

The Season of Advent

The word 'Advent' means 'coming' or 'arrival'. The season of Advent marks the time we prepare for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. This year Advent starts on Sunday, 3 December. It spans four Sundays and four weeks of preparation for Christmas.

In this booklet you will find a Family Prayer Service and activity suggestions for the four Sundays of Advent as we journey towards Christmas and the arrival of the Son of God to a stable in Bethlehem. It is our sincere hope that this resource will be a spiritual support to everyone during the season of Advent.

Create an Advent Family Prayer Space

Preparation

Plan a time to gather in your home to pray.

Create a Prayer Space



A Prayer Space may include:

- Photographs of loved ones.
- A lighted candle.
- A religious symbol such as a cross, an open Bible, a sacred picture or icon, a statue or rosary beads.
- Dim the lights of the room and quieten distractions to create a calm and serene atmosphere.
- If you are gathering as a group, you might choose someone to lead the different prayers or to proclaim the Gospel readings.
- You could use your phone or tablet and connect with others outside your home.
- Couples might wish to light the candles from their wedding day or parents of a new baby, their baptismal candle.
- This is your prayer time, be creative and include additional elements that will bring you and your family peace.



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***“You have made us for yourself, O Lord,
and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”***

Saint Augustine

In the short days, dark nights and the chill of winter, we reminisce of the brighter and warmer days that have passed and, in hope, long for their return. We are tired by the strain of this pandemic and the disruption that it has brought to our lives. We yearn for consistency, we seek out signs of hope, and we long for something to fill the void in our lives. Our consistency and our hope are found in God. God is with us.

As we set out on our journey towards Christmas, we may find ourselves connecting with the emotions of weariness, anxiety and fear felt by Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem. Unsure of what lay ahead, Mary and Joseph embarked on a courageous journey fuelled by their trust in God and a beautiful expectant hope of better things to come. Let trust and hope be the hallmarks of our prayerful journey this Advent.

The Northern Pastoral Network has collated this prayer resource to support us in our spiritual preparations through Advent. You are invited to use this resource through each of the four Sundays of Advent. Week by week, may the candles on our Advent wreaths dispel the darkness as we journey to Christmas and the arrival of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

May Christ Emmanuel be with you in these weeks of waiting and anticipation and we pray that, as we journey through Advent, we will grow closer to Christ, experiencing the hope, love, joy and peace that a relationship with Jesus brings.

Advent Prayer

(from The Family Prayer Book)

Father, in the wilderness of the Jordan,
You sent a messenger to prepare people's hearts for the coming of Your Son.
Help me to hear his words and repent of my sins, so that I may clearly see the way to walk, the truth to speak and the life to live for Him, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.