

Let the Light In

HOW TO LIGHT ADVENT CANDLES

A

dvent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*,

meaning “coming” or “arrival”. It is the first season of the Christian church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays. Lighting Advent candles is a tangible reminder for us to reflect on the birth of Jesus and what it means to us. The Advent season not only symbolizes the waiting for Christ's birth but also for His final return. It is a beautiful reminder of what the holiday is really about.



SET UP

1. Place a Christmas wreath on a flat surface somewhere visible, like a table or windowsill. You can purchase an already made Advent wreath or you can create your own with a wreath and 4 candleholders.

Symbolism:

- The **evergreen branches** of a traditional wreath represent everlasting life in Jesus Christ in the midst of winter and death as the evergreen is continuously green.
- The **circular form** of the wreath symbolizes God's unending love and the eternal life He makes possible, since a circle has no ending.

Candles:

- **Purple**
 - The purple candles are the main candles of Advent, and they each represent something different: **Hope, Faith & Peace**.
 - Set 3 purple candles in 3 of the candleholders around your wreath, and make sure they're far away from anything flammable.
 - These will be lit in the beginning of the week (i.e. the first 4 Sundays or Mondays before Christmas)
 - Look for tall, thin candles that you can burn multiple times throughout the month.
- **Pink**
 - Set 1 pink candle that's the same style as your purple candles on the wreath.
 - This candle represents **Joy**, which is why it's a brighter color.
 - Put this candle in the 3rd spot on the wreath. Go for a pale pink candle.
- **White**
 - Put a white candle in the center of the wreath to represent **Christ and His Purity**.
 - This candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

If you're lighting the Advent candles with your family, give each member a turn lighting the candle.

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- On the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, light one of the purple candles.
- The first candle symbolizes **HOPE** and is called the "**Prophet's Candle**".
- We remember the many promises God gave to prepare the world for the Savior's arrival through the prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, who waited in hope for the Messiah.
- The purple color symbolizes repentance, prayer and fasting.
- Think of the **HOPE** that people felt, waiting for the promises of the Messiah to be fulfilled.
- You can read **Isaiah 9:1, 6-7** to accompany your lighting.
- You can also sing the hymn "*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*".
- End with prayer.

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- The second candle represents **FAITH** and is called "**Bethlehem's Candle**".
- Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David. It is also a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
- The second candle is purple as well to symbolize royalty in preparation for the coming King. (Light both the first purple candle and a second purple candle.)
- Think of the **FAITH** Joseph and Mary needed in preparing for the birth of Jesus.
- You can read **Luke 2:1-7** as you light this candle.
- You can also sing the hymn "*O Come All Ye Faithful*".
- End with prayer.

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- The third candle symbolizes **JOY** and is called the "**Shepherd's Candle**".
- To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus, although He is King, also came for humble, common people like themselves.
- In liturgy, the color rose signifies joy. This candle is colored pink to represent rejoicing.
- Light the first 2 purple candles, then light your pink candle as well.
- Think about the **JOY** the people felt when Jesus was born.
- You can read **Luke 2:8-12** to accompany your lighting.
- You can also sing the hymn "*Joy to the World*".
- End with prayer.

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- The fourth candle represents **PEACE** and is called the "**Angel's Candle**".
- God sent His angels 4 different times to prepare people for Jesus' arrival. The angels also announced that Jesus came to bring peace and reconcile His people with God.
- The purple continues to represent the royalty of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords and Prince of Peace.
- Think of how His peace brings us close to God and each other again. (Light all 4 candles at the same time, including the unlit purple one).
- Read **Luke 2:13-20** as you light this candle.
- You can also sing the hymn "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!*".
- End with prayer.

CHRISTMAS EVE

- The final Advent candle, the "**Christ Candle**", represents the life of Christ, His purity and lack of sin. We are reminded when Jesus said: "***I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.***" **John 8:12**
- You can light this one on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day with your family as you celebrate Jesus's birth.
- Read **John 1:9-14** to accompany your lighting.
- You can sing "*Go Tell It On a Mountain*".
- End with prayer.