

Family Page

Background Reflection

In the midst of busy Christmas preparations, the season of Advent calls us to a different preparation—one of reflection, excitement, and growing joy! Waiting for Christmas can be difficult for the best of us, and it can be even harder for children. The first Advent wreaths and calendars were an attempt to help children to count the passing days, to focus their impatience, and to build anticipation and joy. These traditional practices also help adults to focus our longing and place our hope on the coming of the Messiah, in Bethlehem, in our lives now, and at the end of time.

The people of Israel were also impatient, enduring years of hardship and exile. The prophet Isaiah promised a great king and named him Prince of Peace, Eternal Father, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. What do we name that king? We name him Jesus! The birth of a king in an obscure, small, and humble place was not at all expected. So we are reminded that greatness often hides in the ordinary fabric of our lives and in the hidden corners of our world. The King of Kings is Emmanuel: God with us.

Family Activities

- Start making a paper chain with red and green construction paper strips to decorate your tree or a doorway. Cut out twenty-four strips of paper, about 6 inches long, for December 1–24. Each day, connect a new strip of paper to the chain. Use this time to talk about how you can make Advent a special time of preparation for Christmas.
- Decorate a can or jar. Write “Advent Pennies” on a label and attach it to the can or jar. Collect pennies and loose change to donate to a charity.
- View the video “Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)” (YouTube, 2:09) together. Discuss what your child saw in the video and any points that were new for her or him. Make a commitment to celebrate Advent in a new way this year.

People of Faith

Saint Lucy (c. 283–304)

Saint Lucy was a young woman who chose to die rather than give up her faith. Her life was a witness to the light of Christ and his love. Lucy means “light”. Saint Lucy’s feast day is December 13, and is often celebrated by lighting candles and sharing a sweet Saint Lucy bread.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Loving God, in this season of Advent, help us grow in love and fill our hearts with peace. As we prepare to celebrate your coming into the world, let us be grateful for all our gifts and especially for the gift of Jesus. Amen.

