

Faith-Filled HOLIDAYS

Advent

Week 4 – Joy

Best Use

As a way to anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus and recapture the tradition of Advent in your home this Christmas season

Purpose

The word Advent comes from the Latin word that means *coming* or *arrival*. For centuries the Church has celebrated the four week Advent season by lighting candles in a wreath and reflecting on the coming of Jesus as told in Scripture. The circle of the wreath represents God's never-ending love for us, the evergreens represent Christ's gift of eternal life and the candles announce Jesus as the Light of the World.

Advance Preparation

You can find an Advent wreath and candles in the arts & crafts or holiday section of many stores. You will need some kind of simple wreath and five candles. Arrange them in the center of your table throughout the Christmas season. Use this *Advent* activity to guide your family through a brief moment of reflection during a meal or bedtime snack of the four weeks before Christmas and on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Light the candles:

Before eating, light the first three candles and remind everyone that these are the candles of Hope, Peace and Love. Then light the fourth candle and explain it is the candle of Joy. Traditionally the first three candles lit are purple and the fourth is pink, the color of Joy, but any color will work. Consider taking turns lighting and reading the verse each week.

Read:

Luke 2:10-11 – *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”*

Explain:

The fourth week of Advent is Joy. This verse is from the story of Jesus' birth. The angels appeared to the shepherds in the fields nearby to announce that a baby has been born in a manger. The angels describe Jesus' birth as “good news of great joy” because he came to be our Savior! The Bible tells us that right after they announced this news to the shepherds, thousands of angels appeared and sang glory to God because Jesus had been born.

Discuss:

- Joy means *happy, delight* or even *rejoice*. What are some things that bring us joy at Christmas? (family, gifts, parties, etc.)
- Why did the angels say that the news of Jesus' birth is great joy? (Because he came to be the Savior of all people.)
- The Christmas carol *Joy to the World* includes the line, “let every heart prepare him [Jesus] room.” Have you prepared room in your heart for Jesus by trusting in him as your Savior? Have we prepared room in our Christmas activities for him?

Pray:

Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus who came to be the Savior for everyone who trusts in him. Help us to remember that Jesus came to save us and help us to share the great joy of this good news with one another. Amen.