

ADVENT 2020

Over the next few weeks we will be observing the season of Advent, a time of expectation and preparation, where we prepare our hearts and minds to fully celebrate the birth of Jesus.

We invite your family to engage in the lighting of the Advent candles symbolizing HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and PEACE, on the four Sundays of Advent, along with the CHRIST candle on Christmas Eve.

We have included information for you to use along with the devotional provided by the church to help your family more fully engage in the lighting of the candles. You may wish to do your candle lighting as you watch church service online or you can set aside a separate time each week to focus on the lighting of the candles as a family.

In addition to the materials enclosed in your Family Experience Advent kit, we will be providing other resources and ideas at cor.org/Christmas, be sure to check it out beginning November 29.

Advent Wreath

To begin, you will need to purchase or create an advent wreath if you don't have one already. Check out the cor.org/Christmas for ideas if you need inspiration. There will be ideas for simple projects using items from around the house to more elaborate projects for the Christmas crafters out there! And ideas for family friendly advent wreathes using flameless candles.

There are many ways you can create a unique Advent wreath to perfectly fit your family, but there are some common traditions and symbolism in Advent wreathes you may wish to consider. Advent wreathes are traditionally made of evergreen to represent eternal life. The circular shape reminds us of God's unending love. There are three purple candles for HOPE, LOVE and PEACE. The one pink candle is the JOY candle and traditionally lit the third week. In the middle of the wreath is a white candle, often different shape or size than the others that is the CHRIST candle lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Christmas Songs

We have chosen a favorite Christmas song to be paired with each candle. To help the songs come alive for your children, we'll teach about the songs background, the meaning behind the lyrics and explain the message. With greater understanding of the words they sing, your family is sure to have a time of worship they'll always remember. Find it at cor.org/Christmas.

Advent Calendar

While most of the focus is on the four Sundays prior to Christmas, Christmas Eve and Christmas day, it is common to do something each day of Advent to encourage us to focus fully on the upcoming celebration of Jesus' birth.

We have included an Advent calendar filled with fun ideas to do a little Advent each day. Don't panic – we know you may not get through all of these activities! And they might not fit into your family's schedule on the days we have them slotted, that's fine. Take a look at them all, choose the ones your family would most enjoy and determine when it works best for you to do them. Most of all have fun finding things to do together while celebrating the season. Who knows, maybe you'll create some new family traditions.

We are so excited to be part of your Advent journey! We pray this season brings you great joy!



ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING GUIDE

Each week as you light your candles, pray this prayer:

Dear God,
Thank you for loving us. Thank you for inviting us to share our light.
Help us to bring hope to those in need. Help us to spread love to all of your people.
Help us to spread joy wherever we go. Help us shape a world filled with peace.
Thank you for Jesus.
Amen



November 29 – Today we light the first purple candle.

This candle represents HOPE.

Hope, is wanting something to happen and thinking that it will. As we light the HOPE candle, we pray that we can be a light to those in need of hope and those who feel lost and alone. We focus on bringing hope to people who are in the midst of darkness. Let us remember, as we light this candle that we are God's hands and feet in caring for others.

We can BE THE LIGHT of hope by providing food to people who are food insecure, being a friend to someone who is lonely, and offering shelter and warmth to those in need.

Song: Go Tell It On the Mountain



December 6 – The LOVE candle.

Light the first purple candle from last week, now light the second purple candle which represents LOVE.

Love is caring for someone or something. As we light the second candle, the LOVE candle, reflect on Jesus' words to 'love your neighbor as yourself'. Loving all people, those near to us and those far away glorifies God. We pray that through our words and actions, we will bring the light of love to everyone we meet!

We can BE THE LIGHT of love by listening to and supporting people who are different than us, forgiving people who have been unkind to us, letting people know we are thinking of them with a phone call or card, and even just by saying "I love you" to family and friends!

Song: Little Drummer Boy



December 13 – The JOY Candle.

Light the first two purple candles, then light the pink candle which represents JOY.

Joy is feeling happiness and great delight. We light the pink JOY candle celebrating the good news shared by the angels. We pray that we will bring the light of joy to others and that through us they feel the excitement of the angels sharing the good news of Jesus' birth.

We can BE THE LIGHT of joy by smiling and saying "hello", giving someone a compliment, saying "thank you" to people who help you, and offering to help someone with their chores.

Song: Joy to the World



December 20 – The PEACE Candle.

Light the first two purple candles and the pink candle, then light the last purple candle which represents PEACE.

Peace is a sense of calm and harmony. As we light the PEACE candle, we pray that we can share the light of peace. Peace in our hearts, peace within families, in our communities and around the world. We give thanks for those who help shine the light of peace to others.

We can BE THE LIGHT of peace by trying to understand another person's viewpoint, focusing on gratitude and appreciating other people, stopping before we act out in anger, and choosing to see the very best in everyone.

Song: Away in a Manager