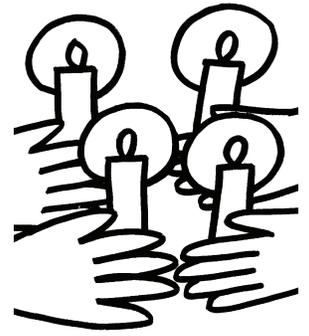


# WITH HEARTS PREPARED: Praying, Talking, and Living God's Word during Advent



## Introduction

As we begin another Advent season, we are called to deepen our relationship with God. Advent offers us a time to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming and grow as a people of faith. The Church teaches us that "*when the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating [John the Baptist's] birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: He must increase, but I must decrease*" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 524).

An at-home program has been created to allow you and your family to prepare for the joyful celebration of Christmas. The program is designed for families with adolescents to gather together around the kitchen table or in the living room once or three different times during the week. Each week you will be deepening your faith based on a particular theme. Step-by-step instructions have been set out and the program does not require a lot of preparation.

The program is an opportunity to slow down amidst the chaos of the season and truly prepare our hearts for Christ's birth. Take the time to use this Advent program to grow as a family and prepare your hearts to invite God more into your life and family.

## Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is the symbol we use during this season. Each week we light a candle to remind us of how Christ is the light that came into the world and we are preparing our hearts for his coming. As a family, place the Advent Wreath where the entire household will be able to see it.



### **Supplies for an Advent Wreath:**

- 3 purple candles
- 1 pink candles
- Evergreen (real or artificial)

### **Making an Advent Wreath:**

- the three purple candles and one pink candle are placed equal distance apart in a circle formation
- evergreen is circled around the four candles

### **Lighting the Advent Wreath:**

Each week during advent we light a candle:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent (purple)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (purple)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent (pink)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (purple)

For the history of the advent wreath go to

<http://www.catholic.org/clife/advent/index.php?id=21>.

## Program Design

Each week gather together as a family to spend time with God. During your time together, the family will *Pray God's Word; Talk About God's Word; and Live God's Word*. As you *Pray God's Word*, a simple prayer service will be conducted where family member are invited to take on a role. When you *Talk About God's Word*, a topic will be presented to deepen your faith. A family member will read the topic and the questions will be provided for discussion. With *Live God's Word*, the family or its individual members will do an act of service and various options are provided. As you gather use the Advent Wreath as a focus and light the wreath when everyone is present to begin.

The gathering location can be around the kitchen table, living room, or a space where there are not too many distractions.

Two options are available to work this program in your schedules. The first option you can do is meet once a week (i.e. Sunday afternoons) and spend 45-60 minutes with the prayer and catechesis and then choose an act of service. The second option has you meet three different times in the week. As a family, you divide up the prayer, catechesis and service into three separate days. Decide which option works best for you prior to beginning the week and know you can switch back and forth between each option.