

Advent

O Come O Come Emmanuel



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Church Family

Advent is one of my favorite seasons of the year. It's a time when we slow down, light candles, and remember that God always keeps His promises. In a world that feels rushed and restless, Advent invites us to pause—to watch, to wait, and to wonder again at the story of Jesus.

This devotional is meant to help you and your family do just that. Whether you read it around the dinner table, before bedtime, or in the evenings by candlelight, I pray these moments draw you

closer to Jesus and to one another.

Each week focuses on a theme—Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace—reminding us that Jesus brings light into every dark place. As you read, discuss, and pray together, may your home be filled with His presence and your hearts renewed by His promises. And remember, you don't have to do it perfectly, just enjoy this special time together!

Advent blessings; and may the light of Christ shine brightly in your home this season!

Rick Asche

Pastor of Family Discipleship





How To Use This Guide

This Advent Family Devotional Guide is designed to help you slow down and focus on Jesus together as a family. Each week highlights one theme of Advent—Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace—with three short devotionals you can do around the dinner table, before bedtime, or in the evenings as you light your Advent candles.

Each devotional includes:

- **Scripture Reading** – Read it aloud together.
- **Reflection** – A short thought to center your hearts on Jesus.
- **Family Discussion** – A few questions to get everyone talking.
- **Prayer** – A simple way to pray together.
- **Family Activity** – A hands-on idea to help the theme come alive.

We also have some videos for you to check out, that you can access through the QR code, or go to efcchico.org/advent. **“What Is Advent?”** and **“5+1 Reasons To Do Advent”**, as well as a video for each week. These are great places to start and will give you the theological and historical background of Advent as well as some encouragement for making the most of this season.







The Season of Light

Advent is a special time to slow down and prepare our hearts for Christmas. It's a season of waiting and watching—not just for the celebration of Jesus' birth, but also for the day He will come again. For centuries, followers of Jesus have used these four weeks to remember what His coming means for the world: hope, love, joy, and peace.

Each week, as we light a new candle and read from God's Word, we're reminded that even in dark times, God's light still shines. Advent helps us reorient our hearts toward Jesus, renew our faith in His promises, and rejoice that the Light of the world has come—and will come again. So gather your family, light the candles, open your Bibles, and get ready to celebrate the greatest story ever told: the story of God's love coming close.



Week 1 Hope

Introduction

The first week of Advent invites us to begin again—with hope. Hope is more than wishful thinking; it's trusting that God keeps His promises, even when we can't see how. This week we remember that God's story isn't finished and that the same God who promised light in the darkness is still at work today.

Candle Reading – The Candle of Hope

Reader 1: Today we light the first candle of Advent—the Candle of Hope.

Reader 2: Hope reminds us that God always keeps His promises.

Reader 3: "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isaiah 2:5)

Reader 4: Jesus, You are our hope. Help us to walk in Your light and trust Your promises this week. Amen.

Devotional 1 Walking in the Light

Isaiah 2:1-5

“Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.” (v. 5)

Reflection:

Isaiah saw a day when nations would stop fighting and walk together in the light of God’s truth. That might sound far away, but hope reminds us that God is moving history toward His peace. Walking in the light means choosing God’s ways right now, even when the world feels dark.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean to “walk in the light of the Lord?”
- How can we bring a little more light to our family or neighborhood this week?

Prayer:

God, thank You for being our light when life feels dark. Help us to walk in Your ways and share Your hope with others. Amen.

Family Activity:

Go for a short walk at night and look at Christmas lights. Talk about how Jesus is the Light of the world and how we can shine His light every day.

Devotional 2 The Armor of Light

Romans 13:11-14

“Let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” (v. 12)

Reflection:

Paul reminds believers to wake up—to live alert and ready for Jesus’ return. When we choose kindness, forgiveness, and truth, we “put on” the light of Christ. The world might feel dark, but hope helps us live differently, shining light wherever we go.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean to “put on” the armor of light?
- How can we help someone see God’s light this week?

Prayer:

Lord, help us live as children of the light. Give us courage to choose what is good and loving each day. Amen.

Family Activity:

Cut out paper shields and have each person write or draw something that helps them stay close to Jesus—like prayer, worship, or kindness.

Devotional 3 Stay Awake with Hope

Matthew 24:36-44

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (v. 44)

Reflection:

Jesus told His followers to stay ready and keep watch. Advent is a season of waiting — not just for Christmas, but for the day Jesus will come again. We can wait with hope, knowing that God’s promises are sure and His timing is perfect.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean to be ready for Jesus?
- How can we wait with hope this week?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to stay awake and ready for You. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait for Your coming. Amen.

Family Activity:

Write down things your family is praying and hoping for. Place them in a jar and thank God that He hears and answers in His perfect time.





Week 2 Love

Introduction

This week we light the candle of Love. God's love isn't based on what we do—it's who He is. Advent reminds us that God's love came near in Jesus, and His love changes everything.

Candle Reading – The Candle of Love

Reader 1: Today we light the second candle of Advent—the Candle of Love.

Reader 2: Love came down to us in Jesus, God's greatest gift.

Reader 3: "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

Reader 4: Jesus, thank You for showing us what perfect love looks like. Help us love others as You have loved us. Amen.

Devotional 1 The Branch of Love

Isaiah 11:1-10

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” (v. 1)

Reflection:

Isaiah's picture of a branch growing from a dead stump reminds us that God brings life where we least expect it. Jesus came from David's line to bring healing, justice, and peace—the fruit of God's love.

Family Discussion:

- What does this passage teach us about God's love?
- How can we share that love this week?

Prayer:

God, thank You for sending Jesus, the Branch of Life. Help us to love others with the same love You've shown us. Amen.

Family Activity:

Draw a tree on paper. Add “fruit” by writing or drawing ways your family can show love—like helping, listening, or forgiving.

Devotional 2 Overflowing Love

Romans 15:4-13

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (v. 13)

Reflection:

Paul says God fills us with joy and peace so that we overflow with hope and love. When we remember how Jesus welcomed us, we can welcome others too—with open hearts and hands.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean to “overflow” with love?
- Who could we show love or kindness to this week?

Prayer:

Father, fill our family with Your love so we can share it freely. Make our home a place of encouragement and joy. Amen.

Family Activity:

Write short encouragement notes to one another or to neighbors. Leave them as surprise reminders of God's love.

Devotional 3
Preparing In Love

Matthew 3:1-12

“Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.” (v. 3)

Reflection:

John the Baptist prepared people’s hearts for Jesus by calling them to turn back to God. True love leads to change—it helps us make room for Jesus in our lives. When we turn toward Him, our hearts are ready for His coming.

Family Discussion:

- What can we do to “prepare the way” for Jesus this Christmas?
- How does turning back to God show love for Him?

Prayer:

Lord, help us clear out the clutter in our hearts and make room for You. Teach us to love You first and love others well. Amen.

Family Activity:

Clean out a room or make space for giving. Donate toys or clothes to bless another family as a way to prepare your heart for Jesus.





Week 3 **Joy**

Introduction

This week we light the candle of Joy. Joy isn't the same as happiness—it's deeper. Joy comes from knowing that God keeps His promises, even when life is uncertain. Jesus' coming brings joy that can't be taken away.

Candle Reading – The Candle of Hope

Reader 1: Today we light the third candle of Advent—the Candle of Joy.

Reader 2: Joy comes from knowing that Jesus is near.

Reader 3: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2)

Reader 4: Lord, fill our hearts with joy as we remember that You are with us and will come again. Amen.

Devotional 1 Joy In The Desert

Isaiah 35

“The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.” (v. 1)

Reflection:

Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of joy blooming in the desert. God’s love brings life where there once was barrenness. When Jesus comes, He brings healing, gladness, and new life to everything He touches.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean for joy to “bloom” in hard places?
- How has God brought joy or healing to your family this year?

Prayer:

God, thank You that You bring joy even in dry seasons. Help us trust that You are making all things new. Amen.

Family Activity:

Plant a seed or bulb together or get out some craft materials and make a family Christmas wreath. Talk about how joy can grow even when we don’t see it yet.

Devotional 2
Mary's Joy

Luke 1:46-55

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (v. 46-47)

Reflection:

Mary's heart overflowed with joy because she knew God had kept His promises. Joy often begins in gratitude. When we stop to remember what God has done, our hearts fill with praise.

Family Discussion:

- What is one thing you're thankful for this week?
- How can we share joy with someone who needs encouragement?

Prayer:

Lord, fill our hearts with joy like Mary's. Help us to see Your goodness in every part of our lives. Amen.

Family Activity:

Make a "joy chain." Each family member writes one thing they're thankful for on a strip of paper. Link them together and hang it up as a reminder of God's goodness.

Devotional 3

Finding Joy In Waiting

Matthew 11:2-11

“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk... and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” (v. 4-5)

Reflection:

Even John the Baptist had doubts while waiting in prison. But Jesus reminded him that God's plan was already unfolding. Joy comes from trusting that God is at work, even when we can't see everything clearly.

Family Discussion:

- Have you ever felt like John—wondering what God was doing?
- How can we find joy while waiting for God's timing?

Prayer:

Jesus, help us find joy in trusting You. Thank You that You are always working for our good. Amen.

Family Activity:

Make a “joy jar.” Each person writes moments of joy from the week and adds them to the jar. On Christmas Eve, open it and thank God for His faithfulness.





Week 4 Peace

Introduction

This week we light the candle of Peace. True peace isn't the absence of trouble—it's the presence of Jesus. His peace calms our fears and reminds us that God is in control, even when life feels uncertain.

Candle Reading – The Candle of Peace

Reader 1: Today we light the fourth candle of Advent—the Candle of Peace.

Reader 2: Peace is the gift Jesus brings to every heart that welcomes Him.

Reader 3: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." (Luke 2:14)

Reader 4: Lord Jesus, fill our hearts and homes with Your peace. Help us share it wherever we go. Amen.

Devotional 1 Peaceful Surrender

Luke 1:26-56

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.
"May your word to me be fulfilled." (v. 38)

Reflection:

When the angel told Mary she would carry God's Son, her first reaction was fear—but her final response was faith. Real peace comes from trusting God's promises, even when we don't understand them.

Family Discussion:

- Why do you think Mary was able to trust God so fully?
- What helps you find peace when you're afraid or unsure?

Prayer:

God, thank You for Your peace that passes understanding. Help us trust You completely, like Mary did. Amen.

Family Activity:

Make a paper dove or draw one together. Write the word "Peace" on it and hang it somewhere you'll see it this week.

Devotional 2
Peace On Earth

Luke 2:1-20

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to those on whom His favor rests.” (v. 14)

Reflection:

On the night Jesus was born, heaven and earth met. Angels announced peace to shepherds, reminding us that Jesus came to bring peace between God and people—and peace within our hearts.

Family Discussion:

- What do you think the shepherds felt when they heard the angels?
- How can we share Jesus’ peace with others this week?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming to bring peace to our world and to our hearts. Help us to live as peacemakers in Your name. Amen.

Family Activity:

Cut out paper shields and have each person write or draw something that helps them stay close to Jesus—like prayer, worship, or kindness.

Christmas Day **The Light Has Come**

John 1:1–5, 9–14

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (v. 44)

Reflection:

Today we celebrate that the waiting is over. The true Light has come into the world! Jesus, the Word made flesh, came to live among us so we could know God's love up close. His light still shines in every heart that believes.

Family Discussion:

- What does it mean that Jesus is “the light of the world”?
- How can we keep His light shining after Christmas Day?

Prayer:

Thank You, God, for sending Jesus—the Light that never goes out. Help us walk in Your light every day of our lives. Amen.

Family Activity:

After opening gifts, take a few moments to light all four Advent candles plus the Christ candle in the center. Thank God for the gift of Jesus.



Find & Follow The Light

As we finish this Advent journey—lighting candles of hope, love, joy, and peace—we celebrate that the light we've been waiting for has come. Jesus is here!

But Advent doesn't end when Christmas morning passes. The same Jesus who entered the world as a baby now calls us to walk with Him every day. The hope that carried us through waiting, the love that drew us close, the joy that filled our hearts, and the peace that quieted our fears—all of it continues as we follow Him into a new year.

So as the lights and decorations come down, may the Light of Christ stay bright in your home and heart. Keep watching for His presence, walking in His light, and sharing His love with the world—until the day He comes again.





“Come, descendants of Jacob, let
us walk in the light of the Lord.”
Isaiah 2:5



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