

ADVENT *for* KIDS

A Family Christmas Preparation



ADAPTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES BY
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A NOTE TO PARENTS

Each Sunday of December, our family lights candles and prepares for Jesus' coming, both His coming to earth as a baby at Christmas and His coming back again as our King.

I grew up celebrating Advent, enjoying the ritual of a different family each week lighting the tall white pillar candles on a table wreathed in greenery at the front of our church. As an adult, I dug up a copy of the original service to try with my own kids, but it was too long and complicated for a toddler's attention span. This guide is the product of necessity, a reformatting of the basic ideas to fit little hearts and minds.

When our three kids were preschoolers back in 2013, I remember reading through Week 1 on the first Sunday of Advent with our kids. As we went along, our three-year-old began to absorb the fact that Jesus was really coming back to earth one day.

"He's *really* coming back?" he kept asking, eyes wide. "And we'll see Him?"

At the very literal age of three, having a relationship with someone you can't see can be frustrating. I was a bit afraid he was starting to think Jesus was coming back to earth *this* Christmas Day! (I tried to explain no one knows the day or

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the hour...) But I felt a glow of warmth that even as young as three he was absorbing this important information about Jesus through our family Advent preparation.

Our family uses a candelabra that holds five candles, which we light in the following order:

Week 1: The Prophets' Candle - HOPE (white)

Week 2: The Angels' Candle - JOY (yellow)

Week 3: The Shepherds' Candle - GOOD NEWS (green)

Week 4: The Wise Mens' Candle - WORSHIP (purple)

Christmas Day: The Jesus Candle - LOVE (red)

Some families use other color combinations, such as four white candles with a red one for Christmas Day (or Christmas Eve). Feel free to use whatever suits your family.

May you be blessed as you read through these devotionals together, and may you draw closer to Jesus as a family this Advent season.

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!

Carolyn

WEEK 1

First Sunday of Advent: The Prophet's Candle - HOPE

Mother: The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival". Whose coming to the earth do we celebrate on Christmas Day?

Kids: Jesus!

Mother: Right! During Advent, we get ready to celebrate the "arrival" of God's Son Jesus as a baby. We also get ready for Jesus to come back again as our King. Let's start getting our hearts ready for Jesus' coming. What are these on the table?

Kids: Candles!

Mother: Do you know why we light candles during Advent? *(pause)* Candles remind us that Jesus is the LIGHT of God coming into our dark, sinful world. Remember,

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Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." Every Sunday of Advent, we light one more candle to remind us that Jesus' coming brings light to the world.

Father: Do you know the name of the first candle? *(pause)* The first candle is called "The PROPHETS' Candle". It reminds us of the prophets in the Bible who foretold Jesus' birthday hundreds of years before He was born.

Do you know what the Prophets' Candle means? *(pause)* It reminds us of the HOPE God's people had as they waited for the coming of a Messiah, a Savior. God showed His prophets that He was planning to send a Savior for His people. Do you know who that Savior was?

Kids: Jesus!

Father: Right! God's promise to send a Messiah, a Savior, was fulfilled when He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. But do you still see sin and darkness in the world?

Kids: Yes.

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Father: So we are still waiting with hope, like the prophets and God's people in the Bible, for Jesus to come back again to make the world new and get rid of sin forever.

Isaiah 9:2 & 6 says: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned. *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;* and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."¹

Who is "the child who is born, the son who is given?"

Kids: Jesus!

(Father lights the first candle)

Father: We light the Prophets' Candle to remind us that Jesus' coming was foretold by the prophets, and that Jesus brings LIGHT and HOPE into a dark world.

Let's pray.

¹ All Scripture quotations from The Holy Bible, New International Version, Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.

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Dear Jesus,

Thank you for coming into the world just like the prophets foretold. Thank you that you are the light of the world, and you bring us hope. Thank you that you will come back again to make the world new and take away sin forever. Amen.

All Sing: "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

Come, thou long expected Jesus!
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone.
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne!

WEEK 2

Second Sunday of Advent:

The Angel's Candle - JOY

Mother: Do you remember what the word "ADVENT" means? (pause) Right! It means "COMING" or "ARRIVAL". Whose coming to the earth do we celebrate on Christmas Day?

Child: Jesus!

Mother: Right! During Advent, we get ready to celebrate the "arrival" of God's Son Jesus as a baby. We also get ready for Jesus to come back again as our King.

Mother: Do you remember why we light candles during Advent?

Child: Because Jesus is the light of the world!

Mother: Right! Today we relight the Prophets' Candle to remind us that Jesus brought LIGHT and HOPE into a dark world. God's people had hope as they waited for God to

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send a Messiah, a Savior. And we are waiting in hope for Jesus to come back again to make the world new and get rid of sin forever.

(Mother relights the first candle)

Father: Do you know the name of the second candle? The second candle is called "The ANGELS' Candle", because it was angels who brought the JOYFUL news of Jesus' coming.

Do you know what the Angels' Candle reminds us of? The Angels' candle reminds us that *Jesus' coming was good news of great JOY for all people.*

Luke 2:10-11 says: "The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great JOY for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord!'"

(Father lights the second candle)

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Father: Today we light the Angels' Candle to remind us that Jesus' coming brought joy to the world, and that we can give this joy to others by telling them about Jesus.

Dear Jesus,

We are full of joy with the angels when we remember your coming. You are the light of the world, and you bring us hope. Please help us tell others the joyful news about you. Amen.

All Sing: "Joy to the World"

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing!

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found!

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love!

WEEK 3

Third Sunday of Advent: The Shepherd's Candle - GOOD NEWS

Mother: Do you remember what "ADVENT" means?

Child: Coming! Arrival!

Mother: Right! Whose coming to the earth do we celebrate on Christmas Day?

Child: Jesus!

Mother: Right! During Advent, we get ready to celebrate the "arrival" of God's Son Jesus as a baby. We also get ready for Jesus to come back again as our King. Do you remember why we light candles during Advent?

Child: Because Jesus is the light of the world!

Mother: Right! Do you remember the name of the first candle?

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Child: The Prophet's Candle!

Mother: Right! What does the Prophet's Candle remind us to have?

Child: Hope!

Mother: Right! We relight the Prophet's Candle to remind us that Jesus brought LIGHT and HOPE into a dark world.

(Mother relights the first candle)

Mother: Do you remember the name of the second candle?

Child: The Angel's Candle!

Mother: Right! What does the Angel's Candle remind us to have?

Child: Joy!

Mother: Right! We relight the Angel's Candle to remind us that Jesus' coming brought great JOY for all people.

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(Mother relights the second candle)

Father: Do you know the name of the third candle? The third candle is called "The SHEPHERDS' Candle", to remind us of the shepherds, who told everyone the GOOD NEWS about Jesus. Do you know what the Shepherds' Candle means? This candle reminds us to be like the shepherds, and tell everyone about the Good News of Jesus' coming.

Luke 2:15-18 says, "When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, *they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.*"

What is the Good News about Jesus? *(pause)* John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." This is the good news about Jesus!

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(Father lights the third candle)

Today we light the Shepherds' candle to remind us to tell everyone the good news about Jesus' coming. Let's pray.

Dear Jesus,

Thank you that your coming to earth is good news of great joy for all people! Help us to be like the shepherds, and tell everyone we meet the good news that Jesus came to earth to die for our sins, so we can live with God forever.

Amen.

All Sing: "Go, Tell It On the Mountain"

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GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!*

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light...

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!*

The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth
rang out the angels' chorus that hailed the Savior's birth...

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!*

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn...

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!*

WEEK 4

Fourth Sunday of Advent: The Wise Men's Candle - WORSHIP

Mother: Do you remember what "ADVENT" means?

Child: Coming! Arrival!

Mother: Right! Whose coming to the earth do we celebrate on Christmas Day?

Child: Jesus!

Mother: Right! During Advent, we get ready to celebrate the "arrival" of God's Son Jesus as a baby. We also get ready for Jesus to come back again as our King. Do you remember why we light candles during Advent?

Child: Because Jesus is the light of the world!

Mother: Right! Do you remember the name of the first candle?

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Child: The Prophet's Candle!

Mother: Right! What does the Prophet's Candle remind us to have?

Child: HOPE!

Mother: Right! We relight the Prophet's Candle to remind us that Jesus brought LIGHT and HOPE into a dark world.

(Mother relights the first candle)

Mother: Do you remember the name of the second candle?

Child: The Angel's Candle!

Mother: Right! What does the Angel's Candle remind us to have?

Child: JOY!

Mother: Right! We relight the Angel's candle to remind us that Jesus' coming brought JOY for all people.

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(Mother relights the second candle)

Mother: Do you remember the name of the third candle?

Child: The Shepherds' Candle!

Mother: Right! The Shepherds' Candle reminds us that Jesus' coming is... what?

Child: GOOD NEWS!

Mother: Right! We relight the Shepherds' candle to remind us to tell everyone the good news about Jesus.

(Mother relights the third candle)

Father: Do you know the name of the fourth candle?
(pause) The fourth candle is called "The WISE MEN'S Candle", to remind us of the wise men who came from a far land to worship Jesus. Do you know what the Wise Men's candle means? *(pause)* This candle reminds us that Jesus came so that people from all nations might come to WORSHIP Him as King. What does it mean to worship Jesus as our King?

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Let's read Matthew 2:10-11: "When [the wise men] saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and *worshiped* him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

To worship Jesus as our King means to bow down to Him in our hearts as the most important thing in our lives. To worship Jesus means to give Him all the things that are most precious to us. What are some things we can give to Jesus this Christmas? (*our time, our hearts, our possessions, our money...*)

(Father lights the fourth candle)

Today we light the Wise Men's Candle to remind us that Jesus came so that people from all nations might worship Him as King.

Let's pray.

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Dear Jesus,

Thank you that you came to earth so that people from all nations could worship you as King. Please help us worship and adore you this Christmas, and help us show others how to worship you too. Please show us what gifts we can bring you from our hearts.

Amen.

All Sing: "We Three Kings of Orient Are"
 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (2 verses)

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WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy Perfect Light!*

Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice!
“Alleluia, Alleluia!”
Earth to heav’n replies.

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy Perfect Light!*

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O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Lo! star led chieftains, Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations.

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

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CHRISTMAS DAY

The Jesus Candle - Love

Mother: What is today?

Child: CHRISTMAS!!!

Mother: Right! Whose birthday do we celebrate today?

Child: JESUS'!

Mother: Right! We've been lighting candles during Advent, which means "coming" or "arrival", because we've been getting ready to celebrate Jesus' arrival on earth as a baby, AND getting ready for Jesus to come back to earth again as our King. Why do we light candles during Advent?

Child: Because Jesus is the light of the world!

Mother: Right! What's the name of the first candle?

Child: The Prophet's Candle!

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Mother: Right! What does the Prophet's Candle remind us to have?

Child: Hope!

Mother: Right! We relight the Prophet's Candle to remind us that Jesus brought LIGHT and HOPE into a dark world.

(Mother relights the first candle)

Mother: What's the name of the second candle?

Child: The Angel's Candle!

Mother: Right! What does the Angel's candle remind us to have?

Child: Joy!

Mother: Right! We relight the Angel's Candle to remind us that Jesus' coming brought JOY for all people.

(Mother relights the second candle)

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Mother: What's the name of the third candle?

Child: The Shepherds' Candle!

Mother: Right! And the Shepherds' Candle reminds us that Jesus' coming is... what?

Child: GOOD NEWS!

Mother: Right! We relight the Shepherd's Candle to remind us to tell everyone the good news about Jesus.

(Mother relights the third candle)

Mother: Do you remember the name of the fourth candle?

Child: The Wise Mens' Candle!

Mother: Right! We relight the Wise Mens' Candle to remind us that Jesus came so that people from all nations might come to WORSHIP Him as King.

(Mother relights the fourth candle)

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Father: Do you know the name of the fifth candle? *(pause)*
The fifth candle is called the Jesus Candle. Do you know what the Jesus candle reminds us of? The Jesus Candle reminds us that Jesus' coming showed the LOVE of God to all people, so that people from all nations might come to worship God. Listen to these verses and raise your hand every time you hear the word LOVE:

1 John 4:9-10 says, "This is how God showed His *love* among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is *love*: not that we *loved* God, but that he *loved* us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

(Father lights the fifth candle)

Father: We light the Jesus Candle on Christmas Day to remind us that Jesus' coming showed the love of God to all people, and to remind us that we too - with the Prophets, the Angels, the Shepherds, and the Wise Men - can show the love of God and invite all people to worship Jesus with us.

Let's pray.

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Dear Jesus,

Thank you that you came as a little baby to show the love of God to all people. Thank you for dying on the cross for our sins because you loved us. This Christmas, please help us invite everyone around us to love you and worship you too. Amen.

All Sing: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (all 4 verses)

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

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*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Lo! star led chieftains, Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations.

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*