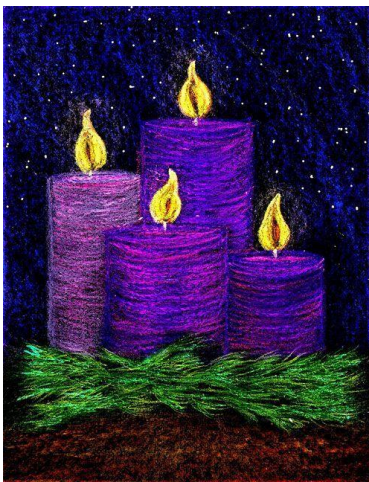


# ADVENT



## What is Advent?

Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus' and means 'coming'. It is the period of preparation in the church that is marked by the four Sundays before Christmas day. The first Sunday of advent can fall anywhere between 27<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December.



## What is the point of Advent?

Advent is time for us to prepare for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Although he was born over 2000 years ago, we wait and prepare alongside Mary and Joseph as if he was coming to us for the first time. This is because as Christians we believe that Jesus will return to us again one day and we want to be prepared for when this happens.

## Advent/ Christmas – what's the difference?

Technically Christmas begins with 'Midnight Mass' on Christmas morning and lasts for 12 days after this. Advent is the season from 1<sup>st</sup> December until 24<sup>th</sup> December. Advent is the preparation and Christmas is the celebration that comes after this.

## WHAT CAN WE DO DURING ADVENT?

### The Sacraments

During Advent we are asked to use the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) to help to prepare ourselves.

We also go to Mass each Sunday which is like a 'mini-Advent' as we prepare for Jesus' coming to us in Holy Communion.

### Christmas/Advent

We all celebrate Christmas before Christmas day but think of ways that you might be able to delay this a little in your home. Perhaps the Christmas tree can wait a couple more days, maybe the Christmas sweets will remain in the cupboard a little longer. One tradition is to put up the crib scene at home a little at a time during Advent, leaving the manger empty until Christmas day.

### Advent Calendars

A much loved tradition! We all love the chocolate ones but perhaps beside this you may have another way of counting down to Christmas – what about a small act of kindness each day or a small line of scripture, a prayer or a small act of fasting (going without something). Each of these can help us to countdown and to prepare.

### Prayer

The most important part of our Advent journey. See if you are able to keep a regular prayer time with the children at home; before bedtime often works well.

During advent we may pray for:

- Hope for those who are experiencing difficulties
- Expectant mothers
- That the light of Jesus may be seen by more and more people
- Families and family life
- Ourselves – for God's help with things that we find difficult or struggle with