Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a popular family devotion for this season. It is usually a circle of evergreen branches surrounding four candles, one for each of the Sundays of Advent. Frequently, three of the candles are violet and one is rose. The rose-colored candle is lit during the third week of Advent, beginning on Gaudete Sunday (Gaudete means “joy”) as a reminder that our waiting will soon be over. The Advent wreath is blessed on the first Sunday of Advent. One candle is lit the first week, two the second week, three the third week and all four the fourth week.

Blessing the Advent Wreath

On the first Sunday of Advent, gather the family and bless the advent wreath.

Begin by making the sign of the cross.

Leader - Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All - Who made heaven and earth.

Reading

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:2-3,6-7

Blessing

A parent leads the family in one of these blessings, or the family prays it in unison.

Lord God, Your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, He is the Savior of every nation. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath and its light be a sign of Christ’s promise to bring us salvation. May He come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The First Week of Advent

This ceremony is meant for every day during the first week of Advent, beginning with the first Sunday. The family prays one of these prayers as the first candle is lighted.

All powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to His side in the kingdom of heaven, where He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love, and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of His coming may find us rejoicing in His presence and welcoming the light of His truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

The Second Week of Advent

The family prays one of these prayers as two candles are lighted.

God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy, so that we may share His wisdom and become one with Him when He comes in glory, for He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Father in heaven, the day draws near when the glory of your Son will make radiant the night of the waiting world. May the lure of greed not impede us from the joy which moves the hearts of those who seek Him. May the darkness not blind us to the vision of wisdom, which fills the minds of those who find Him. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

The Third Week of Advent

The family prays one of these prayers as three candles, including the rose-colored one, are lighted.

Lord God, may we, your people who look forward to the birthday of Christ, experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to His return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which His presence will bestow, for He is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

The Fourth Week of Advent

The family prays one of these prayers as all four candles are lighted.

Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through His suffering and death to the glory of His resurrection, for He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Father, all powerful God, your eternal word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces His glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for His coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: A Prayer Book for Catholic Families