

2020 Advent Devotions

Introduction

Advent is a time of holy expectation. Of waiting. Of preparation for the coming of our Savior. In fact, the word advent literally means coming. That is why we take the four weeks leading up to Christmas to prepare our hearts to receive the gift of Jesus into our world and into our lives.

In this Advent season, many of us find ourselves in the darkness of worry, fear, discord, or isolation. But into this darkness, our Savior comes as light, reminding us we are not alone. In this season of darkness, we are reminded God chose to send his only son into our world's darkness to be "God With Us" and to find us right where we are! This Advent season is unlike any other. While we are limited in our ability to be together, we are united by the fact that the God who finds you, has also found me! We are united by the presence of the Living God with us all.

As the light from your candles grows brighter each week, may you be surrounded by the hope, peace, love, and joy of Jesus who unites us by his presence among us!



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Sunday In-Person Services
at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Online live or later at gracepeople.live

Week One: Hope

Say: As we face the darkness of lost connections, lost jobs, and lost opportunities, Jesus has come to remind us that our hope is found in knowing our identity and worth as God's beloved children and in God's promise to find us.



Ask: What is hope?

Explain: Hope is expecting that something good is coming even if we can't see it yet. That this present darkness is not permanent. That Jesus will overcome the darkness with his marvelous light!

Light: Light the first candle in your wreath.

Say: This candle represents hope. When Jesus came, he brought hope for people lost in the darkness of sin.

Read & Discuss: Isaiah 9:2 and Matthew 6:25-34

Pray: Heavenly Father, you have overcome the darkness of sin and the pain of loss by sending Jesus to find us and lead us back to you. Give us hope today that the things we have lost in this dark season are not a reflection of our true worth that is only found in your love. May we be carriers of hope into this broken world so that others can know of your salvation found only in your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Further Discussion: What are some things you have lost in this season of COVID-19? What are you hoping for? What's so hopeful about Jesus coming into the world?

Sing (Optional): "The First Noel" (LBW 56)

Week Two: Peace

Say: Jesus is the Prince of Peace. In a world filled with turmoil and fear, we look to the one who speaks peace to the storms and quiets the fears of our anxious hearts.



Ask: What is peace?

Explain: Peace is the end of hostilities and the restoration of right relationships. It is God's Kingdom realized in our broken, earthly communities. It is the promise of eternal life that takes away the sting of death.

Light: Light the first and second candles of your wreath.

Say: These candles represent hope and peace. When Jesus came, he spoke peace to our troubled hearts.

Read and Discuss: Isaiah 9:6-7 and John 14:27

Pray: Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Lords. When the world is filled with turmoil and our hearts are filled with fear, we ask that you would speak peace into our hearts and calm the storms of violence in our world. Lord, make us instruments of your peace to heal our shattered society and reconcile our broken relationships. Thank you, Jesus! Amen

Further Discussion: What are you most afraid of today? Why is it so hard to live peacefully or to "keep the peace" in our lives? What would it mean to have peace in your relationships?

Sing (Optional): "Silent Night" (LBW 65)

Week Three: Love

Say: Jesus is the demonstration of God's love, and at Advent we light candles to remind ourselves of the light of hope, the promise of peace, and of the overwhelming love God has for us, shown in Jesus Christ.



Ask: What is love?

Explain: Love is when you care more about others than yourself. Love is shown in action, when we choose to put someone else's needs before our own. It's sacrificial. The Bible tells us God is love (1 John 4:8).

Light: Light the first, second and third candle on your Advent wreath.

Say: These candles represent hope, peace, and love. When Jesus came, he revealed God loves us so much he chose to meet our need for grace, by his sacrifice for us.

Read and Discuss: John 3:16-17, John 15:13, 1 John 4:9-11

Pray: Lord, it's hard to believe sometimes that you really love us, but your actions speak louder than words. Jesus, you were born into our world and laid down your life to show us you would give everything to give us what we need most: life forever in your love. Help us to be so secure in your love for us that our lives reflect your heart, showing others, by our actions, that your love is for them too. As we have been loved by you, so teach us to love others, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Further Discussion: What actions help you feel loved? What are some actions you can take this season to show others that they are loved, by God, and by you?

Sing (Optional): "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (LBW 42) or "Away in a Manger" (LBW 67)

Week Four: Joy

Say: Jesus is the Joy of our Salvation, and at Advent, we light candles to remember the light of hope, the promise of peace, the gift of love and the joy of salvation that Jesus brings to a lost and broken world.



Ask: What is joy?

Explain: Joy is a foundational sense of goodness and wellbeing that we can have despite outward circumstances. You can be joyful even when you don't feel happy, knowing, for those held in the promises of Jesus, no matter where you are in life, there are still blessings to come through Christ! We belong to the King!

Light: Light the first, second, third and fourth candles on your Advent Wreath.

Say: These candles represent hope, peace, love, and joy. When Jesus came, he brought us the joy of knowing we belong to God, now and forever.

Read and Discuss: Luke 2:8-14, John 17:24-26, Romans 15:13

Pray: Lord, in this world that can be so full of sadness and pain, you bring the joy of the gift of a savior, Jesus. This good news brings great joy even today, because as the angels proclaim, this gift is given to us! Help us to receive the joy of knowing you came because you want us to be part of your family, now and forever! Help me receive that saving gift with Joy as your promise, Lord becomes my life's solid foundation! Help us to be yours, as we wait for you to come again! We love you! Amen.

Further Discussion: What brings you joy? What parts of the Christmas story make you most glad? Is there a way you can bring joy to someone else this season?

Sing (Optional): "Joy to the World" (LBW 39)



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