

# Advent Wreaths



## Creating an Advent Wreath

There are many different styles of advent wreaths that you can find and/or – from the elaborate with real pine boughs to ones made out of cardboard and toilet paper rolls (and everything in between). What it looks like is up to you!

## Options for creating a wreath in the parish

1. You can also purchase something pre-made
2. Have activities set up at church where you can make them
  - a. Supply everything that's needed at no cost
  - b. Supply everything that's needed, as long as you place an order ahead of time and pay for it (could be a fund raiser for the church)
3. Offer supplies so that people can take them home and make them (either at a cost or not)
4. Give instructions and wish people luck

## Options for advent wreath creations

1. Pine and candles
2. Faux pine and candles
3. Just candles
  - a. Pillar candles
  - b. Taper candles
  - c. Votive candles
4. Some other kind of wreath and candles
  - a. Cranberries
  - b. Whatever strikes your fancy
5. Felt (with felt "flames")
6. Paper (with paper "flames")
  - a. Toilet paper holders
  - b. Paper towel holders
  - c. Cut paper and candles



## Candles



There is no right or wrong way to make an Advent Wreath or choose the candles. Do what you like! Here are some "traditions."

There are usually four colored candles and one white (though some leave out the white). Traditionally the candles for advent are purple (thinking of Advent as being a time of penitence), though many are now going to blue (focusing, instead, on the royalty of Christ), whatever color you choose is fine. There is one pink candle – for the third week of Advent representing "Rose Sunday," or "Mary Sunday," or "Joy". The four candles form the ring, or wreath, and the white candle sits in the middle. This one represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve (after sun set, or early morning).

As stated above, you can use any kind of candles. If they will be around children, pets, or clumsy people (like me), make sure they are secure. And please remember to put them out when you aren't in the room with them.

## Using an Advent Wreath at Home



There are many ways you can use an advent wreath to celebrate the season at home. Some of the following ideas have questions for discussion – if you are living alone or with others who don't want to share with you, you can use the questions for journaling or meditation.

The weeks (there are many different themes that you can use, these are most common but you can also pick your own)

Week 1: **Hope**

Week 2: **Peace**

Week 3: **Joy**

Week 4: **Love**

### The Activity

On the first day of each week (as the week begins on Sunday, you can begin when the sun sets on Saturday evening or sometime Sunday before the sun sets)

- 1) **Gather at a table** – a coffee table or dining room table, someplace central to the family.
- 2) **Place the wreath** that you have created on the table
- 3) **Tell the story of how you created it** as a family (even if it was only a few days ago, it sets us in the right spirit for remembering our story). You can have one person in the group, or you can tell the story as a group (for instance, say “I remember when we made this wreath. We all gathered in the parish hall and found all the supplies. What do you remember?”).
- 4) **Light the first candle** (up to whatever week it is – remembering that the pink candle is for the third week).
- 5) **Say a prayer** (look at the following page for prayer examples)
- 6) **Reflect on the past week.** The weeks have themes (listed above). Encourage all to think back to the week you've had, and ask where you saw the theme of that week (for instance, if the theme is “Joy” ask each other where you saw, experience or felt “joy” that week. Did you see someone else who was joyful? How could you tell? Is there a time you were joyful? What was it and why do you think you felt that way? Did you help give someone else joy? What did you do?
- 7) Now **look forward to the next week** and ask each other how you can focus on that theme.



How can you show people love even when they're bothering you? Or show love to someone that you don't know, or maybe don't really like? Are love and like the same thing?"

8) **Put the candle out.** This can be done ceremonially, with a candle snuffer, or you can wait for others to leave and blow it out (but, please remember to put it out!).

9) **Put the wreath where it will live for the week.** This can be the same table, or any place else in the house where people will see it and notice it.

## Prayers

"Remember Jesus" From St. Martin of Tours, Kalamazoo

Dear God,

We light this candle to help us remember  
to get ready for Christmas, Jesus' birth day.

We get ready by thinking about you and your son, Jesus,  
and about how much you love us.

As we share the stories of Christmas, please give hope to us  
and to all your people.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



*Note: At church we focus on hope for week 1, and on peace, joy, and love in weeks 2, 3, and 4, respectively -- so you could use the word "hope" in line 6 at the beginning, but change it to "peace" or "joy" or "love" in each of the succeeding weeks.*

"An Advent Prayer," By Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Prayers for Each Week, by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

**1:** ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**2:** MERCIFUL GOD, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**3:** STIR UP YOUR POWER, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.



**4:** PURIFY OUR CONSCIENCE, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Christmas Day:** Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen