

more to be

a guide to celebrating **ADVENT**

- 1 pink candle, which is lit the fourth Sunday, stands for joy
- 1 white candle, in the center, is lit on Christmas Eve
- Traditionally, a passage of Scripture is read each Sunday with the lighting a candle
- For a very thorough explanation, go to The Voice at <http://www.criovoice.org/cyadvent.html#Advent%20Reflection>

Advent

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for celebrating Jesus' birth! According to Dictionary.com, Advent is simply described as:

1. a coming into place, view, or being; arrival: the advent of the holiday season.
2. the coming of Christ into the world.
3. the period beginning four Sundays before Christmas, observed in commemoration of the coming of Christ into the world.

The Dates

- Advent traditionally begins on the Sunday nearest November 30th
- It is celebrated for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, culminating on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, depending on individual practices
- There are traditional but varied themes for each Sunday:
 - * 1st Sunday = Hope
 - * 2nd Sunday = Love or Peace
 - * 3rd Sunday = Joy
 - * 4th Sunday = Peace or Love

Symbolism and Tradition

- The circle of the wreath stands for God as the eternal symbol of continuous life
- The greenery placed around the base of the candle stands for new life
- 3 purple candles, which are lit the first three Sundays, stand for royalty

First Sunday

Purple Candle

Luke 1:26-38 NIV

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

26In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Prayer Suggestion

Heavenly Father, prepare our hearts for the celebration of your Son's birth, as you prepared Mary for the arrival of Jesus' birth. Just as we take time to plan our own birthday parties, choosing what cake we would like and deciding whom to invite, may we take time to focus this week on preparing for your party. Remind us to invite others to know you and to truly enjoy your birthday party on Christmas Day by choosing to love you as our Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Second Sunday

Purple Candle

Luke 2:1-7 NIV

The Birth of Jesus

1In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

2(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3And everyone went to his own town to register.

4So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Prayer Suggestion

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending King Jesus as a baby into our world, arriving as a baby born in a manger. Please, Lord, remind us to always make a place for Jesus in our hearts and in the way we live our lives. Also show us how we can be sure to always have a place for friends, family, and even strangers the homes you have provided for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Third Sunday

Purple Candle

Luke 2:8-20 NIV

The Shepherds and the Angels

8And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ[a] the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Prayer Suggestion

O Lord, our God, we thank you for the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Your word tells us how "Mary treasured up all these things." She saw how special the gift of Jesus' birth was to her and to those who came to see him. Teach us this week, Lord, to see the treasures you have given to us, too; not just gifts and toys and things to do, but to see your love and share it with others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Fourth Sunday

Pink Candle

Matthew 2:1-12 NIV

The Visit of the Magi

1After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ[c] was to be born. 5"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

7Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." 9After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11On 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 and of incense and of myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Prayer Suggestion

Heavenly Father, most of us have never met a king here on earth, but many of us have had the chance to meet an important person. We know we ought to listen closely, be respectful, and be patient. Lord, please help us to pay very close attention to you and to show you our love by doing what the Bible says is right. Lord, please give us patience, too, as we wait for Christmas day and remind us that we need to focus most of all on your birthday celebration! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Christmas Eve or Day

White Candle

Luke 2

The Birth of Jesus

1In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3And everyone went to his own town to register. 4So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged

to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

8And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

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Jesus Presented in the Temple

21On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. 22When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." 33 The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." 36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.[e] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. 39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the

teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Prayer Suggestion

God, thank you so much for the birth of your precious son, Jesus Christ. You sent Him into this world so that He could be the one and only sacrifice for all our sins. May we take Jesus in our hearts and allow Him to be our Savior, so that we can spend eternity with you in Heaven. Help us Lord, to celebrate your life throughout the whole year and not just at Christmas time. Teach us your word, as written in the Bible, and show us how to live our lives according to your instructions. Help us to love you, Lord, and obey you joyfully, as a small gift that we can give back to you this year. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sources & Additional Resources

- Prayers for the First Sunday and Throughout Advent
<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv.html>
- Prayers for Each Week
<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv-week.html>
- The Voice Institute
<http://www.criovoice.org/cyadvent.html#Advent%20Reflection>
- The Episcopal Church at Cornell
<http://www.episcopalchurchatcornell.org/worship/seasons/advent/evening.html>
- First School
<http://www.first-school.ws/activities/bible/advent1.htm>

Disclaimer: The views reflected at the suggested websites do not necessarily reflect the views of **More to Be**.