

Faith-Filled HOLIDAYS

Christmas / Advent Season *Week 3 - Love*

Best Use

As a way to anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus and recapture the tradition of Advent in your home this Christmas season

Purpose

The word Advent comes from the Latin word that means *coming* or *arrival*. For centuries the Church has celebrated the four week Advent season by lighting candles in a wreath and reflecting on the coming of Jesus as told in Scripture. The circle of the wreath represents God's never-ending love for us, the evergreens represent Christ's gift of eternal life and the candles announce Jesus as the Light of the World.

Advance Preparation

You can find an Advent wreath and candles in the arts & crafts or holiday section of many stores. You will need some kind of simple wreath and five candles. Arrange them in the center of your table throughout the Christmas season. Use this *Advent* activity to guide your family through a brief moment of reflection during a meal or bedtime snack of the four weeks before Christmas and on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Light the candles:

Before eating, light the first two candles and remind everyone that these are the candles of Hope and Peace. Then light the third candle and explain it is the candle of Love. Traditionally the first three candles lit are purple, but the color is not important. Consider taking turns lighting the candles and reading the verse each week.

Read:

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Explain:

The Third Week of Advent is the week of Love. This verse tells us that Jesus came because God loves us so much that he doesn't want any of us to miss out on spending eternity (forever) with him. All we have to do is *believe* that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save us. God's love for us is one of the main themes the Apostle John wrote about in the Bible. He tells us in another verse that the greatest love anyone can have is to give their life for others (John 15:13). He also tells us we are to *love one another* because *love comes from God* (1 John 4:7).

Discuss:

- Who are the people you love the most?
- What would you be willing to give up for those you love? (favorite toys, choosing the TV show, time for hobbies, money, career aspirations, etc.)
- How much do you think God had to love us in order to give his son for us?

Pray:

Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus who came because you love us so much and want to spend forever with us. Help us to believe that Jesus came to save us and help us to show your love to one another. Amen.