



Advent



Advent is a four-week period of prayer and preparation, and of looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus among us. We are filled with joy and love in the Lord, and compelled to share those with others. As we open our hearts in prayer during Advent, we pray that the "Good News" of Jesus is heard throughout the world so that hearts will turn to love and peace.

Praying with the Advent

Wreath The symbolism of the Advent wreath is beautiful. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul and the everlasting life found in Christ.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Their light signifies Christ, the Light of the World. Three candles are purple and one is pink.

The purple candles symbolize the prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken during Advent.

The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday; it symbolizes rejoicing, at this midpoint of Advent, when our preparation is half over and we are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of the joy in His second coming.

The Missionary Childhood Association wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Missions Prayers

For each week of ADVENT

<u>Click HERE</u> to access a virtual Advent Wreath you can light each week. Remember to go back each week

"WE MUST PRAY, NOT FOR OURSELVES, BUT FOR THE WORLD"



Week 1: Light the first purple candle. The first **PURPLE** candle represents **HOPE**.

Father in Heaven, we need the warmth of your love in our hearts and the light of your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with hope when Jesus comes. In our own little way, help us to bring hope to children who are afraid, sad or alone. We ask you to bring them hope for tomorrow. Through us, shine your light of Hope upon them.

Amen.

Week 2: Light the second purple candle. This PURPLE candle represents PEACE.

Father in Heaven, very soon the birth of your Son, Jesus will light up the world. May his quiet coming bring us true inner peace. Dear God, help us to bring peace to those around us. Look after children who live with conflict at home, at school and in their country. Help us to throw your blanket of peace around their shoulders and comfort them with our friendship.

Amen.

Week 3: Light the only pink candle.
This PINK candle represents JOY.

Father in Heaven, we know that you love all of your people. Your love brings the gift of joy to our hearts. We think of all the unhappy children in the world today. We ask you to bring a little joy to their hearts this Christmas and we hope that someone can provide for all their needs. Thank you for the joy we feel as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Amen.

Week 4: Light the third purple candle. The third **PURPLE** candle represents **LOVE**.

Father in Heaven, bless our families and bring us the spirit of understanding and love. May our homes be places of peace and laughter and may your love shine from our eyes. In everything we do and say, help us to show love to others. Today we ask your blessing on our circle of love and prayer. Keep us forever safe in the warmth of your love.

Amen.



Christmas/Advent around the World



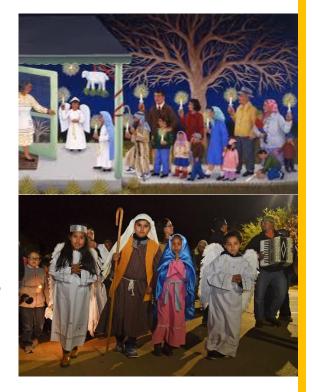
Americas

From December 16 to Christmas Eve, children in Mexico and many Latin American countries perform the "Posada" procession. Posada is Spanish for inn or lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for a room in the inn. Children carry candles and a board holding painted figures of Mary and Joseph. They go from house to house and sing a song at each home.

The song they sing is about Joseph and Mary asking for a room – like the journey of that first Christmas Eve.

Eventually the children find a home that welcomes them in!

They say prayers of thanks, and have a party with food, games and fireworks. At the final Posada on Christmas Eve, a manger and figures of shepherds are added to the board. When the Posada house has been found, a baby Jesus is put into the manger, and then families go to midnight Mass.



Europe

In many countries in Europe, Missionary Children celebrate advent by going from house to house, supervised by adults, singing carols. Three children dress as the Wise Men and follow a child carrying the Star of Bethlehem, who knocks on the door of the house. In this way, the children proclaim the Good News of Jesus' birth and at the same time raise funds to send to poor children through the Missionary Childhood Association. This year, for example, the group recites the blessing outside the windows of the house and collect the offerings with a fishing net or through bank cards rather than in a piggy bank!



Many kids in Africa will dress up in costumes and put on a play for adults. The costumes are very colorful, and the play has a lot of music and dancing part. Everyone has a good time. Kids use the play to teach adults what they have learn about Jesus and proclaim the Good News!



