

The "O Antiphons" of Advent



The Church has been singing the "O" Antiphons since at least the eighth century. The O Antiphons are seven responses, sung or recited, to introduce the canticle of Mary (the Magnificat) at evening prayer from **December 17 to December 23**, which is the *octave* before Christmas.

These antiphons are based on Isaiah's prophecies and refer to the **different ancient titles given to the Messiah**. You will find them in the Book of Isaiah: 11:2-3 & 28:29 (Dec 17) 11:4-5 & 33:22 (Dec 18) 1:1 & 11:10 (Dec 19) 9:6 & 22:22 (Dec 20) 9:1 (Dec 21); 9:5 & 2:4 (Dec 22) and 7:14 (Dec 23).

How to pray and teach the O Antiphons

We can bring these antiphons into our own prayers, as reminders of God's promise of redemption through the Messiah, who we are joyfully awaiting. We can use them as **introductions to our own prayers**, especially to begin our prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord. We can teach them to our children with the hymn, **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** or help them **create ornaments** in the shape of "O"s with each antiphon on the inside to hang on the tree or as a banner before Christmas.

Regardless of how you incorporate these ancient words into your Advent prayer life, let them speak to you, and maybe they will become part of your family traditions. *—from Loyolapress.com*

December 17: O Sapientia

O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

December 18: O Adonai

O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

December 19: O Radix Jesse

O Root of Jesse's stem,
sign of God's love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

December 20: O Clavis David

O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

December 21: O Oriens

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those
who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

December 22: O Rex Gentium

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save man,
whom you formed from the dust!

December 23: O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

—from Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers