

FAMILY FAITH

Liturgical Year: Advent

During Advent, we prepare our hearts for Jesus.

Chapter Summary

The Church celebrates the life of Christ through seasons that make up the liturgical year. Advent is the first season of the liturgical year. “Advent” means “to come.” During the season of Advent, we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus and remember the hope that God’s people had as they waited for Jesus. The Advent wreath reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World, who saves us from the darkness of sin. The Church participates in the season of Advent by lighting a candle each week. We strive to grow in the virtue of hope during Advent.

More for Parents

Waiting is hard, especially for children. As parents, we see this every year at Christmastime when our children eagerly wait, to the best of their abilities, for that joyful morning to come. However, we are all challenged during the Advent season to treat the weeks leading up to Christmas as a time of joyful, yet repentant, preparation. As parents, we can help our children enter into the Advent season by practicing joyful and hopeful waiting. We do this by intentionally modeling for our children that as Christians, unlike the secular culture, which sees the weeks leading up to Christmas as the most hectic of the year, we use this time for extra prayer and reflection to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

Virtue in the Family

Advent is a time of hopeful preparation. While Christmas can truly be the busiest time of the year, it is important for families not to skip this short but beautiful liturgical season. If we enter into Advent intentionally, God will reward us in making us more patient, repentant, and hopeful.

Celebrating Advent as a Family

Here are some practices that will help your family fully participate in the Advent season:

- Purchase an Advent wreath and set it up at your dinner table. Choose a night every week when you will share dinner together, beginning by lighting the wreath and saying a Hail Mary, Our Father, and Glory Be for your own intentions.
- Advent is a penitential season, which means we are called to prepare for Christ’s coming by remembering our sins and our need for conversion. Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation together. If your children are too young, have them spend time in the church praying for their family and friends.
- Set up a nativity scene in your home but leave out the infant Jesus to help your children see that Advent is a time of preparation for Jesus’ coming at Christmas.
- Spend a day toward the end of Advent to clean the house in preparation for Jesus’ coming at Christmas. This helps children see that just like we prepare the house, we should also prepare our souls for Christ’s coming.

Vocabulary Words for Your Children to Review

- **Advent**
- **Advent wreath**

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