



Advent Begins Sunday, November 29, 2015 Click [here](#) for links to Prayers, Prayer Services and Activities for Advent on our St. Clair website

The Advent wreath, made of a circle of evergreens, 3 purple candles and 1 pink candle, is full of history, tradition and symbol:

SHAPE: The circular shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, symbolizes God’s complete and unending love for us as well as eternal life promised through Jesus’ dying and rising to new life.

COLOR: The colours represented in the Advent wreath are purple, pink and green.

- Purple is a liturgical colour that is used to signify prayer, penance, and sacrifice and good works. Advent is the season where we spiritually wait in our “darkness” with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption.
- Pink is a liturgical colour that is used to signify joy, so we light the single pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing.
- Green is the colour of life. It also reminds us of the gift of new and eternal life we received at baptism. The colour green is also the colour of hope. The green is represented with “evergreen” branches which also symbolize everlasting life.



Weekly prayers for lighting the candles may be found on the Loyola Press website:

<http://www.loyolapress.com/prayer-for-lighting-the-advent-wreath-candles.htm>

CANDLES: Four candles are lit, one for each Sunday of Advent. *For deeper reflection and connections to prayer and scripture see page 3 of this newsletter.*

Week 1: November 29

The 1st Sunday of Advent symbolizes **Hope** with the “**Prophet’s Candle**” (purple candle) reminding us that Jesus is coming.

Week 2: December 6

The 2nd Sunday of Advent symbolizes **Faith** with the “**Bethlehem Candle**” (purple candle) reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem.

Week 3: December 13

The 3rd Sunday of Advent symbolizes **Joy** with the “**Shepherd’s Candle**” reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus. The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On this day we light the pink candle as we celebrate that our waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day is almost over.

Week 4: December 20

The 4th Sunday of Advent symbolizes **Peace** with the “**Angel’s Candle**” (purple candle) reminding us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.” On the fourth Sunday of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait expectantly for the soon-coming birth of the King of Kings.

Advent in Two Minutes

Help your students to see the relationship between Advent and Christmas. Check out Busted Halo's® two-minute video that describes why we celebrate Advent and wait to celebrate Christmas.

<http://bustedhalo.com/video/advent-in-two-minutes>



- **What Is Advent?** Advent means *coming*. During the four weeks before Christmas we look forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as king and judge at the end of time and to our Christmas celebration of his coming as our saviour 2,000 years ago.
- **Coming at the end of time.** As Christians we are sent to build up God's kingdom on earth. We do this by living each day as his people: by working and praying, by obeying God's will and by suffering with Christ. At the end of time, Jesus will come to judge our efforts and to hand over to the Father the kingdom he has built with our help.
- During the first weeks of Advent (up to December 16) we reflect on Christ as our coming king and our judge; we wait in joyful hope for his return in glory (the parousia) to complete his work on earth.
- **Coming as our saviour.** Beginning on December 17, we join with the prophets and the people of God who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. We express our longing for God's mercy, and grow more aware of our need for this saving help.
- **Preparation:** Advent is a period of four weeks of prayer and preparation, of renewal and of looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus among us, his beloved people.

http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/01_Ad_Joy_Hope.pdf

"The season of Advent restores ... a hope which does not disappoint for it is founded on God's Word. A hope which does not disappoint, simply because the Lord never disappoints! ... Let us think about and feel this beauty."

Pope Francis



Advent Week One - Hope

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined. Is. 9:2

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." "The Holy Spirit . . . he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life." (Catechism 1817)

Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence (1 Pt. 3:15)



Advent Week Two - Peace

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.
John 14:27

Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the *peace of Christ*, the messianic "Prince of Peace." By the blood of his Cross, "in his own person he killed the hostility," he reconciled men with God and made his Church the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of its union with God. "He is our peace." He has declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Catechism 2305)

Forgiveness, dialogue, reconciliation – these are the words of peace, ... in all the world! Let us pray for reconciliation and peace, let us work for reconciliation and peace, and let us all become, in every place, men and women of reconciliation and peace! Amen. (Pope Francis)



Advent Week Three - Joy

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal. 5:22-25

"... the joy that the Lord communicates to us must find grateful love in us. Indeed, we achieve full joy when we recognize His mercy, when we become aware of the signs of His goodness. ... He who receives the gifts of God in a spirit of selfishness does not know true joy; rather, it is he who finds in God's gifts the opportunity to love Him with sincere gratitude and to communicate His love to others whose heart is filled with joy." (Pope Benedict XVI)

"A Christian is one who is invited ... Invited to what? ... You are invited to join in the feast, to the joy of being saved, to the joy of being redeemed, to the joy of sharing life with Christ." (Pope Francis)



Advent Week Four - Love

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35

Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives. Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfillment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us. (Pope Francis)

We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. (1 John 4:19-20)



Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016

Pope Francis has declared 2016 a “Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy” as a way for the Catholic Church to “make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy.”

The theme for this year has been taken from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, “God, who is rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4a). The opening of the “Jubilee of Mercy: Merciful Like the Father” will take place on the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. This is of great significance, for it compels the Church to continue the work begun at Vatican II.



Holy Years usually are held every 25 years; the last was the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. Pope Francis declared one only 15 years after the last great Jubilee; it was that important to him. Holy years feature special celebrations and pilgrimages and offer special opportunities to experience God's grace.

On Dec. 8, 2015, the Vatican Holy Door will be open to begin the year of celebration this Holy Year of Mercy.



How will you respond to this call to be a witness of mercy?

Year of Mercy – Advent Resources

Advent Calendar

PRAY First week of Advent						TIDY
PRAY Second week of Advent						TIDY
PRAY Third week of Advent						TIDY
PRAY Fourth week of Advent	JESUS IS GOD'S HOLY DOOR OF MERCY				HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!!!!!!! MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!!!!!!!	

A “door of mercy” Advent calendar is available for each classroom teacher (Mainly aimed toward JK- Gr. 3) through the school Faith Ambassador. Saturdays are reserved for tidying and Sundays for praying. Monday – Friday one panel of the “Holy Door” of Mercy in Rome will be cut off to reveal an image just in time to welcome Jesus! Each panel is named and accompanying reflections, scripture references and prayers have also been provided (see below) to deepen your own and your students’ awareness of the meaning of each door panel. Use the information as it developmentally fits for your students.

Links to Support Learning in the K-8 Classroom:

FDK

Advent – Special Seasons and Special Days for Age 4 – Loyola Press

<http://loyolapress.com/age-4-advent-special-seasons-and-days.htm>

PRIMARY

Jesse Tree ideas:

- NOTE: The Jesse Tree is mentioned in the Grade 1 and 3 expectations of the New Religion Curriculum Document
http://www.iccreligiouseducation.com/twelve_days_of_chris.cfm?subpage=221143
- Jesse Tree Overview:
http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/seasons/advent/jesse_tree.cfm
- Jesse Tree Instructions:
<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/activities/view.cfm?id=545>

JUNIOR

- Advent lesson plans for grades 4-6 (includes information about Advent, a make your own calendar, an age appropriate prayer service, and other classroom ideas
<http://www.loyolapress.com/advent-lesson-plan-intermediate-grades.htm>

INTERMEDIATE

- Arts and Faith - Each week Loyola Press provides a video commentary about a work of art inspired by the Sunday Scriptures. Use these videos to take a new look at this season of hope and preparation through the lens of sacred art.
<http://www.loyolapress.com/arts-and-faith-advent.htm>

Celebrating Advent in our Secondary Schools:

There are a number of ways our Catholic Secondary Schools can incorporate the Advent Season into their classes. While there are natural connections between the Religious Education classes and celebrating the liturgical year, by our Baptism we are all called to journey through Advent.

We can journey with our students as companions towards celebrating the coming of Jesus. Here are some ideas:

- Have an Advent Wreath in your classroom
- Start class with an Advent prayer - Pray with your students. Some resources are listed below or talk to your Chaplaincy Leader
- Research the History of Advent
- Read about Advent – <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/advent/history/the-history-of-advent/>
- Help students distinguish between the Advent Season and the Christmas Season!
<http://bustedhalo.com/video/advent-in-two-minutes>
- Help our students make the connection between charitable giving and Jesus' invitation to feed the hungry, clothe the naked... (cf. [Matt 25:31-46](#))
- Incorporating Justice themes into your lessons – helping students see that a Just world is a key component to building the Kingdom of God on earth
- Read the Sunday Gospel readings with your class (Looking for the readings? Ask your Chaplaincy Leader) or visit the CCCB Liturgical Calendar online: <http://nlo.cccb.ca/index.php/liturgical-calendar>
- Talk to your students about your participation in the Faith Community and the Sunday Eucharist!
- Promote Peace as we wait for the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ!

Questions you can explore with your students:

- What does the word Advent mean? Where does the word come from?
- What are the key messages and symbols of the season of Advent?
- How long does Advent last? What are some key scripture texts during this season?
- How is the Church Liturgical Year organized? (seasons, readings, themes or message, colours and symbols) When does the Church Liturgical Year begin and end?
- What is a Jesse Tree? What are differences/similarities between Jesus' genealogy in Matthew and Luke's gospels?
- How does the Advent wreath help to prepare Christians for Christmas?
- Why and how do people use Advent calendars? Where did Advent calendars originate?

From:

<http://extranetportal.bne.catholic.edu.au/re/Advent/Teaching%20and%20Praying%20Advent.pdf>

Advent Prayers for Families

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift
to us.

He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the
weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his
coming.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our
Savior.
Amen.

<http://www.loyolapress.com/advent-family-prayer.htm>



Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. (...) Waiting for God is an active, alert - yes, joyful - waiting. As we wait, we remember him for whom we are waiting, and as we remember him, we create a community ready to welcome him when he comes. (Henri Nouwen)

Advent Connections to Religious Education Curriculum and Existing Resources

Grade	New Curriculum/Program Expectations	Existing Program Connections
K		"Walking in the Light": Theme 16
GRADE 1 The word made flesh - Jesus (Advent)	Growing in Faith – Growing in Christ – Unit 2	
GRADE 2 The word made flesh - Jesus (Advent)		
GRADE 3 The word made flesh - Jesus (Advent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the origin of Advent and Christmas – connecting the images related to each season to Scriptural roots (CL3.1) • The church has established special days to celebrate the life of Christ (CL3) • Note: Jesse Tree and Advent Wreath (CL3.2) 	Unit 4 – Theme 10 and 12 (Advent) Page 137 "Celebrating God's Spirit" Page 143 "Celebrating God's Spirit" Page 148 "Celebrating God's Spirit"
GRADE 4 The Word made Flesh: Jesus (Advent & Christmas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramental focus: The Sacrament of Reconciliation (CL1) - CL1.3: Link the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation to the seasons of the liturgical calendar (Advent) and identify in the symbols of the seasons, signs of God's presence(• God's mercy & the sacraments (ML3) • Examine Scripture passages specific to various Liturgical seasons (CL3) – e.g. Advent and Christmas CL3.1 	Unit 4 Themes 10 – 12 Unit 4 Themes 10 – 12, Unit 7; Theme 20 Page 120-121 "Celebrating Hope in Advent" Page 128 "Celebrating God's Word in Advent" Page 134 "A Celebration of Light and Hope"
GRADE 5 The Word made Flesh: Jesus (Advent & Christmas)	The divinity of Jesus (CL3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Law: the Law of the Gospels (ML1) • Sacramental focus: Sacrament of the Sick (CL1) 	Unit 4 Theme 10 Page 132-133 "Celebrating the Hope of Advent" Page 140-141 "We Celebrate the Hope of Advent" Page 145-146 "Celebrating the Promise of Advent"
GRADE 6 The Word made Flesh: Jesus (Advent & Christmas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus' Hidden Life and public life (BL2) • The Incarnation (BL2) • Role of Mary (LC2) 	Unit 4 Themes 10 & 11 Unit 4 Theme 12 Unit 9 Theme 26 (Reconciliation) Page 121 "Blessing the Advent Wreath" Page 123-124 "Celebrating the Promise of a Covenant Written in our Hearts" Page 132-133 "Celebrating Advent's Dawning Light" Page 140-141 "Jesus is the Fulfillment of the Promise"

<p>GRADE 7</p> <p>The Word Made Flesh: Jesus (Advent & Christmas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus: Incarnation of God's Word; true God & true human (BL1) • The four gospels - the life and teaching of Christ Jesus. (B1) • Jesus taught his disciples how to pray (PR1) 	<p>Unit 7 Theme 2 (Jesus) Unit 5 & Unit 6 Theme 1 (Jesus) Appendix 4 (pages 325f) Gr. 7 Teacher Manual (Advent) Unit 6 Theme 3 (Scripture – Parables)</p> <p>We Have Neither Silver Nor Gold (posted on website under Religion Curriculum – page 47)</p>
<p>GRADE 8</p> <p>The Word Made Flesh: Jesus (Advent & Christmas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the New Testament, Jesus the Messiah fulfills the Covenant of the Old Testament (BL1) cf. Specific Expectation BL1.2: • Jesus' mission (LS3) • Jesus modelled and taught his disciples how to pray (PR1) • The Our Father is a prayer of faith, hope and charity (PR1) • The Way of Prayer is through Jesus (Mediator) in the power of the Holy Spirit to God the Father (PR2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 5 (pages 303f) Gr. 8 Teacher Manual (Advent)