



Clearpoint
Church

Family Advent Guide





Advent Wreath & Candles

The use of the wreath in Christian worship dates from the time of the Renaissance. The wreath is a Christian symbol. The shape of the wreath, the circle, stands for eternity.

The everlasting green is an ancient symbol of eternal life. The first candle in the wreath stands for **HOPE**, as seen in the prophecies of the Messiah's coming. The second candle stands for **PEACE**, symbolized by the little town of Bethlehem where the Prince of Peace made His first appearance. The third candle stands for the **JOY** of the shepherds, and the fourth candle stands for **SALVATION**, as seen in the angelic announcement. The fifth, or center candle, represents the CHRIST CHILD.

One candle is lit each of the four Sundays before Christmas Day, and the white center candle is lit on Christmas Day. Each week the light grows brighter, indicating the coming of the Light of the World.

You may make a Christmas table wreath by arranging the three colored candles in holders or in a Styrofoam base, decorating the base with twigs of evergreen, holly, or cones. (Just a caution-greens dry out rapidly and become a fire hazard!) A taller white candle is placed in the center as the Christ candle. Traditionally, three purple and one pink candle have been used in the wreath. However, royal blue is becoming a popular color. Some families may prefer to use crimson red candles. Purple has long been a symbol of royalty, repentance, and preparation. White symbolizes purity and light. Place the wreath in a spot in your home that represents a center for your family - the mantle in the den, or on the dining room table.

Each family member can take turns lighting the candles and leading parts of the service. You might want to invite another family, or a person living alone to participate with you.

If you miss a Sunday, do it on Monday evening.



The Creche

The following daily worship suggestions involve the assembly of a Creche. A Creche (pronounced "Krash") is a representation of the Nativity scene. An animal or figure will be added each day to the Nativity scene until the Christ Child is placed in the manger on Christmas Day. The Creche does not have to be incorporated in your daily worship. If you decline to use this activity, simply ignore it in your worship guide. However, if you have children, you'll find this a meaningful activity.

Traditionally, the Creche contains the family of Jesus, shepherds, three Magi, and several animals. However, the Wise Men probably were not present at the inn. The account in Matthew 2:11 states that the Magi arrived at the house. While the familiar Nativity scenes are not necessarily historically accurate, the tradition provides an excellent vehicle to teach children the Christmas story.

Adding a separate piece to the Creche each day of Advent requires a large Nativity set. Your children might enjoy making your own set out of modeling clay, home-made play-dough, wood, paper or felt. A recipe for homemade play-dough is found at the back of this booklet. If you don't want to expand an existing Nativity set, you might consider using your existing pieces and reading only the "Creche" sections that apply.

One addition to the Creche is a candle, referred to as the Star Candle. This candle is used to represent the star that led the shepherds and Magi to the Christ Child. This candle should not be confused with the candles in the Advent wreath. The Star Candle, a white candle, should be placed behind or off to the side of the stable. The Star Candle will be relit during each family worship time.



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: HOPE

The First Sunday - December 3, 2023

Reflection

God inspired the prophets to foretell the coming of the Messiah. Generations of people lived in expectation, hoping to see this promise fulfilled in their day. We also live in anticipation, knowing that Christ will return again, perhaps in our lifetime.

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14; 9:2, 6-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the shadow of death a light has dawned...For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The Lighting of the Prophecy Candle

Parent: The candle is lit. The prophets have foretold it. Christ is coming!

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"The First Noel" by David Archuleta*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqQuanlQbFg>

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us **hope** by preparing a way to lead us out of darkness and into your light. Today, we choose to live in fellowship with you and follow where you lead!



Monday, December 4, 2023

Reflection

You would have expected the birth of a king to take place in the finest of settings. But it didn't. There was not even a room in the inn for Mary and Joseph. The only available place to harbor them from the night was a stable.

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-7

Creche

Oldest Child: Put the stable in its place.

Parent: "The stable stands ready to receive the Christ Child. As we eagerly anticipate Christmas, let the stable be a reminder to us to open our home to the Saviour."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQjpDKKPK4>

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us so much. Thank you for the comforts of our home, and thank you for preparing a place for us in Heaven. Amen.



Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Reflection

Peace is a rare commodity in today's world. The newspapers contain stories of wars and fighting throughout the world. Will war ever cease? Many years ago, the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of a Messiah who would be called the Prince of Peace. Under His rule, the entire universe would be at peace. Here is how he describes this new world:

Scripture: Isaiah 11: 6-7

Creche

Child: Place the cow in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "As we place the cow in this peaceful setting, we are reminded that only Christ can bring real peace."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" by Chris Tomlin***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH7asSGxAxA>***

Prayer

Dear Lord, as children of the Prince of Peace, may each of us commit ourselves to being peacemakers. We anticipate your coming, when all of the world will be at peace. Amen.



Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Reflection

In this modern age of cars and planes, a trip during the final days of a woman's pregnancy is not considered such a difficult event. However, in ancient times, any trip became a major task because the basic means of transportation was walking or riding an animal. Only the very wealthy could afford a cart drawn by horses. In the ancient world, the donkey would often carry man and his belongings. Mary and Joseph embarked upon a seventy-five mile trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a trip that possibly took them five days or longer. Tradition has it that Mary rode to Bethlehem on a donkey.

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-5

Creche

Child: Place the donkey in the stable.

Parent: "Like the donkey which helped Mary, we can be a helper to others."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"All Creatures of our God and King" by David Crowder Band*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=182xcb3GyOg>

Prayer

Lord, we were created to praise you with our lips and serve you with our life. During this Christmas season help us to glorify you as we serve others in need. Amen.



Thursday, December 7, 2023

Reflection

It was foretold that the Christ Child was to be a descendant of Abraham. Abraham, the father of the Israelites and a herdsman, had great faith in God. Because of his faith and obedience, God promised to bless the world through one of his descendants. Listen to the prophecy of God!

Scripture: Genesis 17: 4-6 and 22:18

Creche

Child: Place the sheep dog in the Nativity scene.

Parent: “Sheep dogs were very common among the Israelites. The Hebrew people used sheep dogs to watch their houses and flocks. Abraham may have used a dog to help him herd his huge flocks of sheep and goats. One admirable quality of dogs is their total obedience to their master's commands.”

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***“Silent Night” by Hillsong***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNpiQwgStNA>***

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to be like Abraham, who was faithful and obedient to follow you, no matter the cost. Help us to be like a sheep dog and respond to your every command. Amen.



Friday, December 8, 2023

Reflection

His visit to earth was a humble one. His first bed was made of a trough to feed animals. To look in on that first Christmas you would have thought the baby to be royalty.

Scripture: Luke 2: 7b

Creche

Child: Place the manger in the stable.

Parent: "Let the manger remind us of his humble birth. May our lives reflect the humility of our Lord Jesus."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Away in a Manger" by Carrie Underwood*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zVnOKt9jYE>

Prayer

Lord, hasten the day when you will come back to us, not in the form of a tiny baby in a manger, but as a King on your heavenly throne. Amen



Saturday, December 9, 2023

Reflection

John the Baptist would have fit well with the all-natural health-food people of our day. His diet consisted of wild honey and locusts. His clothing, different from most garments of the day, was made out of camel hair. Preaching a message of repentance, John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah.

Scripture: Mark 1: 1-8

Creche

Child: Place a camel in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "Let the hair of the camel remind us that while man looks on the outward appearance of man, God looks on the heart."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***"God of All Comfort" by Resound Worship***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ajo4JMFUSIA&t=166s>***

Prayer:

Dear Lord, prepare our hearts for your coming. Forgive us where we have failed you. Look into our thoughts and cleanse us of all our unrighteousness. May our hearts be truly repentant. Amen.



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT: PEACE

Sunday, December 10, 2023

Relight the First Candle

Reflection

Light has always been a precious tool for navigating in the dark. Ships use a light on shore to navigate safely into a harbor. Miners use lights to find their way through a cave. We turn on our porch lights so people can find their way to our homes. The Magi must have been excited to see a new light appear in the eastern sky. They had heard about a king that would come out of Israel, but they did not know how to find him. A brilliant star guided the Magi to the place where Jesus was born.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1-9

The Lighting of the Bethlehem Candle

Parent: The Bethlehem candle reminds us that just as the Wise Men could not find Jesus with their own effort, we cannot discover God on our own. God provided a light for the Wise Men and he provides a Light for us today. The candle is lit. The Light of the World is on His way. Let us prepare that Light in our lives.

Song: Look up the following Christmas carol or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

- *“O Little Town of Bethlehem” by Jeremy Camp*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grKx1YSeLr0>

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for being our light to guide us through life. As we prepare for your coming, help us to seek your counsel in everything we do. Remind us daily, that a truly wise person is one who trusts your leadership. Amen.



Monday, December 11, 2023

Reflection

Stars and constellations have always attracted us. We gaze through telescopes to admire them. We look up at them and are reminded of the vastness of God's creation. God chose one special star to guide the wise men and confirm that this is indeed the Christ, whom they had been waiting for.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 9-10

... they went on their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

Creche

Child: Light the Star Candle in the Nativity Scene.

Parent: "It was at Bethlehem that the Light of the World first shined."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Light of the World" by Lauren Daigle*
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo

Prayer:

O Father, may that holy star grow every year more bright and send its glorious beams afar to fill the world with light. (William Collen Bryant)



Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

If you were invited to come to the White House to meet the President of the United States, how would you prepare for your trip? What would you take? Back in ancient times, a traveler would not think of beginning a long journey without making extensive preparations. Just as the Magi probably made preparations for their journey to see the Christ Child, we too must prepare our hearts for His coming.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1-2

Creche

Child: Place the first Wise Man in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "We really don't know the number of Magi that traveled to Bethlehem. There may have been three or there may have been twelve. The Bible just doesn't say. Traditionally, they have been called "kings," but there is no indication from scripture that this is so. What we do know from the Bible is that they came to worship the Christ."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***"We Three Kings of Orient Are" by Reawaken Hymns***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0BJonwPCds>***

Prayer

Dear Lord, as we decorate our home and make preparations for celebrating Christmas, may we also prepare our hearts for your coming. Amen.



Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

Not all were excited about the news of Christ's coming. The ruler over Judea, Herod, was very suspicious of those around him. Herod was threatened by the news that a Messiah, a King, would be born of the Jews. Today there are those who are threatened by His coming, for to accept Christ is to accept His rule in our lives.

Scripture: Matthew 2:3-8, 12.

Creche

Child: Place the second Wise Man in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "Wise is the man that seeks Christ."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" by MercyMe*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzYPQfAfq0U>

Prayer

Dear Lord, show us the way you would have us live. Teach us to follow you, just as the Wise Men followed the star. Amen.



Thursday, December 14, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

They had traveled many miles and had anticipated finding the Christ Child. The day had arrived; the star that had guided them such a great distance was now shining above the place where baby Jesus lay. While the Magi have been represented as figures in the Nativity scene, the Scriptures indicate that by the time the Wise Men had arrived, Jesus and his family were in a house. Regardless of the location, the Magi were thrilled with the opportunity of seeing the Christ Child. They responded to the opportunity by bowing down and worshipping him.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 9-11a

Creche

Child: Place the third Wise Man in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "May this Magi remind us to worship the King of Kings."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"O Come All Ye Faithful" by Passion Music—Melodie Malone*
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wW4R4lfUQI

Prayer

Dear Lord, prepare our hearts for your coming. May we, like the Magi of old, bow down and worship you. Amen.



Friday, December 15, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

On a long journey servants were usually entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the camels. A servant must care for the maintenance of the animals and guard the valuable camel furniture, which included saddles, saddle bags, and bridles. The position of a servant was one of great humility, and servants had little status in the community. Jesus understood the meaning of servanthood.

Scripture: Philippians 2: 5-11

Creche

Child: Place the helper for the Wise Men in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "May this helper remind us that God has called us to have a servant's heart."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"I Surrender All" by Reawaken Hymns*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSPcuV5Sli8>

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for coming down to earth in the form of a servant, giving yourself to us. Prepare us to have a servant's heart. Help us to love others with the same kind of love that you gave us. Amen.



Saturday, December 16, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

On this historic trip, a group of camels carried precious cargo to a new king. The Magi had come prepared with gifts befitting the Christ Child. Gold was the possession of monarchs. Frankincense was burned in religious ceremonies as an act of worship. Myrrh was an expensive perfume used for embalming. All of these gifts were inaccessible to the common man, but Jesus was no ordinary baby.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 11b

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and incense and myrrh.

Creche

Child: Place three camels in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "As we place the camels in the Creche, let us remember to bring our very best to the Lord."

Poem: "A Child's Offering" (printed on the next page)

Prayer

Dear Lord, may our lives be a pleasing offering to you. Make our hearts willing to give our time, talents, and money to your kingdom. You are indeed worthy of receiving our best. May our lives bring you honor. Amen.



A Child's Offering

*The wise may bring their learning,
The rich may bring their wealth,
And some may bring their greatness,
And some bring strength and health;
We, too, would bring our treasures
To offer to the King;
We have no wealth or learning;
What shall we children bring?*

*We'll bring Him hearts that love Him;
We'll bring Him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
To walk in holy ways;
And these shall be the treasures
We offer to the King,
And these are gifts that even
The poorest child may bring.*

*We'll bring the little duties
We have to do each day;
We'll try our best to please Him,
At home, at school, at play:
And better are these treasures
To offer to our King,
Than richest gifts without them;
Yet these a child may bring.*

The Book of Praise for Children, 1881

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: JOY

The Third Sunday — December 17, 2023

Relight the First and Second Candles

Reflection

The heavenly message heard by the shepherds concerned “good news of great joy.” Joy characterizes the Christmas season. The shepherds departed immediately to share that joy. The more we share His joy, the more joy we will have to share.

Scripture

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child. (*Luke 2: 15-17*)

The Lighting of the Shepherd’s Candle

Parent: The Shepherd’s Candle is lighted. There is joy in the land. Come, let us rejoice and be glad, for Christ Jesus has come.

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *“What A Glorious Night” by Sidewalk Prophets*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNqekM4UwPg>

Prayer

Dear Father, our hearts are filled with joy because of the good news of the gospel. Like the shepherds, help us to tell others about the coming of Jesus. Amen.



Monday, December 18, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

The prophets told us that a Messiah would come who would be like a shepherd tending his flock. Jesus Christ loves us as a shepherd loves his lambs. Listen to how the prophet Isaiah describes our Lord:

Scripture: Isaiah 40: 10-11

Creche

Child: Place a shepherd in the Nativity Scene.

Parent: "Thank you Jesus for loving us like a shepherd loves his sheep."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Jesus Loves Me" by Chris Tomlin*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8gKXu6J2wE>

Prayer:

Read Psalm 23. Thank you God for coming to earth to be our shepherd. Amen.



Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

Sheep are not known for their intelligence or eyesight. They can only see a few feet in front of them. Left by themselves, sheep become lost. They need a shepherd to guide them back to safety. The good news of the gospel is that Christ entered this world to save us from our blindness.

Scripture: Isaiah 53: 6

Creche

Child: Place several sheep in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "The sheep remind us that Christ came to save that which was lost."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"What Child is This?" by Francesca Battistelli*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQWKjTvPgiM>

Prayer

Dear Lord, forgive us for going astray. Open our eyes that we might see our sin. Thank you for coming to be our Savior. May we proclaim the good news to those around us. Amen.

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be the "Lamb of God." In this statement, John was referring to the practice in Judaism whereby the High Priest placed his hands on the head of a goat, symbolically transferring the sins of the people to the goat. The goat was then led out to the desert and released, forever gone. In this act, God forgave the people of their sins and remembered them no more. John was saying the Christ Child had come to take away the sins of the world.

Scripture: Leviticus 16: 21-22 and John 1: 29

Creche

Child: Place a goat in the Nativity scene.

Parent: "Christ became our scapegoat by taking all our sins upon Himself."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"How Many Kings" by Downhere*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTYe9sWYKdo>

Prayer

Dear Lamb of God, thank you for becoming our scapegoat and taking away the sins of the world. Forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen.



Thursday, December 21, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

When something miraculous happens to you, it is hard to keep it a secret. The shepherds returned to their homes praising God for what they had seen. The good news of Jesus Christ is not to be retained but to be proclaimed.

Scripture: Luke 2: 20

Creche

Child: Place a shepherd in the Nativity Scene.

Parent: "The shepherds had to tell others about what they had seen and heard. May we also share Christ's coming with others."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***"Go Tell It On the Mountain" by Zach Williams***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXBzrutelZA>***

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the witness of the shepherds. We praise you for sending us your Son. Help us to proclaim what we have seen and heard. Amen.



Friday, December 22, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

The prophet Isaiah foretold of this coming. The Messiah would gather his sheep close to his heart. Proclaim the news, Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Scripture: Isaiah 40: 9-11

Creche

Child: Place the rest of the sheep in the Nativity Scene.

Parent: "As the sheep are placed we are reminded that sheep recognize the voice of their master and follow."

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Glory" by Matt Maher*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW4c6DcxgGc>

Prayer

Lord, teach us to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly. Amen.



Saturday, December 23, 2023

Relight the Star Candle in the Creche

Reflection

Good news has a way of exciting all who hear it. The shepherd's story was contagious. Everyone who heard the shepherds was amazed. We can also "spread the word" about his coming.

Scripture: Luke 2: 18; Romans 10: 14

Creche

Child: Place the townspeople in the Nativity Scene.

Parent: As the townspeople are placed in the Creche, we are reminded that people will not believe in the Christ Child until they have been told about Him.

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Mary Did you Know" by Pentatonix*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE>

Prayer

Dear Lord, we rejoice in your coming! May the experience of your love be communicated to those who have not heard about the Christ Child. Amen.



FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: LOVE

The Fourth Sunday — December 24, 2023

Relight the First Three Candles

Reflection

Everyone likes to hear good news. The angel, Gabriel, brought good news to Mary about the coming of a Savior. His name would be called Jesus, for he would save the people from their sins. What excitement! What joy!

Scripture: Luke 1: 26-33

The Lighting of the Angel's Candle

The Angel's Candle is lighted. The news is released in the world. A Savior has come to save his people from their sins. "With angelic hosts proclaim, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'"

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by Paul Baloche*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3IghOn18VY>

Prayer

Dear Lord, may we be like the angels and bring good news to those we meet. Help us to share the joy of Christmas with others. Help us to tell others about Jesus, who came to earth so that we might be saved from our sins. Amen.



Emmanuel Christmas Day

Relight All Four Advent Candles

Reflection

With the lighting of the candles each week we have watched the light grow and prepare us for His coming. The Light is now full, the time of His coming is at hand. Christ is born today. We praise Him for the unspeakable gift of Himself. He comes now to live in us and join us in celebration.

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-16

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Let this candle represent our faith in Christ, the Saviour, the Light of the World. May we feel His presence in our lives throughout this wonderful day.

Song: Look up the following song or choose your favorite Christmas Carol to sing together as a family.

- ***“Unspeakable Joy” by Chris Tomlin***
- ***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqxMvvptf9I>***

Creche

Parent: Relight the Star Candle in the Creche.

Child: Place baby Jesus gently in the manger.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for leaving your throne and coming to dwell among us. We gratefully acknowledge your salvation as we anticipate the day when you will come again. Amen.