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**WELCOME TO ST. THOMAS MORE'S  
CATHOLIC AT HOME ADVENT BOOKLET**

[STTMformation.org](http://STTMformation.org)



At Mass, after praying the Lord's Prayer, we hear,  
*"... as we await the blessed hope and the coming of  
our Savior, Jesus Christ."*

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**DURING ADVENT,  
WE WAIT...**

*SOON AND VERY  
SOON, WE'RE GOING  
TO SEE THE KING!*

**WE WAIT IN JOY, HOPE,  
AND ANTICIPATION FOR  
THE COMING WONDERFUL  
EXPERIENCES**

*\* Feast of Christmas \**

- \* Coming of Christ into our lives in new ways \**
- \* Return of Christ in glory at the end of time \**

We wait, looking forward to celebrating God's love that was so great that He sent His Son down to the world to save us. Far from empty, Advent is a hope-filled time with God's promises to us.

In this booklet, we offer home celebrations for the Advent season - taking advantage of this special time to celebrate our faith more particularly with our family!!

"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 Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'"

CATECHISM #524



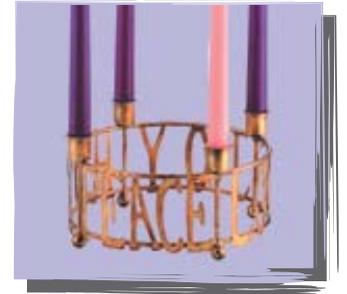
## Advent Wreath History

The Advent wreath is part of our long-standing Catholic tradition. Likely originating among pre-Christian Germanic people, wreaths held lit candles during December as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended-sunlight days of Spring. By the Middle Ages, Catholics adapted this tradition and used Advent wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. After all, Christ is "the Light that came into the world" to dispel the darkness of sin and to radiate the truth and love of God (cf. John 3:19-21). By 1600, both Catholics and Lutherans had more formal practices surrounding the Advent wreath.

*Source: [catholiceducation.org](http://catholiceducation.org)*

**SYMBOLISM:** A prayerful way to reflect the passage of the Advent season, lighting the Advent Wreath candles banishes the darkness just as Jesus's birth brought Light to our world and our hope for salvation. His Presence in every Catholic Church's tabernacle throughout the world continues to share His Light. Why Evergreens? Evergreens are a sign of the everlasting life we'll share one day with Jesus.

**SAMPLES:** Advent Wreaths can be made of almost anything. Below are a few traditional examples, but be creative and tailor it to your family's style, culture, and ways of celebrating Christmas!



DURING ADVENT,  
WE WAIT...

WEEK 1: HOPE

WEEK 2: LOVE

WEEK 3: JOY

WEEK 4: PEACE



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## How to Make an Advent Wreath

**Materials (usually \$10-\$15):**

**Frame Metal:**

craft store, theCatholicGiftShop.com, or  
CatholicSupply.com

**Fastener** (to attach items to the wreath):

green floral wire

**Garland** (material that covers frame):

evergreen boughs

**Decorative Items:**

pine cones, ornaments, ribbon

**Advent Candles:**

3 purple and 1 rose/pink



**Instructions:**

1. Lay garland on top of the metal frame.
2. Tie on with Fastener, making sure frame remains flat.
3. Use Fastener to attach Decorative items.
4. Wrap ribbon around the garland loosely, adding a bow on one side.
5. Add a bow, if desired. Creating it then adding it is usually easier.
6. Add the candles.
7. Bless the Advent Wreath on Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent (see below).

## Advent Prayers

Each night beginning on the Sunday of Advent, dim the lights and gather the family around the Advent Wreath. Every week has a different theme on which to meditate and for which there are different prayers. You can repeat the prayer below each night, or find others you prefer.

[ourcatholicprayers.com/support-files/adventwreath.pdf](http://ourcatholicprayers.com/support-files/adventwreath.pdf)

[onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/Daily-prayers.html](http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/Daily-prayers.html)

Thy and Thee are traditionally used in the prayers below, and many prefer them for their sense of reverence. You can change these to Your and You if you prefer.

### Week 1: HOPE

O Lord, stir up Thy might, we beg Thee, and come, that by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins and saved by Thy deliverance. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Week 2: LOVE

O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Thy only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with pure minds. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Week 3: JOY

*(the joyful Sunday in Advent (known as "Gaudete")*

*is represented by rose (or pink) instead of the penitential purple color)*

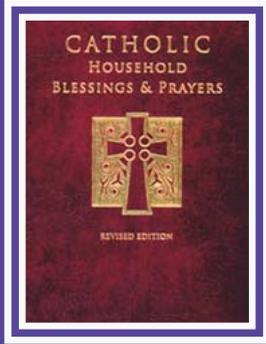
O Lord, we beg Thee, incline Thy ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation. Through Christ our Lord.

### Week 4: PEACE

O Lord, stir up Thy power, we pray Thee, and come; and with great might help us, that with the help of Thy Grace, Thy merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Through Christ our Lord.



DURING ADVENT,  
WE WAIT...



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## ADVENT WREATH BLESSING

*All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:*

**Our help is in the name of the Lord.**  
Response (R!): **Who made heaven and earth.**

*Then the Scripture is read, choose:*  
*Isaiah 9: (lines 1-2 and 5-6) or*  
*Isaiah 63 (lines 16-17 & 19) or*  
*Isaiah 64 (lines 2-7)*

Reader: **The Word of the Lord.**  
R!: **Thanks be to God.**

*With hands joined, the leader says:*

Lord our God,  
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:  
he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,  
he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,  
he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,  
let your blessing come upon us  
as we light the candles of this wreath.  
May the wreath and its light  
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.  
May he come quickly and not delay.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R/. Amen.

*The blessing may conclude with a verse from*  
*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":*

O come, desire of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of humankind;  
bid every sad division cease  
and be thyself our Prince of peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

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— From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

## Following Mary's Advent Footsteps

*Each year, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Church  
has us focus on the Blessed Virgin Mary.*



Each year, on this fourth Sunday of Advent, we follow the footsteps Mary traced on that first Advent. In doing so, we're doing more than traversing the physiological and historical events that preceded the birth of the Lord. We're entering into Mary's response of faith that are a guide for us along our own pilgrimage of faith.

**Source:**

[catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/following-mary-s-advent-footsteps.html](https://catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/following-mary-s-advent-footsteps.html)

DURING ADVENT,  
WE WAIT...

## ADVENT ACTIVITIES TO DO AS A FAMILY

Fun and Meaningful Family Activities  
For December - by One of The Saints

<p><b>Read a family devotional</b> Read a family devotional together. You can find many online or in books.</p>	<p><b>Place a paper plate on the table</b> Place a paper plate on the table with a candle in the center. Light the candle and say a prayer.</p>	<p><b>Make a family calendar</b> Make a family calendar with a picture of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child.</p>	<p><b>Write a letter to Santa</b> Write a letter to Santa Claus and put it in the mailbox.</p>	<p><b>Light a candle</b> Light a candle and say a prayer.</p>	<p><b>Decorate a tree</b> Decorate a tree with lights and ornaments.</p>	<p><b>Make a family calendar</b> Make a family calendar with a picture of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child.</p>	<p><b>Write a letter to Santa</b> Write a letter to Santa Claus and put it in the mailbox.</p>	<p><b>Light a candle</b> Light a candle and say a prayer.</p>	<p><b>Decorate a tree</b> Decorate a tree with lights and ornaments.</p>
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- ☆ **Make and deliver treats to neighbors**
- ☆ **Give Jesus a birthday gift by giving a gift to someone in need**
- ☆ **Donate a bag of food to a local food pantry or food bank**
- ☆ **Pray for good things for someone who has been unkind to you**
- ☆ **Visit an elderly friend or relative who doesn't get many visitors**
- ☆ **Make a handmade gift for someone**
- ☆ **Celebrate the feast days of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe with a Mexican--themed meal & celebration**
- ☆ **Go to a weekday Mass or Adoration**
- ☆ **Surprise someone by doing a task or chore they normally do**
- ☆ **Genuinely compliment someone who isn't expecting it**
- ☆ **Make a creative project that helps you reflect on the true meaning of Christmas**

Source: [reallifeathome.com/advent-activities-printable/](http://reallifeathome.com/advent-activities-printable/)

## Advent Calendars

Believed to originate from Christians in the early 19th century, the Advent Calendar counts down the 24 days of December (or from the first Sunday of Advent, 26 days for 2020), ending on Christmas Eve.

Daily engaging your family in anticipation of the Christmas season keeps the focus on the birth of the baby Jesus. Heightening joy while helping us learn one aspect of our salvation history, each day shares a new treasure of Scripture, good deeds, prayers, and even candies.

Our local *Innervisions Religious Store* on Beechmont Avenue offers Advent calendars to hang up or you can find them at: [shop.catholicsupply.com/store/c/421-Advent-Calendars.aspx](http://shop.catholicsupply.com/store/c/421-Advent-Calendars.aspx)

You can also download Advent Calendars from many sites, including Loyola Press: [loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/calendars/printable-advent-calendars/](http://loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/calendars/printable-advent-calendars/)

*Be sure to find one focused on faith! New secular Advent calendars focus on receiving a pleasure now and anticipating the physical gifts rather than giving to others or seeking gifts of faith.*

## Advent Sundays & Feast Days Liturgical Year 2020-2021

The following is a list of the dates of the Sundays and major feast days that fall in Advent 2020

- First Sunday of Advent (Sunday, November 29, 2020)
- Feast of Saint Nicholas (Sunday, December 6, 2020)
- Second Sunday of Advent (Sunday, December 6, 2020)
- Immaculate Conception (Tuesday, December 8, 2020)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe (Saturday, December 12, 2020)
- Feast of Saint Lucy (Sunday, December 13, 2020)
- Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) (Sunday, December 13, 2020)
- Fourth Sunday of Advent (Sunday, December 20, 2020)
- Christmas Eve (Thursday, December 24, 2020)
- Christmas (Friday, December 25, 2020)



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## CHRISTMAS TREE

The ancient version of the Christmas tree was called the “Paradise tree.” It was adorned with apples reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. In our Catholic tradition, it is lit with lights or candles, which symbolize Christ, the Light of the World. Set up just before Christmas, it remains until the Solemnity of Epiphany (in January). Traditionally, it remains un-lit until it is blessed (see below).

Home Christmas trees may be blessed by a parent, or other family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.

## BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.

*The leader makes the Sign of the Cross, and all reply “Amen.” The leader reads the blessing while others respond as indicated by R/.*

*The leader greets those present in the following words:*

**Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.**

R/: Amen.

*In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:*

**My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.**



## Blessing of a Christmas Tree (continued)

*Someone reads a relevant sacred Scripture (e.g., Titus 3:4 – 7, Ezekiel 17:22-24)*

Leader: **The Word of the Lord.**

R/: **Thanks be to God.**

*The intercessions are then prayed:*

Leader: **Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.**

R/: **Lord, give light to our hearts.**

Leader: **That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.**

R/: **Lord, give light to our hearts.**

Leader: **That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.**

R/: **Lord, give light to our hearts.**

Leader: **That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.**

R/: **Lord, give light to our hearts.**

*After the intercessions the leader invites all present to pray “The Lord’s Prayer.”*

*The leader then prays the following prayer, while all join hands:*

**Lord our God,**

**We praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.**

**We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of Your love.**

**Lord God,**

**Let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

R/: Amen.

*The tree’s lights are illuminated and the leader concludes the rite by signing him/herself with the Sign of the Cross and Praying:*

Leader: **May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.**

R/: Amen.

*The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”:*

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death’s dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

DURING ADVENT,  
WE WAIT...

## BLESSING OF A NATIVITY SCENE

The family Nativity scene emphasizes the “reason for the season” -- placing us at that first Christmas day beside the manger. Children are drawn to, and mesmerized by, nativity scenes!

One tradition is to hide baby Jesus until Christmas, when He appears in the stable, on his birth day. Another tradition places the three Magi further from the stable, and each day one child is permitted to move them a small distance closer to the stable until they arrive on the Epiphany, January 6th. (*The Epiphany is typically celebrated on a Sunday nearest January 6th, but the feast day is always January 6th.*)



*To heighten the Nativity scene's spiritual meaning,  
bless it with the following prayer of the Church.  
All join hands and pray:*

Leader: **God of every nation and people,  
from the very beginning of creation  
you have made manifest your love:  
when our need for a Savior was great  
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.  
To our lives he brings joy and peace,  
justice, mercy, and love.**

**Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;  
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,  
and raise our thoughts to him,  
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,  
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.**

R/: **Amen.**



ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH

Cincinnati, Ohio



Thank you for living this Advent Season in  
a special way that helps keep our focus  
on the reason for the season.

Please share your experiences and pictures of your Advent preparations throughout  
these four weeks so that we can continue to celebrate as a community.

*(These will be posted on the website,  
but no names will be included with the pictures.)*

