

SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF ADVENT

- ▶ Hang your **Bible promise stars** from Lesson 4 in a prominent place and pray to grow in trust of God and His Word.
- ▶ Decorate your tree during Advent, but **don't turn on the tree lights until Jesus is born**; that is, until the light of the world is in our midst!
- ▶ **Wait to decorate for Christmas until the last days of Advent.** Or decorate a little each week, waiting to decorate the tree until the last moment.
- ▶ **Place candles in all of your windows.** Let your lights say welcome to all who are without the things of this world that your family has. As you light them remind your family that Christ, the light of the world, is coming soon.
- ▶ Make every Sunday night during Advent a **family story time.** Begin a collection of good Christmas stories that teach Christian values. Make it extra special by lighting a fire in the fireplace (if you have one), making popcorn, and cuddling on the couch.
- ▶ Choose a family member (keeping your chosen person a secret if you can) and become his **"secret saint"** by doing hidden good deeds for him during this special time of the year, e.g., make his bed, leave him a little note of love and cheer, do a chore for him, or leave a chocolate kiss on his pillow.
- ▶ As a family, **pray for everyone on your Christmas card list**, as well as those who send you cards.
- ▶ After you light your tree on Christmas Eve, read aloud the Christmas story as found in **Luke's Gospel.**

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Advent Blessing and Prayer

The purpose of this activity is to pray in a special way to prepare your family's hearts to receive Christ at Christmas.

Advent Manger Sacrifice Activity

The goal of this activity is to turn little sacrifices you make each day during Advent into a soft bed of love for the Baby Jesus.

Birthday Party for Jesus

The goal of this activity is to bring Jesus' birth to the heart of your home on Christmas Eve.

YOUR LAST NAME

ADVENT FAMILY COVENANT

Take a few moments to reflect on what has been said and, together, make your own plan for how you will celebrate the season of Advent in your home.

Jesus, You are the Light of the World. You always keep Your promises. We promise to wait and prepare for Your arrival this Advent in the following ways:

Please help us to do these things, and bless us in a special way this Advent season.

ADVENT BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS



The purpose of this activity is to pray in a special way to prepare your family's hearts to receive Christ at Christmas. Below are special prayers to offer throughout the season. Pray each as you light the candles on your Advent wreath. If you don't have one, you can make a simple one with some evergreen leaves and four candles.

First Sunday of Advent

Leader: "A voice proclaims: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! ... Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40: 3, 5). Lord God, we gather around this wreath and wait and prepare for Your coming once again into our lives. As we light this candle, send forth Your Holy Spirit, who alone can dispel the darkness of our sin and fill us with the light of Your Son, Jesus the Christ. Bless this wreath and our lives as we wait in joyful hope for Your coming.
All respond: Amen.

Light one purple candle tonight and each night of the first week of Advent. Then pray:

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Come, Lord Jesus!

All respond: Come, quickly!

Second Sunday of Advent

Leader: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone... For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us; upon His shoulder dominion rests. They name Him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9: 1, 6). Father, you loved us so much that you sent light into our darkness – your only Son Jesus. As we light this second candle tonight, may it be a reminder for us of Your everlasting love and Your promise that You will always be with us. Help us to wait with expectant hearts for the fullness of Your kingdom.
All respond: Amen.

Light two purple candles tonight and each night of this second week of Advent. Then pray:

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Come, Lord Jesus!

All respond: Come, quickly!

Third Sunday of Advent

Leader: “Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them...” (Luke 2: 8, 9). Lord, as the days grow shorter and the darkness envelopes the earth, this night we light three candles as a sign of hope and joy that soon Christmas will once again be upon us. We are reminded that as You surprised the shepherds with Your glorious light, Your coming always surprises us with joy.

All respond: Amen.

Light two purple candles and the pink candle tonight and each night of this third week of Advent. Then pray:

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Come, Lord Jesus!

All respond: Come, quickly!

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Leader: “And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests’” (Luke 2: 13, 14). Father, as we light this fourth candle we join with the heavenly hosts giving praise to You for the gift of Your Son Jesus. He is Emmanuel – God with us! Help us in these final days of preparation to renew once again our desire to receive Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our lives. Fill us with praise as we draw near to the celebration of His birth.

All respond: Amen.

Light three purple candles and the pink candle tonight and each night of this fourth week of Advent. Then pray:

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Come, Lord Jesus!

All respond: Come, quickly!

You may end each evening’s prayer by singing the following song to the melody of *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*:

O Savior, rend the heavens wide. Come down, come down with mighty stride. Unlock the gates, the doors break down. Unbar the way to heaven’s crown.

Or you may sing a verse from the song *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS!

The goal of this activity is to bring Jesus' birth to the heart of your home on Christmas Eve.

You Will Need

- › Empty cardboard boxes and a white sheet
- › A nativity scene (you can use the manger from the Sacrifice Activity)
- › Old Christmas cards
- › Party decorations
- › Cake mix and frosting
- › Blank paper and markers
- › Cardboard and/or foil for crowns

How to Prepare

On the first Sunday of Advent, set up your manger scene:

- › Set up your manger scene in the spot near where your Christmas tree will be.
- › Take empty cardboard boxes and stack them to look like a mountain or steps leading up to the manger. Cover them with a white sheet. You may want to display the three kings on their way up the mountain.
- › Don't place Jesus in the manger.

During the second week of Advent:

- › Purchase small nativity figurines to be placed on the cake. These can be found at craft or cake decorating stores.
- › Make invitations out of construction paper and decorate them with pictures of the Holy Family cut from old Christmas cards.
- › Have your children send these invitations to their godparents, family, and friends.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS!

On the morning of December 24, prepare for the party:

- › The children help bake and decorate a cake. Set up the nativity scene on top.
- › Decorate the house as you would for other birthday parties. For example, put up balloons, happy birthday vinyl cling stickers, and crepe-paper streamers.
- › Have the party on the afternoon of Christmas Eve.

The Party

- › As people arrive, give them a sheet of paper to write 1) what they've brought as a present to Jesus, and 2) what they're especially thankful to Jesus for giving them this Christmas.
- › They may also draw a symbol for their present to Jesus, such as: an open heart, a peaceful spirit, a song (they may want to sing), or anything else they wish to share.
- › Make homemade crowns with construction paper or foil to represent that we are children of the King.
- › Sing *Silent Night* as the children lead a procession through the house to your manger, carrying the baby Jesus and your gifts to Him. This would be a great time to invite any children who play an instrument to play an accompaniment.
- › One by one, bring your gifts to Jesus and lay them in the manger.
- › Turn on the Christmas tree lights and celebrate the Light of the World having come into our lives, our hearts, and our home!

1st Week of Advent

Prayer of the Week

Dear Lord, help us to stay awake to be ready for the great day of Your coming. Come, Lord Jesus! We greet you with joy!

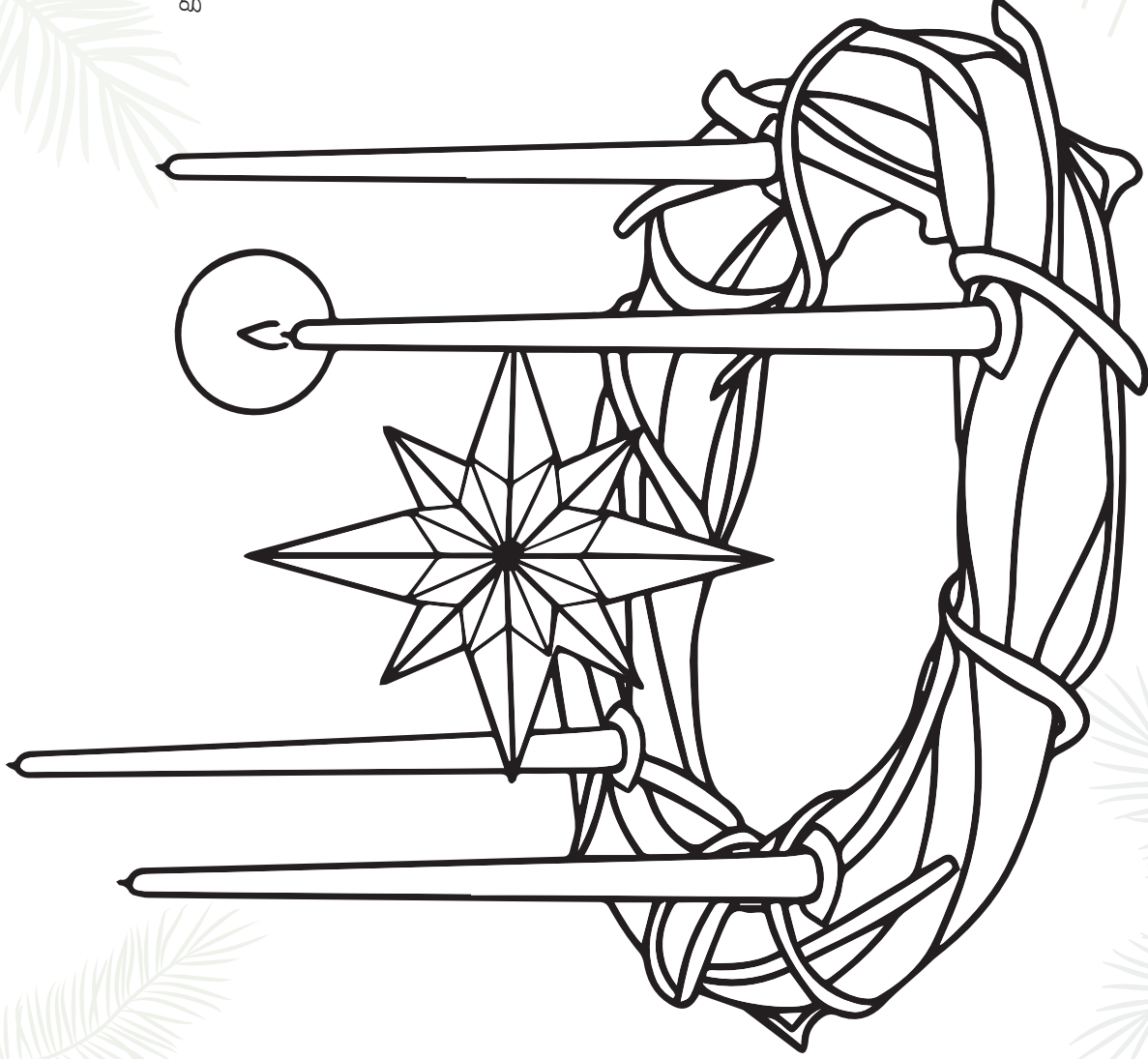


Hymn: O Come, Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away
Dear Savior, haste
Come, come to earth
Dispel the night and show your face
And bid us hail the dawn of grace
(Repeat) O come, divine Messiah...

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these
Thy gifts, which we are about to receive.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Can you color the first candle of Advent purple?

EVANGELIZE

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2nd Week of Advent

Prayer of the Week

Dear Lord, help us to prepare the way for you, so others may know You too. Come, Lord Jesus, and fill us with hope!

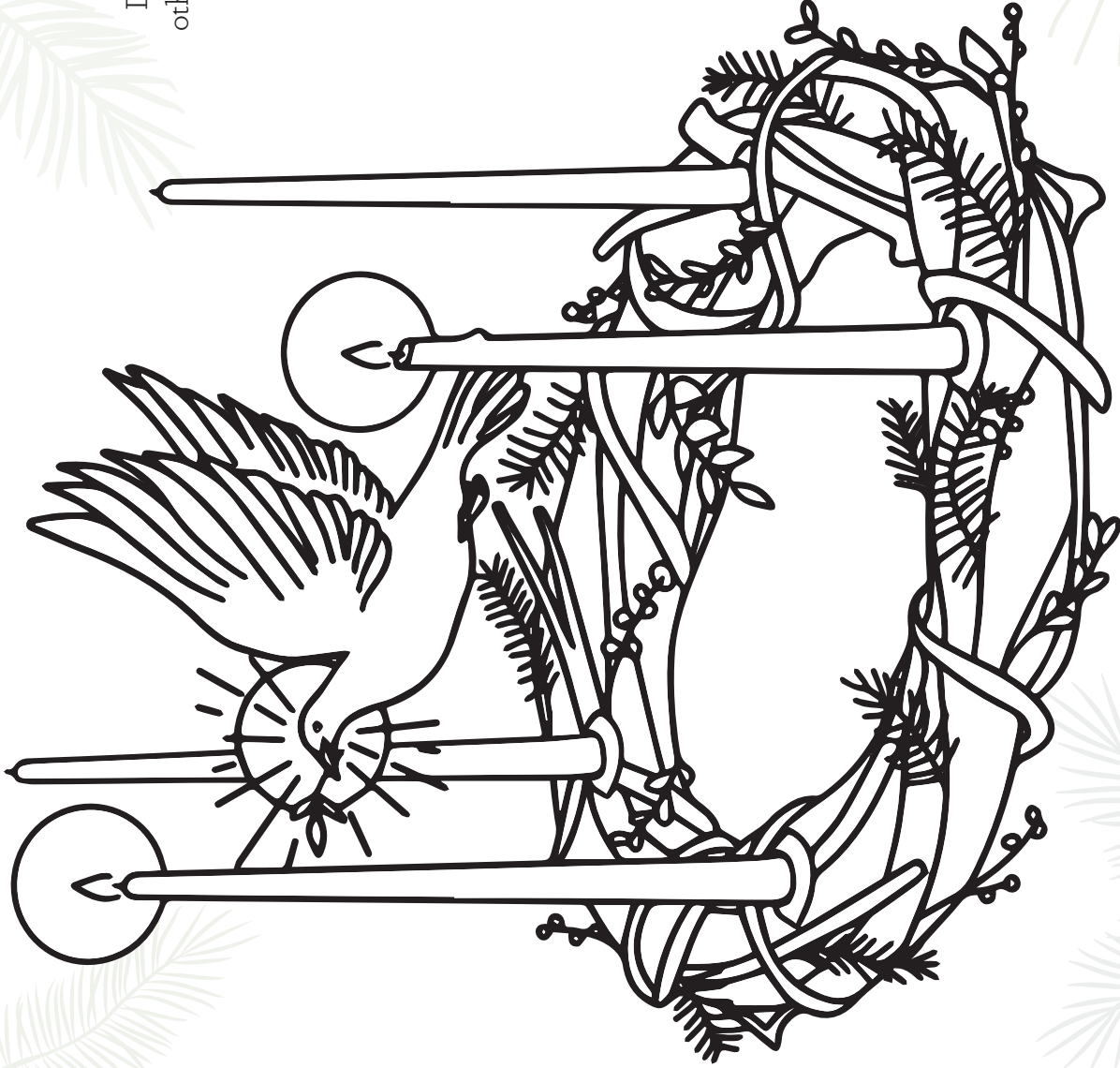


Hymn: O Come, Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away
Dear Savior, haste
Come, come to earth
Dispel the night and show your face
And bid us hail the dawn of grace
(Repeat) O come, divine Messiah...

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these
Thy gifts, which we are about to receive.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Can you color the second candle of Advent purple?

3rd Week of Advent

Prayer of the Week

Dear Lord, open our eyes and clear our ears, so we may see You and rejoice when we hear Your voice. Come Lord Jesus, bring us the Good News of Christmas!



Hymn: O Come, Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away
Dear Savior, haste
Come, come to earth
Dispel the night and show your face
And bid us hail the dawn of grace
(Repeat) O come, divine Messiah...

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these
Thy gifts, which we are about to receive.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Can you color the third candle
of Advent pink?

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4th Week of Advent

Prayer of the Week

Dear Lord, show us a sign of Your salvation. Come Lord Jesus, come and save us who await you!

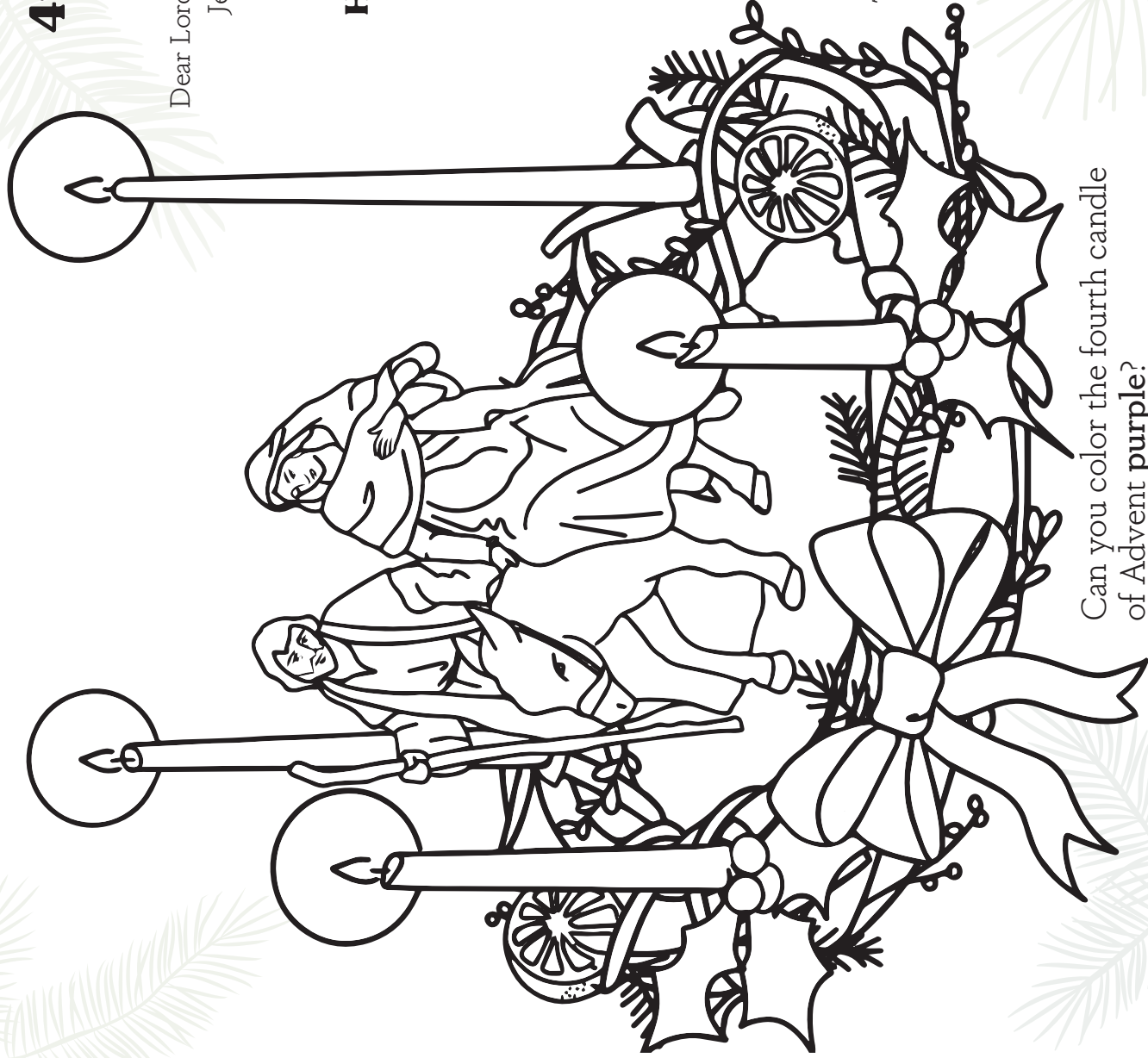


Hymn: O Come, Divine Messiah

O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away
Dear Savior, haste
Come, come to earth
Dispel the night and show your face
And bid us hail the dawn of grace
(Repeat) O come, divine Messiah...

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these
Thy gifts, which we are about to receive.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Can you color the fourth candle
of Advent purple?

Christmas Octave

Prayer of the Week

Dear Lord, we rejoice in Your coming at Christmas.
Fill our house with Your peace and joy!



Hymn: Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these
Thy gifts, which we are about to receive.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Can you color the Holy Family?

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