

Readings for Lighting the Advent Candles (Option 2)

Week One – HOPE

Child: Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Advent means “coming,” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. We light the candle on the Advent wreath to remind us of the blessings that Christ brings to the world.

Adult: The Advent wreath includes many symbols. The wreath is in the circle, with no beginning and no ending. This reminds us that there is no beginning and no ending to God, and that God’s love and caring for us never ends. The green branches are a sign of ever new life. The candles tell us of the light shining into the world with Jesus Christ. The colors of the Advent candles remind us of our need for God’s help to be the people we should be. The white candle, which we light on Christmas Eve, signifies the birth of Jesus.

Child: Today we light the first candle, the candle of hope. *(Child and Adult light the first candle.)*

Adult: The prophet Jeremiah spoke words of hope to Israel. He talked about the promise of Shalom and of a new beginning. We hope and pray for a world of peace and harmony.

Child: Hope is like a flame that warms and comforts us. As we light this candle, we celebrate the hope of the prophets and the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

Family: We continue to hope in God’s promise that Christ will continue to fill our lives and the life of the world with love and joy and peace.

Prayer: Thank you, God for the flame of hope. As we prepare for Christ’s coming, help us to share our hope with others.

Sing verse 1:

“O come O come Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Week Two – PEACE

Child: Last Sunday we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. Let us light it again to show that our hope continues. *(Light the first candle.)*

Adult: John the Baptist called on the people of his day to prepare the path for the coming of the Messiah. He called them to repent, turn around, change their ways. To live in peace with others, we need to repent and change directions.

Child: We light this second candle to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He shows us how to share God’s peace with others. *(Light the second candle.)*

Adult: The prayer of St. Francis asks God to help us be peacemakers. Let us say it together:

Family: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is sadness, joy;
And where there is darkness, light.
Grant that we may seek
not so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Sing verses 1 and 2:

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Week Three – JOY

(Child and adult light the first two candles again)

Child: We have lit again the first two candles in our Advent wreath, to remind us of God's gifts of hope and peace. Today we will light the third candle, the candle of joy.

Adult: As we wait for Christmas, the birth of Jesus, we look forward to the joyful celebrations we will share and those we love. The prophet Zephaniah calls us to shout for joy, because God will transform the people. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angel told the shepherds not to be afraid. The angels brought "Good news of a great joy, which shall be to all people." The good news of Jesus' birth and the promise of Shalom are still "tidings of great joy" for us today.

Child: Paul tells us to rejoice in God always. The third candle reminds us of our joy in Jesus Christ. *(Light the third candle.)*

Family: God of Joy, thank you for the excitement and delight we experience at this joyful time of year. Help us to share your joy with others, so that they too will be filled with your spirit. Amen.

Sing verses 1 – 3

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O bright and morning star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night,
and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Week Four – LOVE

Child: Today we will light the fourth candle in our Advent wreath.

Adult: Before we do that, we remember God’s blessings, symbolized by the candles of hope, peace and joy. *(Light the first three candles again.)*

Child: The fourth candle helps us to remember that God is love. *(Light the fourth candle.)*

Adult: The Bible tells us that the greatest blessing is love. It is because God loved the world so much that Jesus came to share God’s love. Mary sings her song in praise of God’s love and goodness. Because God loves us, we must love and care for others.

Child: This candle reminds us to share our love with others through words and actions.

Family: Loving God, thank you for expressing your love through the life of Jesus, through our lives, and the lives of those around us. Help us to remember that your love will never end. Amen.

Sing all verses

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O bright and morning star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night,
and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Christmas Eve

Adult: This is the last time this year we will light the Advent candles. *(Light all four candles)*

Child: For four weeks the candles have been burning as we thought about hope, peace, joy and love. These are the gifts which Jesus Brought to us at Christmas time. The waiting is over and Jesus is Born.

Adult: Each week another candle glowed and our wreath has shone more brightly. Today we light the Christ candle, the candle which represents Jesus. It is the center of our wreath, just as Jesus is the center of our lives. Happy Birthday, Jesus. *(Light the Christ candle.)*

Family: God, our hearts sing with joy and praise because of Jesus. At this happy season we rejoice that Jesus came among us. By his birth and life, he has shown us that we are your people and that we are greatly loved. Help us to remember Christmas all year long by giving to others the gifts of life: hope, peace, joy and love, expressed in the works of our hands and hearts. Amen.