

First Week of Advent Prayer for Families

“Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem.
May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man.”
Pope Francis



Acknowledgement of Land

As we gather in God’s presence, let us connect our feet to the ground and remind us of the place that we are praying on. As we enter stillness, and open our hearts, we acknowledge the wisdom of the First Nations Peoples of this place, and their continued spiritual connection and relationship to place. Imagine what is possible when we listen deeply to the people of our place and speak the language of hope.

Context of Advent

During Advent, we prepare for the coming of the Lord. The four candles of Advent represent the four Sundays of Advent, and they respectively symbolize hope, peace, joy, and love.

Advent week 1 – Hope: Prophecy Candle (purple)
Advent week 2 – Peace: Bethlehem Candle (purple)
Advent week 3 – Joy: Shepherd’s Candle (pink)
Advent week 4 – Love: Angel’s Candle (purple)

First Week of Advent

Hope

It is only fitting that the first candle on the Advent wreath represents Hope – the first Week of Advent not only leads us to anticipate the birth of Christ but celebrate the beginning of a new liturgical season as well.

The first candle is purple, the primary colour of Advent and a colour symbolizing royalty. Sometimes called the “Prophecy Candle,” the first candle harkens us back to Isaiah’s foretelling of the birth of Christ and all of the promises God gave us in the Old Testament that would be fulfilled by the birth of Jesus.

*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”*

(Isaiah 2:3)

Scripture

A reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew [Matthew 24:37-44]

For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.



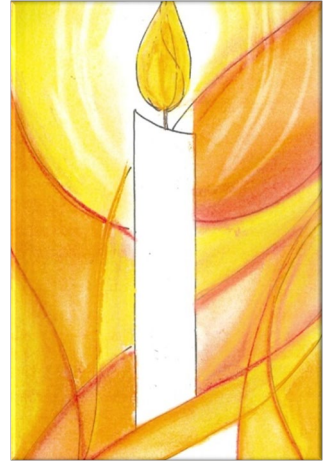
Reflection

Jesus is not asking us to stay awake all night, but to live in the present, so that we can recognise the Lord when he appears in our lives. He shows himself in the unrehearsed moments, the interruptions and accidents that can throw us off balance.

Teach us, Lord, to recognise your face wherever we encounter you.

Leader: Let us pray (all together).

God of Hope,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your hope for us.
Help us walk in that hope during the weeks of
Advent, as we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Saviour.
Amen



Call to Action

- [Reflection Questions for the 1st Sunday of Advent Year A](#)
 - What is my focus as I prepare for Christmas?
 - Do I see Christ in the people around me, particularly in the marginalized?
 - What else do I need to be ready for the coming of the Lord?
- Enjoy video commentary about '[Works of Art inspired by the Sunday Scriptures of Advent](#)'. Use these videos to take a new look at this season of preparation through the lens of sacred art.

References

Context: Hallow (2022) Advent Candles and Advent Wreaths: The History and Meaning, Colors, Symbolism, Themes, and More. <https://hallow.com/blog/advent-candles-and-advent-wreaths/>

Reflection: Sacred Space (2022) *Sacred Space: your daily prayer online*
<https://www.sacredspace.ie>

Images: Adrien Innes-Simpson.

