Advent Wreath-Readings and Prayers

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a tradition that helps us take time out from our busy Christmas preparations to open our hearts to Jesus. The circular form of the wreath, like God’s love, is never-ending. The greenery that covers it reminds us of everlasting life and hope because evergreen trees are green even in the midst of winter. The candles are symbols of the light God brings us. Three of them are traditionally purple, the royal color for the new King. A fourth candle is pink and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent. Some people light a white candle, the Christ Candle, in the center of the wreath on Christmas Day.

The short prayer services below may be used in homes and classrooms as you light the candles each Sunday. For use with very young children, you may only want to do one of the readings and the closing prayer. (Source unknown)

First Sunday in Advent – November 30, 2008 The Prophecy Candle

Preface: Our King and Savior now draws near: Come let us adore him
Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9a; Psalm 80; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Mark 13: 924-32)33-37
Collect: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath: O God, by whose word all things are made holy, pour your blessings on this wreath. May it remind us to slow down our hectic pace and make our hearts ready for the coming of Christ your Son and our Lord. Amen.

Light the first purple Candle.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for loving us so much that you gave Jesus to be our friend. When we love him, a light shines in our hearts. We are glad that the light has come to us. Help us to give it to others. Amen.

Second Sunday in Advent: December 7, 2008 The Bethlehem Candle

Preface: Our King and Savior now draws near: Come let us adore him.
Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm85; 2 Peter 3:8-15a, 18; Mark 1:1-8
Collect: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Light two purple candles.

Closing Prayer: Christ, the light of all who love you, help us to make ready for your birthday by preparing room for you in our hearts. Let no selfishness of ours darken our homes. Let no ill feelings spoil our fun. Draw us closer together by showing us the way to love you and others. Amen.
Third Sunday in Advent: December 14, 2008        The Shepherds’ Candle

**Preface:** Our King and Savior now draws near: Come let us adore him.

**Readings:** Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28; John 1:6-8, 19-28 or John 3:23-30

**Collect:** Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for every. Amen.

**Light two purple candles and the pink candle.**

**Prayer:** Dear God, bless our family. May it be like the Holy Family into which Jesus was born. Help us to make our home a happy place; to do our work cheerfully and well; to share with others. May Christ be with us in all that we do together, so that we can be truly one, living in love and peace. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Advent - December 21, 2008        The Angels’ Candle

**Preface:** Our King and Savior now draws near: Come let us adore him

**Readings:** 2 Samuel 7:4,8-16; Psalm 132; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

**Collect:** Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Light three purple candles and the pink candle.**

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, born in a stable among the oxen and sheep because there was no room in the inn; come into our hearts and dwell there forever. Help us to cast out all that is unworthy of your holy presence. Grant that the peace and good will of which the angels sang may shine forth in our lives, and in the lives of people everywhere. Amen.

Christmas Eve or Christmas morning

**Preface:** Alleluia. To us a child is born: Come let us adore him.

**Readings:** Isaiah 9:2-4; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

**Collect:** O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Light the four Advent candles and then the white Christ Candle.**

**Prayer:** Dear God, we thank you for Jesus, your Christmas gift to us. As we open our presents, we will be glad for the love they bring and know that it comes from Jesus himself. Make our Christmas merry by reminding us that he shares it with us; through him who is born in our hearts today, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Blessing of the Christmas tree:** O God, who, in the midst of this holy day, did send your Word to dwell among us and be our true light, bless this tree, we ask you, which we have hung with signs of your creation and with lights. Let it remind all of us who behold it this season of the mystery of his flesh taking and may we be engrafted as living branches into the same Lord Jesus who lives and reigns with you now and forever. Amen.