



ad·vent
/'ad,vent/

noun

The arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. The first season of the Christian church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays.

synonyms

arrival, appearance, emergence,
materialization, occurrence, dawn, birth,
rise, development

WHY SHOULD WE CELEBRATE ADVENT?

In a season that is busy with shopping, family, meals, decorating, and traveling, we often forget what all the busyness is about; or at least what it *should* be about. Observing the season of Advent is a way to interrupt the busyness and re-orient our hearts and minds toward the arrival of Jesus. Advent expands the Christmas celebration to include the four weeks prior to it. In doing so, our observance becomes a practice that can help aim our wandering hearts and quiet our busy souls as we reflect on the Christmas story. Advent

helps us remember and dwell on what God has done for us in sending Christ. It's also a way for us to link arms with the generations that have gone before us, and experience their same anticipation as they eagerly awaited the coming Messiah who would take away the sin of the world. Lastly, it helps us to long and pray for the return of Jesus and his establishment of the New Heaven and the New Earth. This will be our eternal dwelling place, filled with peace and light beyond imagination.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Our hope is that this guide will be a tool that helps you carve out some intentional time with God, friends, and family throughout the Christmas season. Each week includes a passage of scripture, a

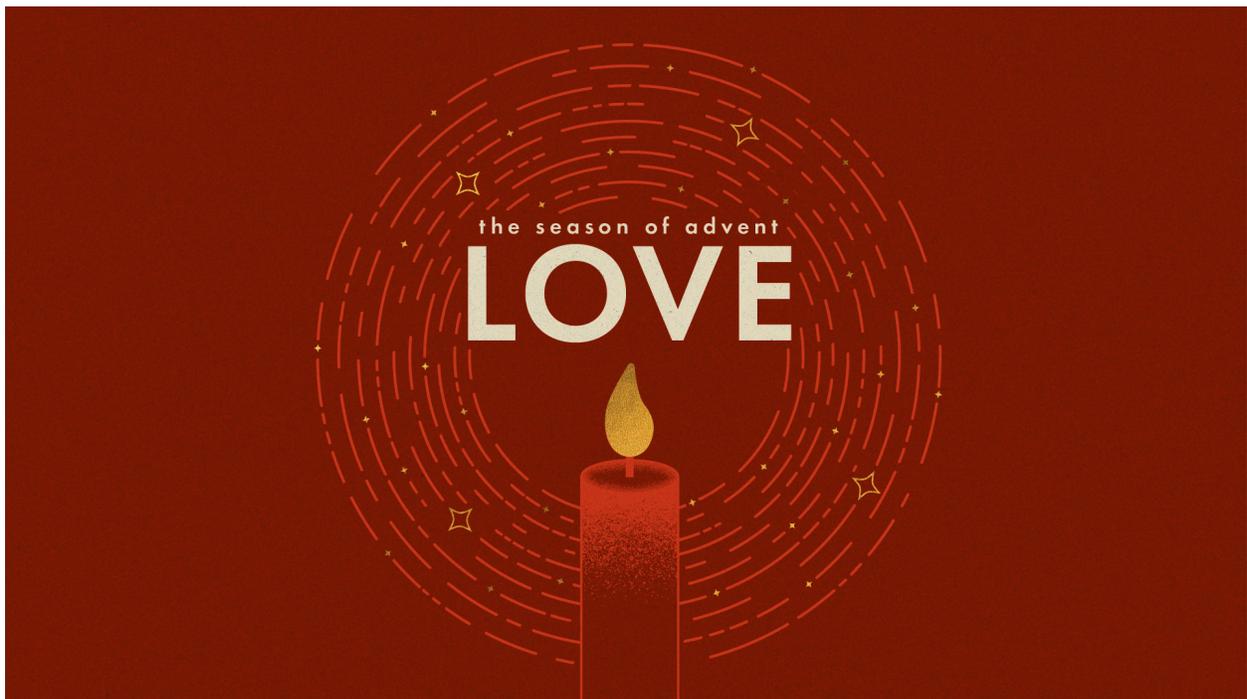
devotional, reflection questions, a prayer, songs, and activities. Before you get too busy, pick a day, time, and place that you can carve out 30 to 60 minutes to engage with the content each week leading up to Christmas. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you and talk through what you are learning. If you have children, consider making this a special weekly activity to build anticipation toward Christmas.

ADVENT WREATH HOW-TO GUIDE:

- 1) Gather four candles of your choice (any kind will do).
- 2) Place them in a line or circle on a surface that won't be damaged by wax.
- 3) Optional: Spruce it up with some holly, ribbon, or winter greenery.

Light a candle each week during your time of reflection. Each week is meant to build toward the next, until all four candles are lit during your Advent reflection time.

Parents, kids love lighting the candles! Help them understand anticipation, excitement, joy, and longing as they light each candle.



Week 2

Light the Second Candle **Read the Devotional** **Reflect**

“For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his
shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Mighty God...”

Isaiah 9:6

Kids often struggle to accomplish the things they want to do. Whether it's building a tower with blocks, figuring out a math problem, or dealing with a painful experience, kids regularly find themselves in situations where they aren't equipped or even able to move forward.. On their best days, parents intervene in their child's struggles out of their great love for their child and their desire to help.

This same motivation, love, is what drove the God who created all things to leave the comforts of heaven and enter into our world as a baby at the first Christmas. Mankind wasn't struggling with blocks, math, or bullies, of course, but our struggles are much more serious – our

struggle is with sin and the suffering it causes.

Sin causes broken relationships, sin makes our jobs difficult, sin opened the door for suffering and death in our world. You don't have to live very long to become personally aware that we, as human beings, have a sin and suffering problem. And the worst part about this problem is that no human being has the ability to intervene and provide a solution. Unlike the kid who can't quite get the last piece on their tower, no one taller, stronger, and smarter can solve our problem.

Since the problem of sin is within us, a solution has to come from the outside. And at Christmas that's exactly what we

find. The promise of Isaiah 9:6 is that the coming Messiah won't just be a really special human being, he'll be the *Mighty God* himself. God himself intervenes in human history, through Jesus his Son, to rescue mankind from our sin and suffering.

Jesus is the atonement for our sins and not just for you and me, but for the whole world. His suffering created a path between our sinful hearts and a holy God, forgiving our sin and offering redemption. He was able to abolish death and instead bring eternal light and life (1 John 2:2, 1 Peter 3:18, Colossians 1:14, 2 Timothy 1:10).

But he didn't have to. We are responsible for the mess, after all. And when God

looked at the brokenness human beings brought into his world his love for his people led him to intervene.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. - Zephaniah 3:17

This prophecy from Zephaniah comes at the end of a chapter that contains strong words of rebuke and judgment against God's people for rebelling against God's ways. But instead of the chapter ending with further judgement or a promise of destruction, the chapter ends with hope that, despite the fact that mankind has

turned away from God, God has not turned away from mankind.

God is coming to save his people and when he does he will *rejoice over (them) with gladness, quiet (them) by this love, and exult over (them) with loud singing.* Why? Because they solved their sin problem and are now living in perfect submission to God? No. Because the *Mighty God*, compelled by love, entered into human history to save his people.

REFLECTIONS

Have you trusted Jesus to forgive your sins and restore your relationship with God? If so, what sins do you need to release to him and trust that he's forgiven?

Consider an area of your life you feel is most affected by sin and suffering. What would it look like for the power of Mighty God to bring hope to that area?

How does God's love for you lead you to love others? Consider how you can demonstrate your love for others this Christmas season.

PRAYER

Mighty God, we confess that we are powerless to rescue ourselves from the sin and suffering of this world. Thank you for your great love for us. Thank you for seeing our struggle and entering our world to rescue us. Help us respond to your love for us by loving others.

HYMNS & SONGS

Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Joy to the World

SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Search for redemptionchurch
[Songs of Advent](#)

ACTIVITY

Plan a night to eat dinner with your family or friends. Over dinner, share about how you have experienced love from them. Tell a story of a time when their actions communicated love to you.

Then discuss some ways you could together love a neighbor, family member, or stranger, this Christmas season. This could be something as simple as baking cookies and delivering them with a note, making a handmade gift or ornament for someone, buying someone else dinner, or purchasing a gift for someone. Be creative. It doesn't have to be big or complicated.

As you love others this week, consider first how much God has shown his love for you

through Jesus. Afterwards, discuss how loving others affected you. Did it help you reflect upon how God loves you? Did it stir your heart more for Jesus? Was it difficult or challenging?

MAY YOU BE FILLED WITH LOVE IN
CHRIST

This guide was written and distributed by
Redemption Church of Oklahoma City.
All scripture is quoted from the ESV Bible.

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