

A Family Advent Service

At dinner time or bedtime gather around the advent wreath. Light one candle the first week, two the second, three the third, and four the fourth. A candle may be added to the center for Christmas. For some families mornings might be a better time to gather.

Each evening, after lighting the candles, read the prayer for the week. One one of the days, read the section of the bible listed. The other days, say the memory verse for that week. Conclude with one or all of the prayers that follow the reading.



First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Verse of the week

Luke 1:16 John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to the Lord their God.

Week 1 **Luke 1: 5-23**

⁵When Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest by the name of Zechariah from the priestly group of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was from the family of Aaron. ⁶Both of them were good people and pleased the Lord God by obeying all that he had commanded. ⁷But they did not have children. Elizabeth could not have any, and both Zechariah and Elizabeth were already old. ⁸One day Zechariah's group of priests were on duty, and he was serving God as a priest. ⁹According to the custom of the priests, he had been chosen to go into the Lord's temple that day and to burn incense, ¹⁰while the people stood outside praying. ¹¹All at once an angel from the Lord appeared to Zechariah at the right side of the altar. ¹²Zechariah was confused and afraid when he saw the angel. ¹³But the angel told him:

Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayers. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you must name him John. ¹⁴His birth will make you very happy, and many people will be glad. ¹⁵Your son will be a great servant of the Lord. He must never drink wine or beer, and the power of the Holy Spirit will be with him from the time he is born.

¹⁶John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will go ahead of the Lord with the same power and spirit that Elijah had. And because of John, parents will be more thoughtful of their children. And people who now disobey God will begin to think as they ought to. That is how John will get people ready for the Lord. ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know this is going to happen? My wife and I are both very old."

¹⁹The angel answered, "I am Gabriel, God's servant, and I was sent to tell you this good news. ²⁰You have not believed what I have said. So you will not be able to say a thing until all this happens. But everything will take place when it is supposed to."

²¹The crowd was waiting for Zechariah and kept wondering why he was staying so long in the temple. ²²When he did come out, he could not speak, and they knew he had seen a vision. He motioned to them with his hands, but did not say a thing.

²³When Zechariah's time of service in the temple was over, he went home. ²⁴Soon after that, his wife was expecting a baby, and for five months she did not leave the house. She said to herself, ²⁵"What the Lord has done for me will keep people from looking down on me."

Closing prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen*



Second Sunday of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Verse of the week

Luke 1:37 "Nothing is impossible for God!"

Week 2 Luke 1: 26-38

²⁶One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee ²⁷with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. ²⁸The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. ³⁰Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, ³¹and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus.

³²He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. ³³He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. ³⁶Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. ³⁷Nothing is impossible for God!"

³⁸Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her.

Closing prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen*



Third Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Verse of the week

Luke 1:50 "He always shows mercy to everyone who worships him."

Week 3 Luke 1: 39-56

³⁹A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. ⁴⁰She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. ⁴²Then in a loud voice she said to Mary:

God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. ⁴³Why should the mother of my Lord come

to me? ⁴⁴As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. ⁴⁵The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶Mary said: With all my heart I praise the Lord, ⁴⁷and I am glad because of God my savior. ⁴⁸He cares for me, his humble servant. From now on, all people will say God has blessed me. ⁴⁹God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and his name is holy. ⁵⁰He always shows mercy to everyone who worships him. ⁵¹The Lord has used his powerful arm to scatter those who are proud. ⁵²He drags strong rulers from their thrones and puts humble people in places of power. ⁵³God gives the hungry good things to eat, and sends the rich away with nothing. ⁵⁴He helps his servant Israel and is always merciful to his people. ⁵⁵The Lord made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his family forever!

⁵⁶Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she went back home

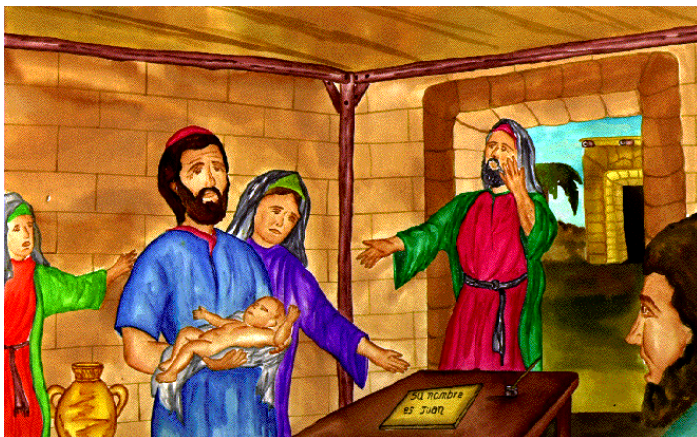
Closing prayers

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The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen*



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Verse of the week

Luke 1:78 "God's love and kindness will shine upon us like the sun that rises in the sky."

Week 4 Luke 1: 57-80

⁶⁷The Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah, and he began to speak: ⁶⁸Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to save his people. ⁶⁹Our God has given us a mighty Savior from the family of David his servant. ⁷⁰Long ago the Lord promised by the words of his holy prophets ⁷¹to save us from our enemies and from everyone who hates us. ⁷²God said he would be kind to our people and keep his sacred promise. ⁷³He told our ancestor Abraham ⁷⁴that he would rescue us from our enemies. Then we could serve him without fear, ⁷⁵by being holy and good as long as we live. ⁷⁶You, my son, will be called a prophet of God in heaven above. You will go ahead of the Lord to get everything ready for him. ⁷⁷You will tell his people that they can be saved when their sins are forgiven. ⁷⁸God's love and kindness will shine upon us like the sun that rises in the sky. ⁷⁹On us who live in the dark shadow of death this light will shine to guide us into a life of peace.

⁸⁰As John grew up, God's Spirit gave him great power. John lived in the desert until the time he was sent to the people of Israel.

Closing prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen*



The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day till January 6, Epiphany

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Verse of the week

Luke 2:14 "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God."

Week 5 & 6 Luke 2: 1-20

¹About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. ²These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³Everyone had to go to

their own hometown to be listed. ⁴So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

⁵Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, ⁶and while they were there, ⁷she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The Shepherds

⁸That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. ⁹All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. ¹⁰But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. ¹¹This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

¹³Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

¹⁴"Praise God in heaven!

Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God."

¹⁵After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

¹⁷When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him.

¹⁸Everyone listened and was surprised. ¹⁹But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

²⁰As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Closing prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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