

WHAT IS ADVENT?



Most Americans celebrate the new year on January 1. As Christians we also celebrate the start of a new liturgical year this Sunday with the beginning of Advent.

During Advent we joyfully anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ — by looking forward to Christmas when we remember his birth in Bethlehem, but also by anticipating his triumphant return at the end of time. The Church’s celebration of Advent always reflects this dual character, “for by sharing in the long

preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 524)

“THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN; THE YOUNG WOMAN, PREGNANT AND ABOUT TO BEAR A SON, SHALL NAME HIM EMMANUEL.”

:: Isaiah 7:14

Observing Advent means slowing down and trying to avoid the hectic rush of the “pre-Christmas” season. Instead of focusing on shopping, party preparations, and what we hope to get, we focus on how we can prepare our hearts so that, like the

faithful and wise servant (cf. Luke 12:35-48), we will recognize Jesus and be ready to follow him when he appears.

There are a variety of traditions that have risen around the observance of Advent. Many families set up an Advent wreath, lighting a new candle each week before Christmas. Others hang Jesse ornaments on a tree as a way to remember the story of salvation as

laid out in the Bible. Many mark each day with an Advent calendar as a way to count down the season.

There are also wonderful Advent hymns to listen to, new prayers and readings in the liturgy, and individual feasts to



Watch the video:

youtu.be/0cTx_dXckcY



observe such as St. Nicholas (December 6), the Immaculate Conception of Mary (December 8), and St. Lucy (December 13).

All of these can help us observe this season as the Church does — through prayerful watching and waiting for our Lord and Savior to arrive as a poor child in a manger.

“ADVENT HAS A TWO-FOLD CHARACTER, FOR IT IS A TIME OF PREPARATION FOR THE SOLEMNITIES OF CHRISTMAS... AND LIKEWISE A TIME WHEN, BY REMEMBRANCE OF THIS, HEARTS AND MINDS ARE LED TO LOOK FORWARD TO CHRIST’S SECOND COMING AT THE END OF TIME.”

:: *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 39

Family Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to enter into joyful anticipation in our hectic, frantic world? What value is there in waiting?
2. How can your family slow down and observe Advent in a more prayerful and meaningful way this year?
3. Jesus tells us to be watchful and alert for his return. What does being watchful look like in the life of a disciple? How is grace already present in your life?

Family Challenge

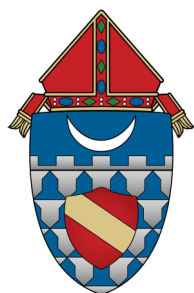
Get out your Advent wreath (or [have the kids make one out of toilet paper rolls!](#)) and set it in a prominent place in your home. Each evening, perhaps before dinner, light one of the Advent candles and pray as a family.

Additional Videos

- Advent in 2 Minutes youtu.be/eCOFGQLBp7w
- The Spirituality of Advent youtu.be/MAWnDA5cWD8

Other Resources

- Advent Music Playlist (Spotify): bit.ly/Advent-Playlist
- Digital Advent and Christmas Calendar: mcgrath.nd.edu/events/creche-exhibit/



Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* copyright © 1994, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE-IN-INDIANA
www.do-in.org/catechesis ♡ facebook.com/diolafin

The ministries of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana are supported by generous contributions to the Catholic Ministries Appeal.