

# Celebrating Advent



## 3-Minute Retreat

Before preparing for the session, turn your focus inward and be aware of the loving presence of God.

**Luke 3:4**

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

### Reflection

The words of John the Baptist call us to prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives. There are really three different comings for which we prepare during the Advent season. We give thanks for Jesus' historical coming into the world, we yearn for Jesus' final coming in glory at the end of time, and we celebrate Jesus' personal coming into our lives. Each of these three are part of the mystery of the Incarnation, which Advent helps us prepare to celebrate.

### Questions

How can I prepare the way of the Lord in my own life?  
What can I do to welcome Jesus more intimately into my life?



### Prayer

Speak to God, using this prayer or one of your own.

*God of Advent hope, help me open my heart to  
Jesus so that I may celebrate his birth with true joy.*

## Knowing and Sharing Your Faith in Session 10

Consider how Scripture and Tradition can deepen your understanding of the session content.

### Scripture

**Luke 3:4** reminds us that Advent is a time to prepare our minds and hearts to celebrate Jesus' birth.

### Tradition

Advent is a season of joyful anticipation. We await the glory of God coming among us as the Person of Jesus. The Scripture readings during Advent include Old Testament passages that tell of the promise of a Messiah. Many New Testament passages concern Jesus Christ's Second Coming as the judge of all people. Since Advent prepares us to celebrate Christmas and is not part of the Christmas season itself, Christmas hymns or readings are not used. The characteristics of the season are hope, joy, love, and peace. Over time various traditions have developed that help us mark this sacred time. These include Advent calendars, Advent wreaths, and *Las Posadas* celebrations.

### Catholic Social Teaching

In this session the integrated Catholic Social Teaching theme is **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**. See page 31b for an explanation of this theme.

### Window on the Catechism

The season of Advent is described in CCC 524.

### General Directory of Catechesis

The importance of understanding the centrality of Jesus for our Salvation is found in GDC 98.

# One-Hour Session Planner

## SESSION 10 Celebrating Advent





**Session Theme:** *We can prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives by making good moral choices.*

### Before This Session

- ▶ Determine whether you will use the Unit Assessment option listed on page 60.
- ▶ Determine whether you will also discuss the Advent seasonal pages in the back of the Children’s Book.
- ▶ Bookmark your Bible to Luke 3:4. Place the open Bible in your prayer center.
- ▶ Have children collect small personal-care items that can be given to people who are living in homeless shelters.
- ▶ Read the Guide for this session, choose any additional If Time Allows activities that you might have time to complete, and gather the listed materials.

**Prayer in Session 10**

The prayers in this session encourage children to ask for the strength to make good moral choices. The prayers also include time for children to talk with God in the silence of their hearts and to share with him any of their thoughts and concerns. Children learn how to pray the Angelus, a prayer that recalls the mystery of the Incarnation.

STEPS	APPROXIMATE TIME
<b>Engage</b> <i>Celebrating Advent</i> PAGE 57	 10 minutes
<b>Explore</b> <i>We Prepare During Advent</i> PAGE 58	 25–35 minutes
<b>Reflect</b> <i>Mass During Advent</i> PAGE 59 <i>Art Print: The Procession</i> ART PRINT AND PRINT BACK	 20–25 minutes
<b>Respond</b> <i>Living My Faith</i> PAGE 60	 5–10 minutes

### Materials

#### REQUIRED

- ▶ Images of people preparing for important events
- ▶ Advent wreath and a blessing for the Advent wreath
- ▶ CD player
- ▶ CD 2, Track 17 or 18: “Reflective Music”
- ▶ Bible
- ▶ Art Print 10: *The Procession* and Children’s Book page 238

#### IF TIME ALLOWS

- ▶ A liturgical calendar, an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe (page 57)
- ▶ Cardstock, art supplies (page 57)
- ▶ Session 10 BLM, T-305 (page 58)
- ▶ Small personal-care items, brown paper lunch bags, art supplies (page 59)
- ▶ Session 10 Assessment, [www.findinggod.com](http://www.findinggod.com) (page 60)
- ▶ Unit 2 Assessment, T-306–T-308 (page 60)

SESSION 10

# 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.

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**IF TIME ALLOWS**

**Inclusion: Specific Learning**

**Present with Props** If you have children with dyslexia, you may wish to reinforce concepts by using props. For this session display a liturgical calendar, an Advent wreath, and an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Display each prop as you talk about the information in the session.

**Advent Calendar**

Distribute cardstock, paper, pens or pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, and glue. For each day of Advent, have children write one way they can prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth. Ask children to use their ideas to make an Advent calendar. One option would be for children to cut out of a sheet of paper a folding door for each day of Advent. Children can then glue the sheet with the doors that open and close to another sheet of paper. Children can write their ideas for preparing for Christmas behind each folding door.

SESSION 10

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Explain that Advent begins a new liturgical year.
- ▶ Identify Advent as a season of hope and waiting during which we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.
- ▶ Name different traditions, such as *Las Posadas*, that people observe during Advent.
- ▶ Define *Angelus*.

**1 Set the Stage**

Display images of people preparing for important events. Ask: **What are these people doing?** (preparing for an event) **What are some events we prepare for?** (Possible answer: a party) **Why do we prepare?** (Possible answers: so we have everything we need, to make sure people feel welcome) **How do we prepare?** (Possible answers: shop, clean, decorate) **What feelings do we experience as we prepare?** (Possible answers: excitement, anticipation)

**2 Get Started**

Read aloud the session title and the page. Ask: **Advent is the beginning of what?** (the Church's liturgical year) **What do we do during Advent?** (We get our churches, our homes, and our hearts ready to celebrate Jesus' birth.) **What two feasts of Mary's do we celebrate during Advent?** (the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe)  
Say: **In this session we're going to learn more about Advent.**



**Prayer**

Call attention to the prayer. Say: **Let's take a moment to ask Jesus to be with us during Advent.**

Pray aloud the prayer and then give children time to pray silently.

Conclude by praying together the Sign of the Cross.

**1 Begin**

Before the session, set up an Advent wreath in the prayer center.


Invite children to gather around the Advent wreath. Ask: **What is this? (an Advent wreath) How many candles are on the wreath? (four) What does each candle represent? (one of the Sundays of Advent)**

If your local fire code allows you to do so, you may wish to light the appropriate number of candles on the wreath. Pray together a blessing over the wreath. [See *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* published by the USCCB for ideas for a blessing.]

Ask children to return to their seats.

**2 Connect**

Invite volunteers to read aloud the section We Prepare During Advent. Ask: **What do we recognize when we light another candle on the Advent wreath? (that we are one week closer to celebrating Jesus' birth) How can we prepare to receive this gift? (make good moral choices) What are some examples of good moral choices we can make? (Possible answers: follow Jesus' new commandment, live out the Beatitudes, practice the virtues)**

 Read aloud the section Prepare the Way. Distribute pens or pencils. Give children time to write their prayers. You may wish to play reflective music as children work.

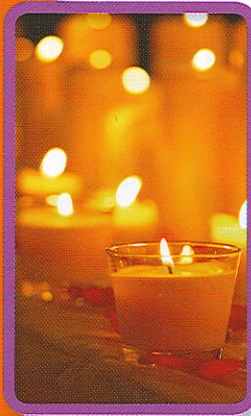
**3 Close**

Direct children's attention to the feature at the bottom of page 58.

**Reading God's Word**

Read aloud the Scripture passage. Ask: **Why is this an appropriate passage for Advent? (During Advent we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.)** Say: **One way we can prepare the way of the Lord is by making good moral choices.**

**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.

Answers will vary.

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**Reading God's Word**

Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths. *Luke 3:4*

**IF TIME ALLOWS**

**Session 10 BLM**

**Advent Journey** Have children complete the Session 10 Blackline Master [T-305] to help them identify good choices they can make that will help them prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.

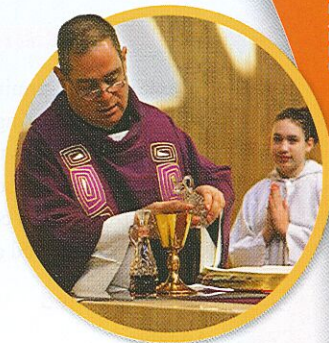
**Seasonal Session: Advent**

Work with children through pages 153–156 of the Children's Book and this guide. This special session can take up to one hour to complete.



## 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.



REFLECT

### 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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## IF TIME ALLOWS

### Service: "I Care" Kits

Ask children to collect small personal-care items such as bar soap, shampoo, and toothpaste. After the collection, distribute brown paper lunch bags and crayons or markers. Ask children to decorate "I Care" kits for people living in homeless shelters. Ask children to fill their kits with the items they have collected. Gather the kits and arrange to have them delivered to a local shelter or food pantry.

 **The Poor and Vulnerable**

Get Ready for Session 11  
Consult the checklist preparation page to prepare for Session 11  
and determine any materials you will need.

## 1 Begin

Display a Bible. Ask: **What do we call the four books in the New Testament in which we learn about Jesus? (the Gospels) When do we hear the Gospels proclaimed? (during Mass)**

Explain that reflecting on Jesus' teaching in the Gospels is another way to decide if we're making good moral choices.

## 2 Connect

Read aloud the section Mass During Advent. Say: **John the Baptist was the son of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. John the Baptist told people to get ready to hear Jesus' message.**

Read aloud the section What We Experience. Discuss the location of the Advent wreath in your church.

Read aloud the section Praying to Mary. Explain that the Incarnation is the mystery of God becoming man in the Person of Jesus. Say: **The Angelus is a prayer of devotion that honors Mary for the yes she gave to God.** Ask children to find the *Angelus* on page 190 in the back of their books. Take a moment to pray together the prayer.

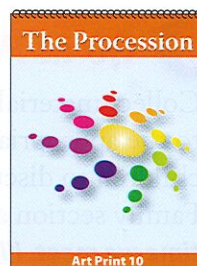


#### Did You Know?

Read aloud the feature. Say: **The third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete, or Rejoice, Sunday, marks approximately Advent's halfway point. In addition to lighting the rose-colored candle, the priest may wear rose-colored vestments.**

## 3 Close

Display Art Print 10: *The Procession*. Use the Art Print 10 instruction to teach this section. Art Print teaching instruction can also be found on page 238.



## 1 Begin

**Faith Summary** Read aloud this section. Ask: **What does Advent begin?** (the Church's liturgical year) **How can we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth?** (by making good moral choices) **Why do we celebrate Mary during Advent?** (because she said yes to God)

## 2 Connect

**Word I Learned** Read aloud the word *Angelus*. Ask children to explain what this prayer is and how to pray it.

**Ways of Being Like Jesus** Invite a volunteer to read aloud this section. Ask: **What can we do to help us make good choices?** (Possible answer: We can practice the virtues.)

Encourage children to take time each day to reflect on their lives and the choices they make.

### Prayer

Ask children to close their eyes and bow their heads. Invite them to pray silently as you pray aloud.

Pray aloud the prayer. Then say: **Take a moment to share with God one way you will prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.** Give children time to reflect.

Conclude by praying together the Hail Mary.

**With My Family** Ask children to read silently the three suggestions in this section. Invite children to choose one or more to complete at home.

## 3 Go in Peace

Collect materials and return them to the appropriate places. Encourage children to discuss the With My Family section at home. Say: **Next time we meet, I'll ask you to tell me some of the ways you're preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth. I can't wait to hear.**

## 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.



## IF TIME ALLOWS

### Session Assessment Option

An assessment for this session can be found at [www.findinggod.com](http://www.findinggod.com).

### Unit Assessment Option

If you wish, photocopy the Unit Assessment on pages T-306–T-308. Administer the assessment during the session or send it home.

## PLAN AHEAD

### Get Ready for Session 11

Consult the catechist preparation pages to prepare for Session 11 and determine any materials you will need.