



Advent

hope

peace

joy

love

THECHAPELCollective

An Advent Prayer



Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the
darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for
Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to
hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward
to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the
complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the
joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness,
yet seeking the light.

To you we say,
'Come Lord Jesus!'
Amen.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

Your Invitation

You're invited on an Advent pilgrimage. To push back against the rush & hurry of the season. A counter-cultural pivot against consumerism & unrealistic expectations.

We bid you come & join the chorus of Christ followers through the centuries; celebrating Christmas with thanksgiving for the Messiah who came, with joyful expectation of His return.

Advent comes from the Latin *adventus* ~ arrival/to come. This is an invitation not to add to your overburdened schedule; rather to invite Jesus into it. To come renew hope. To come infuse peace. To come inspire joy. To come saturate with love.

Traditionally Advent is celebrated on the 4 Sundays preceding Christmas (3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th in 2023), however we walk in liberty. The following are suggestions not to regulate & to legislate; rather to pause & anticipate. Adjust & incorporate in rhythm with your season.

On the following pages you will find 5 reflections you can engage with, one each week plus one for Christmas Day. You may find it helpful to intentionally place these in your calendar alongside moments that are already there.

There are 2 versions, one practice for young families and one practice for pairs/groups/families with older children. You may like to reflect on these practices over lunch with friends on Sunday. Or with your Connect Group mid week. Over family dinner on a Saturday. With your workmates on a meal break. You are invited to gather 5 candles to light (any type is fine) and partake of communion together with whatever supplies you have on hand. There is no formula, only grace, though these practices were designed to be engaged in with at least one other person. Created in the image of the Holy Trinity, we are designed to live flourishing lives in community.

May Jesus be glorified & you be ever more formed in Christ's likeness (see 2 Cor 3:18) as you abide in His presence this Advent season. "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." (Rev 22:17 NIV) Amen, let it be so.

Week 1

PRACTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Prepare ~ Lighting this candle is a special way we take time as a family to think about Jesus. The reason for Christmas! This week we will think about a word called hope. Hope means Jesus is always with us and He always keeps His promises. As we light this candle, let's say hope together: HOPE.

Play ~ (You may like to invite your child to make the word *hope* out of play dough or string.) Hope means we can trust God to keep His promises in the Bible. In Romans 15:13 it says: "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Israel (the people of God) had hope that God would send someone to save them from the bad things they had done. And He did! They looked forward to what God was going to do, and so can we. Let's draw a picture of something we're looking forward to this Christmas.

Pray ~ Let's thank God for the hope that one day He will make all things new. Say after me: Thank you God that you keep your promises just like you said you would. Thank you for hope. Amen.

Praise - Play 'Born Is The King (It's Christmas)' by Hillsong Worship

Week 1

PRACTICE FOR PAIRS/GROUPS/FAMILIES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Prepare ~ Let's all pause & take some deep breaths. Take a moment to slow our anxious thoughts. Jesus who is always present to us, we became aware of Your presence with us now. Holy Spirit You are welcome. As we light this candle, we reflect on the life-giving hope you bring. Say after me: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for hope.

Partake ~ Hope is faith-filled expectation. As Israel waited for a Saviour, let us wait on God for what we need in this season. His presence can carry us through whatever we encounter this Advent. Psalm 39:7 is a faith declaration: ““But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.” Let us call to mind God's past faithfulness to inspire our hope for the future. *(Invite people to share a time when God has been faithful in their lives.)* Let hope rise as you lift your eyes off your circumstances and fix your gaze on Jesus who is so faithful to walk with us through all seasons of life. Let us thank Jesus for the hope of His return when He will make all things new. *(Take communion together.)*

Pray ~ Hope isn't blind optimism, dependent upon external factors. It's an intentional step of faith, trusting that as we wait on God, He will meet with us and walk with us. Today let us reflect on Jesus' resurrection, to give us hope that the power that raised Christ from the dead lives in our hearts. That the God who came as a baby will one day come again in power, glory, mercy and justice. Let us pray along with the Psalmist who in Psalm 130:5 wrote: “I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.” Say after me: Thank you Jesus that in you we have exquisite hope, not just for the life to come, but You walk with us in this life too, no matter what we face. Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'Prince of Heaven' by Hillsong Worship

Week 2

PRACTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Prepare ~ Lighting these candles is a special way we take time as a family to think about Jesus. The reason for Christmas! Let's light a candle and say last week's word, hope. HOPE. This week we will think about a word called PEACE. Peace means Jesus is always with us and can help our hearts to feel calm, no matter what is happening. As we light another candle, let's say peace together: PEACE.

Play ~ (You may like to invite your child to make the word peace out of play dough or string.) In John 14:27 in the Bible Jesus says "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." Let's imagine we're wrapping a present up. Folding and wrapping and sticking, then tying a great big bow. Then pretend to give that present to each other. What a great gift Jesus gives us, the feeling of knowing that God is in control.

Pray ~ Let's thank God that He is always with us so we can feel safe. Say after me: Thank you God that your Holy Spirit is always with us. Thank you for peace. Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'On That Very First Christmas' by Colin Buchanan

Week 2

PRACTICE FOR PAIRS/GROUPS/FAMILIES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Prepare ~ Let's all pause & take some deep breaths. Take a moment to slow our anxious thoughts. Jesus who is always present to us, we became aware of Your presence with us now. Holy Spirit You are welcome. As we light these 2 candles, we reflect on the indescribable peace You offer us all. Say after me: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for hope & peace.

Partake ~ These words I will read may be familiar to us. May God's Holy Spirit breathe fresh life as we read them. Let's take a moment to soak in the richness of all that He is. Whatever our need, His love is greater. May God's love wash over us in unrelenting waves of peace, that He is all we need. Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Read the 4 names slowly, 3 times. Then invite people to share a time when God has given them unexpected, indescribable peace.) Let us thank Jesus, the Prince of Peace, for the peace He won when He made a way for us to be reconciled to our Everlasting Father. (Take communion together.)

Pray ~ May the words of John 14:27 resound afresh in our hearts, louder than our circumstances. Louder than the enemy. Louder than the rush, to-do-lists and weight of expectations this season can bring. Let peace wash over you as a flood of God's love. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Say after me: Thank you Jesus that in you we can have hearts at peace, as we quiet our souls before the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'His Name Shall Be' by Matt Redman

Week 3

PRACTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Prepare ~ Lighting these candles is a special way we take time as a family to think about Jesus. The reason for Christmas! Let's light 2 candles and say the last couple of words we did, hope & peace. HOPE. PEACE. This week we will think about a word called joy. Joy means Jesus can help our hearts to be happy, no matter what happens. As we light another candle, let's say joy together: JOY.

Play ~ (You may like to invite your child to make the word joy out of play dough or string.) When we get new presents at Christmas we may feel very happy. Show me a happy face. If our new toy breaks, we would feel sad, show me a sad face. Joy is the happy feeling deep deep down in our hearts, that we can have even if sad things happen because we know Jesus loves us and that He is the best gift! Show me a sad face that turns happy because of Jesus. We are going to make a list of things that bring us joy. (Write list together.) I'm going to read our list now. Every time I say something that brings us joy, you are going to jump for joy!

Pray ~ Let's thank God for the joy and happiness we can have even if things seem hard. Say after me: Thank you God for giving us joy deep down in our hearts. Thank you for joy. Amen.

Praise - Play 'Joy to the World' by Bethel Music Kids

Week 3

PRACTICE FOR PAIRS/GROUPS/FAMILIES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Prepare ~ Let's all pause & take some deep breaths. Take a moment to slow our anxious thoughts. Jesus who is always present to us, we became aware of Your presence with us now. Holy Spirit You are welcome. As we light these 3 candles we reflect on the true joy of knowing You. Say after me: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for hope, peace & joy.

Partake ~ Thankfulness isn't merely expressing thanks for what we have. It is a choice we make to turn our eyes to Jesus instead of our circumstances. It is a heart attitude we cultivate. As we give thanks, our hearts fill with joy. (Invite people to share some things they are thankful for.) Psalm 103:11-12 reminds us that "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Let us thank Jesus for the absolute joy of knowing He forgives our sins and loves us completely. (Take communion together.)

Pray ~ We choose this day Jesus to base our joy not on current circumstances, but on the joy set before us when You return in glory. Hope despite hardship. Not denying feelings and reality, but defining our lives by Jesus and His promises to restore & renew. May Romans 15:13 be the reality in our hearts this day. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Say after me: Thank you Jesus that in you we can have deep, abiding circumstance-defying, enemy-defeating joy. Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)' by Chris Tomlin

Week 4

PRACTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Prepare ~ Lighting these candles is a special way we take time as a family to think about Jesus. The reason for Christmas! Let's light 3 candles and say last few words we did, hope, peace & joy. HOPE. PEACE. JOY. This week we will think about the word love. Love means Jesus always loves us, no matter what we do, because He made us & we are His! As we light another candle, let's say love together: LOVE.

Play ~ (You may like to invite your child to make the word love out of play dough or string.) God's love for us is soooo big! A love so big, He came all the way from Heaven to Earth to show it, then all the way back to Heaven again. Romans 5:5 in the Bible says: "And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." We are so blessed to have hearts filled with Jesus' great big love. So we're going to share some of that love around. We're going to make some cards to share God's love with others. (Use whatever supplies you have at home to make some cards. A4 paper folded in half and pencils will do just fine.)

Pray ~ Let's thank God for how much He loves us, just because we're His! Say after me: Thank you God that you love us no matter what we do & that your love for us is bigger than the universe! Thank you for love. Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'The King of Christmas' by Colin Buchanan

Week 4

PRACTICE FOR PAIRS/GROUPS/FAMILIES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Prepare ~ Let's all pause & take some deep breaths. Take a moment to slow our anxious thoughts. Jesus who is always present to us, we became aware of Your presence with us now. Holy Spirit You are welcome. As we light these 4 candles, we reflect on the unconditional love You have for each one of us. Say after me: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for hope, peace, joy & love.

Partake ~ God's love is so vast no one can begin to understand it. How wonderful it is not static, but dynamic. Psalm 23:6 says "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Invite people to share some ways they have felt the love and goodness of God.) Let us thank Jesus for His love that we can only begin to imagine the depths of. (Take communion together.)

Pray ~ Take some time to pray these verses from Ephesians 3:16-19 over each other. "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Say after me: Thank you Jesus that Your love is relentless and You are continually pursuing us.

Praise ~ Play 'Silent Night/Jesus We Love You' by Maverick City Music

Christmas

PRACTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Prepare ~ Lighting these candles is a special way we take time as a family to think about Jesus. The reason for Christmas! Let's light 4 candles and say all the other words we've done, hope, peace, joy & love. HOPE. PEACE. JOY. LOVE. In the Bible, one of the names for Jesus is Christ. But Christ isn't Jesus last name! It's a word that means anointed one, which is a fancy way of saying Jesus is King! As we light our last candle, let's say Jesus is the King together: JESUS IS THE KING.

Play ~ (You may like to invite your child to make the word King out of play dough or string.) In Revelation 17:14 in the Bible it says that Jesus is ".....Lord of all lords and King of all kings....." We're going to listen to a song after we pray and it's all about Jesus being the King of the whole world, including us! As we listen, we're going to make some fun actions together.

Pray ~ Let's thank God for being a kind and loving King. Say after me: Thank you God that even though you are the King of Heaven, you came to earth so we could be your friends. Thank you for being my King! Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'Who's The King Of The Jungle' by Colin Buchanan

Christmas

PRACTICE FOR PAIRS/GROUPS/FAMILIES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Prepare ~ Let's all pause & and take some deep breaths. Take a moment to slow our anxious thoughts. Jesus who is always present to us, we became aware of Your presence with us now. Holy Spirit You are welcome. As we light these 5 candles, we reflect on Your coming as a baby, and we eagerly anticipate Your triumphal return when You will make all things new again. Say after me: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for hope, peace, joy, love & for You Jesus.

Partake ~ God is infinitely worthy of our praise, and how blessed we are that He chooses to lavish His love on us. May we all know the hope, joy, peace and love of God as they defining reality of our lives today. Luke 2:14 ""Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." " (Invite people to share what Christmas means to them.) Let us thank Jesus for his sacrifice of taking on flesh and ultimately dying in our place. Let's eagerly anticipate His Second Coming when He reconciles and redeems. What a glorious hope we have in Him. Hallelujah. (Take communion together.)

Pray ~ Today we celebrate our Mighty King who humbled Himself, that He might make a way back to God for those who seek Him. Matthew 6:33 exhorts us "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Let us seek Him today and may we experience the hope, joy, peace and love of Jesus. Say after me: Thank you Jesus that Your love is far more than we deserve, yet so freely given. We are so thankful for you! Amen.

Praise ~ Play 'O Holy Night (O Night Divine)' by Rend Collective

Colour one candle in during each reflection
& write the matching Advent word.
Made for kids & for the young at heart!





Advent

*Come
Lord
Jesus!*



THECHAPELCollective