people around us. Help us to do right and avoid doing wrong.

Monday- O God, thank you for our mother and father, our sisters and brothers. Thank you for our friends. We will try harder this week to help one another be happy.

Tuesday- O God, help me when I feel angry and mean and sad. Help me when I feel like I hate someone or something. Help me to see you in all people.

Wednesday- Lord, help me to live my day like you would want me to. Help me to help my mom and dad, like you helped your mom and dad, Mary and Joseph. Help me to be like you, loving and caring.

Thursday- Help me, God, to know my religion. Help me to understand how I can know, love, and serve you more. You are always with me, and you know when I am scared and in trouble. Please bring me closer to you at these times through my religion and through those who love and care for me.

Friday- Dear Jesus, we know we get a special strength from you when we confess our sins and receive Communion and when we pray. We need this strength, called grace, to make our souls grow stronger and to stay healthy, just like our bodies need food to keep them growing and healthy. Teach us to use this grace when we feel like being bad or doing something wrong—by asking you for your help right away. Please remind us to call upon you in time of temptation.

Saturday- This week has been filled with hope, our hope that the spirit of Christmas will fill our hearts all year. Knowing that you, Lord, are always ready to forgive us, even though we don't deserve it, we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birthday.

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: "Joy" Light three candles (pink)

This third week of Advent we light the pink candle, which means joy. From Jesus Christ we have received so much love, beauty, and joy for the simple things in life. This week let us be happy with simple things that don't cost money—like reading a book instead of watching t.v., like talking to one another instead of playing video games, listening to the children laugh instead of talking on the telephone, eating plain food instead of eating out. Remember that the purple candles stand for sorrow that we have done wrong. But, now we are joyful, because the time for the arrival of Jesus is almost here!

Sunday- Our Father, thank you for letting us celebrate Jesus' birthday again. Help us to be like him, so when people look at us they see goodness and beauty like we see in Jesus.

Monday- Dear Jesus, help us to know you better, love you more, and follow your rules. When we look at the lights of the Christmas tree, help us to think that you are the true Light of the world. Help us to remember that you are with us to guide us and cheer us.

Tuesday- O God, at times it is hard to remember you, especially around this time when we think of the decoration, Christmas cards, and gifts that we're going to receive. And sometimes, even though we have all these beautiful things around us and all the people around us, we still feel alone and scared. Help us to remember that it is because of you that we have this Christmas celebration and that you are always with us and we can trust in you to take care of us. Help us to truly believe that you will forgive our sins, give us new life, and look after us after we die.

Wednesday- O God, before you sent Jesus to us, we were lost and alone. You showed us how much you loved us by sending Jesus to die on the Cross for our sins, and you asked us to share your love with others. During this time help us to spread your name to others by telling them about you and by showing them how you want them to live. Make us examples of your love.

Thursday- Thank you, Lord, for the joy we feel because you are with us. May we share this joy with the people we meet at work, at school, at church, at the store, and everywhere.

Friday- We thank you for the gifts you give us at Christmas, the gifts you can't put in a box with a ribbon on it. We thank you for the gift Christ, bringing us new life. For the gift of our home. For the gift of our dad, who works hard for us. For our mom, who does so many things for us. For the gifts of our brothers and sisters who are always there for us. For the gift of our friends, who are so good to us. For the gift of our grandparents who have done so much for us. For the gift of school and religion, that we may continue to learn more and more each day in your Holy name.

Saturday- In this week of Advent we learned that there are many joys to have without spending money. Thank you God for all of the joy in our life!

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: "Acceptance" Light four candles

This fourth week of Advent has to do with acceptance, which means saying "yes" to someone who asks us to do something. When God asked Mary to be the mother of God, she said "yes." She didn't say, "Just a minute" or "Let me think about it" or "I'll tell you if I want to or not after this show is over." No, she just said "yes."

This week is our chance to say "yes" to God through our families and friends, even though a "no" would be much easier to say at times. When we want to say "no," we should try to remember that God might like us to say "yes." And every time we do say "yes" we will be closer to God because acceptance is pleasing to him.

Sunday- Today we thank you Lord, for giving us people who can tell us about you and your coming. We thank you for our priests and teachers and everyone who talks about you in a loving way. Help us to pay attention so we may live the way you have shown us.

Monday- Dear God, Christmas is almost here. Once more we give you the gifts of our hearts. We wrap ourselves in grace and love and tie our gift with a big effort to do good always. Help us Lord, to give you one whole week of not yelling, crying, arguing, fighting, or being mean. We will really try to be nice to one another all this week, and then on Christmas morning each of us can say, "I did this for you, Jesus, and now I give myself to you."

Tuesday- O God, who sent us your only Son, Jesus, help make this Christmas the most beautiful one we have ever had. Teach us to think first of giving ourselves to you before we think of getting presents. Remind us that Jesus will come to us this Christmas and make us better persons, and fill us with love that we can share with people all year long.

Wednesday- O God, we stand here in front of you knowing we cannot keep secrets from you. You know all about us, and you know how we feel. When we feel like being ugly toward someone, may your beauty help us not to. When we feel like hating someone, may your love help us not to. When we feel like being mean, may your goodness help us not to. You are our light; please show us the way.

Thursday- Great God, you have come to us and you give us Jesus. Even when it is hard to listen to how we should act, help us to follow you and find love and grace. Teach us to pray and to listen to you.

Friday- God the Father, we thank you for Jesus. By believing in and loving him, Christmas comes every day. Help us to remember this Christmas all year long by giving the presents of life; love, patience, kindness, and understanding.

Saturday- Lord, in this fourth week of Advent, we have come a long way from the very first night when we lit our first candle. The next week there were two, then three, and finally four candles shining very brightly, just like our love for you is shining very brightly. We pray that our love for you goes on shining forever. Thank you God, for all that you have given us!

May Jesus, the light of the world, fill your lives with true Christmas joy & peace!

Adapted from Advent Begins at Home, by David Polek & Rita Anderhub