

ADVENT WREATH

INTRODUCTION



The Advent wreath is a popular custom that is celebrated in churches and homes all over the world. Its origins go back to pagan times. Its Christian symbolism was introduced in Germany

in the 1600s. The wreath is made of a circle of evergreens in which are placed three purple candles and one pink (rose) candle.

The circular shape of the wreath reminds us that the love of God is without beginning or end. The evergreens represent the hope of everlasting, or eternal, happiness. The candles remind us that Jesus, the Light of the World, came to Earth to overcome the darkness of sin and selfishness. The purple candles represent our need to prepare for the coming of the Savior, and the pink (rose) candle—lit on the Third Sunday of Advent—reminds us to be joyful, for the coming of the Lord is near!

If an Advent wreath and candles are allowed in your classroom, celebrate the Blessing of the Advent Wreath. You will need: a wreath made of evergreens; three purple candles and one pink (rose) candle; matches or a lighter; and a Bible. Serve as the leader of prayer, and invite a student to proclaim the Scripture reading.

Begin by gathering the children and youth around your prayer table, which should now be covered with a purple cloth.



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Blessing of the ADVENT WREATH

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Gathering Song: *An Advent hymn familiar to the children or youth or a song about light and/or Jesus as the Light of the world*

Sign of the Cross: *(All)*

Introduction: In many parts of the world,
when the season of winter comes,
the darkness of night is longer,
and people wait for the daylight of spring.

THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture Reading Suggestions:

1. Isaiah 9:1-2, 5-6
(The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.)
2. 1 John 1:5-7
(God is light; walk in the light.)

Reflection:

1. Invite the children and youth to name things that give light. Invite a volunteer to keep track of how many sources of light are named.
2. Next, ask the children and youth to name ways that people give light. Again, invite a volunteer to keep track of how many ways are named.
3. Finally, invite everyone to quietly think of one way they can share the light of Jesus with another person in the week to come. (If time allows, invite volunteers to share their choices.)

INTERCESSIONS

Response: *Come, Lord Jesus.*

1. For the Church, working to share your Good News with all, we pray –
2. For the world, especially places longing for peace, we pray –
3. For the hungry, the homeless, and all in need, we pray –
4. For the sick, and for all who care for them, we pray –
5. For each of us gathered here today, we pray –

Blessing of the ADVENT WREATH

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Prayer: Loving God,
your Son, Jesus Christ,
is the Light of the world.

Bless us as we light this wreath
and enter into the season of Advent.

May its candles
remind us to share Christ's light
through our words and deeds.

Amen.

*(Light the first candle of the
Advent wreath.)*



CONCLUDING RITES

Blessing: *Make the sign of the cross as you say the following:*

Now may Jesus, the Light of the world,
guide our words and actions
and fill our hearts with peace.
Amen.

Concluding Song: *See the Gathering Song suggestions.*

Continue to light the candles on the Advent wreath as you gather throughout the season of Advent. Use the Blessing Prayer (above) as your wreath-lighting prayer, modifying the fifth line of the prayer to read "and celebrate the season of Advent." The Intercessions and concluding Blessing are also appropriate for the entire season of Advent.