

Celebrating Advent

The Church's liturgical year begins with Advent, a season of hope and waiting. During Advent we get our churches, our homes, and our hearts ready to celebrate Jesus' birth.

There are four Sundays during the Advent season. We also celebrate two feasts of Mary's. On December 8 we celebrate the Immaculate Conception. This feast celebrates God's gift of grace to Mary, freeing her from any stain of Original Sin. On December 12 we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Advent season ends on Christmas Eve.

The name of this season comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "arrival" or "coming." During the Advent season, we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth and await his Second Coming.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us an example of how to live. Walk with us as we prepare to celebrate your coming.



We Prepare During Advent



Each week, as we light another candle on the Advent wreath, we recognize that we are one week closer to celebrating the birth of God's greatest gift to us—Jesus, the Light of the World.

We prepare to receive this gift by making good moral choices. We freely choose to follow God's plan for us and to share his love with others. Doing this helps us prepare the way of the Lord so that we can celebrate Jesus' birth with joy.

Prepare the Way

Write a prayer to Jesus, asking him to help you prepare to celebrate his birth.



Reading God's Word

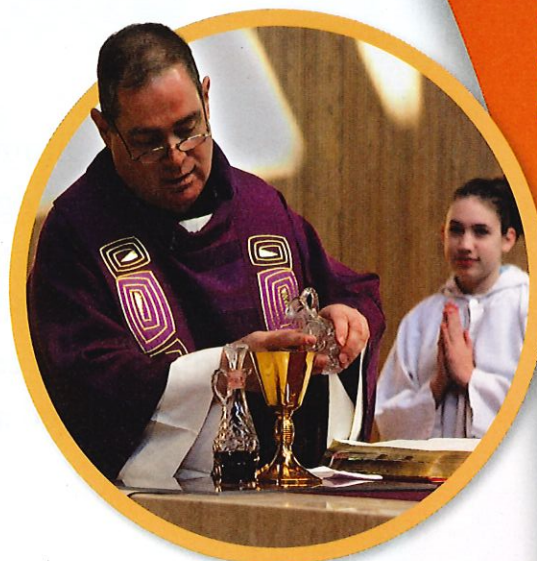
Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.

Luke 3:4



Mass During Advent

During Advent we hear Scripture readings that tell about Jesus' teachings, about John the Baptist, about Elizabeth, and about Mary. We sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and other songs that remind us of how we joyfully await Jesus' coming.



What We Experience

When we look around our church, we see a purple cloth draped on the altar. The priest will be wearing purple vestments. On the third Sunday of Advent, the color of his vestments may be rose. We also see an Advent wreath. Each of the four candles on the wreath represents one of the Sundays of Advent.

Praying to Mary

The **Angelus** is a prayer of devotion that recalls the mystery of the Incarnation. It is prayed three times a day: morning, noon, and evening. We begin praying the Angelus with the words the angel used to greet Mary when he told her about becoming Jesus' mother. Then we pray the Hail Mary, asking Mary to help us say yes to God, just as she did.



Did You Know?

The color of the candle for the third week of Advent is rose.

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Faith Summary

Advent is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. During the season of Advent, we prepare ourselves to celebrate Jesus' birth by freely making good moral choices. We also use this time to celebrate Mary, who said yes to what God asked of her.

Word I Learned

Angelus

Ways of Being Like Jesus

Jesus made good moral choices. *Choose to say and do the right thing.*



Prayer

Dear God, help us make good moral choices so that we are ready to welcome the coming of your Son, Jesus.



With My Family

Activity As you gather around the Advent wreath each week, light the appropriate candles and discuss what you have done during the past week to prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World.

Faith on the Go Ask one another: *What choices can you make this week to help you prepare for Jesus' coming?*

Family Prayer Use Advent as a time to pray for those who help you make good moral choices.