

At Home Advent



When I was a child, I loved our family preparations for Christmas. These included a family Advent ritual at our kitchen table for the four Sundays before December 25th. Held in the evening at dinnertime, the candles glowing in our dark dining room reflected all the mysteries of the impending Holy Day. When I was old enough to be able to light one of the candles (under CLOSE supervision), I felt so grown up!

A Christian Event Passed through Generations

Since having my own children, observing Advent at home is equally important and special to me. Maybe even moreso. This At Home Advent is a very simple adaptation, which I encourage you to further change to tailor it to your beliefs and to your family's needs.

Advent Ceremony Materials

As a child, we used a circular foam board to hold our candles. While there are "official" wire Advent candle holders, I urge you to be creative. Personally, I don't think God gets hung up over candle colors or sizes or just how our candles are arranged or placed. Use what you have. If you do need to buy supplies, the Dollar Tree has great options.

Supplies

- **5 candles** – In our tradition, we use 3 purple, 1 pink, and 1 white candle. If you don't have traditional width tapers, birthday candles or scented pillars or electric blinking fake candles are just as good!
- **5 candleholders** - Again, if you do not own an "Advent candle holder," whatever you do have for each candle works. If you do not have anything, I have been there and done that, too. You can choose an empty baby food jar or a short drinking glass and put the candle in it. Then, crumple up enough aluminum foil around the candle to hold it upright and perfectly steady.
- **Aluminum foil** - I highly recommend this for steadying candles and also to protect your ceremonial surface from drips of molten candle wax. Tear off a sheet to spread beneath your candle set-up.
- **Print-outs** of the ceremony - The one below will work. :D
- **Matches** or a lighter UNDER ADULT SUPERVISION.
- **Bible** with Old and New Testament - You must have the Old Testament for all the predictions from back in the day before Christ was born.
- **General decorations** – maybe you'd like to place flowers around the candles, maybe your nativity set, maybe you'd like to use greenery from your yard or branches from an evergreen tree. Decorate the space in a way that is meaningful for your family.

Adapting The Advent Ceremonies

Count backwards from Christmas Eve (December 24th) to identify 4 Sundays coming before it. Now you have your starting Sunday.

Again, I go with the *spirit* of the observance over strict rules and regulations. If child visitation schedules or family social demands make a Sunday observance stressful, do a ceremony on a Saturday or a Monday night.

Below you will find very simple and short scripts for each of the nights of Advent.

They are written with reading roles assigned to Father, Mother, or Child. If your family has two Mothers or two Fathers or a Single Parent you can adapt. The purpose is to spread the reading among all family members, giving the adults the longer passages. You, as the adult, assign the readers and the candle lighters for your family group.

First Sunday Of Advent

(November 28, 2021)

(Start with unlit candles.)

Father: Christmas is the happiest day of the year. It is Jesus's birthday. The story begins long ago when the people of the world needed someone to show them how to be kind.

Child: Jesus would teach us how to be good at loving one another.

Father: In a little country called Palestine, two men named Isaiah and Micah learned that God would be sending Jesus to the world. Let us read **Isaiah 9:6-7**.

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Father: God said that when the promised one came he would be like a light in the world. Let us read Isaiah 9:2.

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Mother: Let _____ (child) light our first Advent candle. It will help us remember God's promise.

(All are silent as child lights a purple candle.)

Mother: Micah told the people where this would come true. Let us read **Micah 5:2**.
(Mother reads it.)

Optional song: Let us sing about this place. Everyone sing "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*."

Father: Now in the light of our first Advent candle, let us thank God for sending Jesus.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for teachers of long ago who told us about your plan to send Jesus. Thanks for all the good things He did. And, thank you for all the days between now and Christmas when we will be doing good things and planning to make others happy. Amen.

Extinguish candles.

Second Sunday Of Advent

(December 5, 2021)

(Start with unlit candles.)

Mother: Last week we lit the first of our Advent candles to remember God's promise to send a special baby to help the world. We remember that the baby would be born in Bethlehem. This baby Jesus would need a good home with loving parents. So, God

picked Joseph and Mary to be his dad and mom. One day God let Mary know about His(Her) wonderful plan. Let us read **Luke 1:26-31**.

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Father: Now it is time to light 2 purple candles. _____ (child) may light the first one that reminds us of God's promise. _____ (another child) may light our second candle. It will help us remember the good home of Mary and Joseph.

(All are silent as candles are lit.)

Child: Mary was so happy that God chose her to be the mother of baby Jesus that she sang a song of thanks. We can read it in **Luke 1:46-55**. [Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Mother: Perhaps Mary said she would get the baby clothes ready and sing sweet songs to baby Jesus.

Child: Maybe Joseph said, "I will teach Jesus to be a good carpenter and a good person."

Optional Song: *"Joy to the World."*

Father: Now while the 2 candles burn brightly, let us thank God for the great joy that came to the world when Jesus was born.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for choosing Mary and Joseph to be the earthly parents of Jesus. Thanks for all the good things He did. And, thank you for all the happy times we have in our family. Amen.

Extinguish candles.

Third Sunday Of Advent

(December 12, 2021)

(Start with unlit candles.)

Father: Last week we lit the first two of our Advent candles to remember God's promise that He(She) would send a special baby to help the world. We remember that the baby would be born in Bethlehem. This baby Jesus would need a good home with loving parents. So, God picked Joseph and Mary to be his dad and mom.

Mother: While Mary and Joseph waited for Jesus to be born in their house in the town of Nazareth, the King made a law. He said everyone had to take a trip to write their name in a people-counting book. He said that Joseph and Mary had to travel to a town called Bethlehem to obey the law. Let us read **Luke 2:1-7**.

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Father: Now it is time to light 3 candles. _____ (child) may light the first one (purple) that reminds us of God's promise.

_____ (another child) may light our second (purple) candle. It will help us remember the good home of Mary and Joseph.

Let _____ (child) light the third (pink) candle to remind us of the hope and joy and love Jesus brought into the world that night.

(All are silent as candles are lit.)

Optional song: "*Away in a Manger.*"

Child: While Jesus was sleeping in his manger bed, something very exciting happened outside of town.

Read Luke 2:8-20

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Mother: This was the first Christmas night. The baby's first visitors were sheep watching farmers called shepherds. They were not rich people. They loved God and were glad that they learned about Jesus.

Father: Now while the 3 candles burn brightly, let us thank God for making His promise come true and letting the shepherds see the light in the sky and hear the angels sing.

Prayer (do whatever your faith requires for a prayer): Thanks, God, for finding a place for Jesus to be born and for the regular people who helped celebrate His birth. Please help us bring peace to the world the way Jesus planned. Amen.

Extinguish candles.

Fourth Sunday Of Advent

(December 19, 2021)

(Start with unlit candles.)

Mother: Every week as we looked at our Advent candles, they reminded us that Christmas is coming and that Christmas should be like candle light: bright with hope and kindness and love. The story of Christmas continues with astronomers - scientists who study stars - seeing a strange star in the sky. The Bible calls them wise men. They went to the land's king and asked about a new king.

Let us read **Matthew 2:1-6.**

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Father: No wonder King Herod was worried. He liked being the king. He did not want the country to have anyone as king but him. Let us read **Matthew 2:7-12**.

[Another family member reads the Bible passage.]

Father: Now it is time to light 4 candles. _____ (child) may light the first (purple) one that reminds us of God's promise.

_____ (another child) may light our second (purple) candle. It will help us remember the good home of Mary and Joseph.

_____ (child) may light the third (pink) candle to remind us of the hope and joy and love Jesus brought into the world that night.

Let _____ (child) light our fourth (purple) candle to remind us of the visit of the wise ones bringing presents to baby Jesus.

(All are silent as candles are lit.)

Optional song: "**We Three Kings.**"

Father: Now while the 4 candles burn brightly, let us thank God for making His(Her) promise come true and picking Mary and Joseph to love and raise Jesus. And, thanks to God for letting the shepherds and the wise men see the light in the sky and visit Jesus.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for the busy and exciting days between now and Christmas. Please help us stop sometimes to look at our Advent candles and remember why we have Christmas. Amen.

Extinguish candles.

Christmas Eve

(December 24, 2021)

(Start with unlit candles.)

Father: It is Christmas Eve. Advent, the four weeks of getting ready for Christmas, is over. It is Christmas Eve tonight all over the world because once upon a time about two thousand years ago, Jesus was born

Mother: Every week as we looked at our Advent candles, we thought about a part of the Christmas story from the Bible. Now on Christmas Eve let us put all the parts together.

Father: We will remember the story as we light the first 4 candles.

_____ (child) may light the first (purple) one that reminds us of God's promise for a Prince of Peace to come to earth.

_____ (another child) may light our second (purple) candle. It will help us remember the good home of Mary and Joseph for baby Jesus.

_____ (child) may light the third (pink) candle to remind us of the hope and joy and love Jesus brought into the world that night.

_____ (child) may light the fourth (purple) candle to remind us of the visit of the wise men bringing presents to baby Jesus.

(All are silent as candles are lit.)

Mother: Our fifth candle is tall and new. It tells us that the Christmas story goes on and on year after year. _____ (child) may light the fifth (white) candle to be our family's birthday candle for baby Jesus.

Optional song: "*Silent Night*."

Prayer (do whatever your faith requires for a prayer): Thank you, God, for the best Christmas gift to each of us: Jesus. Amen.

Extinguish candles.

A Note from Rev. Beth:

If you have questions or want help figuring out how to make this ritual work for you and/or your family, please reach out! You can contact me in the church office at 508-697-6016 or by email at csccpastor@hotmail.com.

Merry Christmas!!!!