

The Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath is part of our long-standing Catholic tradition. However, the actual origins are uncertain. But by the Middle Ages, Christians

had adapted the use of Advent wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas.

Traditionally, the Advent wreath is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. The four candles used in the wreath represent the four Sundays of Advent. Traditionally, three candles are purple (the liturgical color for Advent) and one is rose.

The purple of Advent symbolizes the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works we are encouraged to carry out during the Advent season. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday; Gaudete means

rejoicing. The faithful rejoice because we have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when our preparation is now half over and we are close to Christmas.

The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of his second coming to judge the living and the dead. We are also reminded to look for His coming in every moment of grace. The lit candles signify Christ, the Light of the World.

In the home, the Advent wreath is most appropriately lit at dinner time before or after the blessing of the food.

Since Advent is a time to stir-up our faith in the Lord, the wreath and its prayers provide us a way to augment this special preparation for Christmas. Moreover, this good tradition helps us to remain vigilant in our homes and not lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas.

(from **The History of the Advent Wreath**, by REV. WILLIAM SAUNDERS)

If you don't use an Advent wreath in your home or haven't for a while, let this be the year you do. Gather your family around your Advent wreath and use the "Advent Wreath Table Prayers" on the back of this sheet for prayer before dinner. May this time spent in prayer help you and your family focus on the true meaning of Advent and to help you prepare your heart for the coming of our Savior, Jesus.



O COME, O COME EMMANUEL!



Advent Table Prayer Week One

Light the first purple candle on the Advent Wreath. If more than one family member, alternate prayer

leader and candle lighter throughout the week.

Come, Lord Jesus! Open our minds and hearts and souls as we wait for you to be born anew in our lives and in our family. Help us to experience your love in our family today.

All share one way you have experienced the love of the Lord Jesus today.

As we prepare for the coming of your Son, O God, we give you thanks for the love of your son, Jesus, which we have experienced in our home today.

We give you thanks for this food and drink, signs of your gracious love. May this meal strengthen us to share your gifts with the hungry and all who look for your justice and mercy. Grant this through Christ our Lord. All: Amen.



Advent Table Prayer Week Three

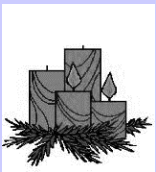
Light the first and second purple candles and the pink candle on the Advent Wreath.

Come, Lord Jesus! Come and stay with our family and friends – and all who are dear to us. May your light shine brightly so we can see you everywhere. Help us to spread your light and joy by giving freely and happily to all we meet.

All share how you have seen the light of the Lord Jesus today.

As we prepare for the coming of your Son, O God, we give you thanks for your light which shines brightly among our family and friends.

We give you thanks for this food and drink, which nourishes us to be your light. May it strengthen us to share your gifts with the hungry and all who look for your justice and mercy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, All: Amen.



Advent Table Prayer Week Two

Light the first and second purple candles on the Advent Wreath.

Come, Lord Jesus! Bring peace and healing in our family and our world. May we hear again your own prayer “that we may be one.” May we prepare the way for you by being generous and forgiving.

All share how you have experienced generosity and forgiveness today.

As we prepare for the coming of your Son, O God, we thank you for the blessing of your generosity and forgiveness.

We give you thanks for this food and drink, signs of your gracious love. May this meal strengthen us to be generous and forgiving. May it strengthen us to share our gifts with the hungry and all who look for your justice and mercy. Grant this through Christ our Lord. All: Amen.



Advent Table Prayer Week Four

Light all four candles on the Advent Wreath.

Come, Lord Jesus! We hunger, we thirst, we wait for you! Come, Lord Jesus and do not delay!

All share a time when you felt hopeful.

As we prepare for the coming of your Son, O God, we hunger and thirst for signs of his love in our lives. We give you thanks for this season of waiting and hopefulness for Jesus to be even more present in the life of this family.

We give you thanks for this food and drink, signs of your gracious love. May this meal strengthen us to love each other and our neighbors as we wait for the coming of your Son, Jesus. Grant this through Christ our Lord, All: Amen