

ADVENT

LITURGY

GUIDE

What is Advent?

The word advent means “the coming” or “the arrival.” It is a season of celebration and a season of preparation. In this season, we celebrate the redeeming birth story of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as we celebrate, we also remind our souls to be in preparation for His return to restore all things in heaven and earth.

What is Liturgy?

The word liturgy means “the work of the people.” While this kind of organized work does involve our being and our doing, it is not our own work. It is the work of the Kingdom of Heaven that is being energized by the Holy Spirit through us. We are participants in this work. And through participating in this work, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to use us as a vehicle for the Lord’s grace and love.

How to use this Guide

- Engage in the practices assigned to each day. Each practice is described on pages 3-7.
- We suggest doing this with someone else, such as your family, a friend, or your lifegroup.
- Do what you can. This is only an organized guide. Go at your own pace and make adjustments as needed.
- If you miss a day or two, don’t worry. Just jump back in on whatever day it is.
- Remember that this is not something to accomplish. The purpose of this Advent Liturgy is to simply be with Jesus, become like Jesus and love like Jesus.

Liturgy Guide

D E C E M B E R

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Worship / Prayer	Reflection Reading	Silence, Solitude, Stillness	Abstain From One Thing	Lectio Divina	Sacrificial Service	Sabbath

Practices Guide

Worship / Prayer

On Sunday Mornings, gather with your local church community to worship the Lord together.

On Sunday Evenings, set aside a certain amount of time to worship the Lord. As you begin to pray, repeat this phrase aloud:

**The day is done, the night has come,
so I quiet myself to embrace Your love.**

As you quiet yourself, take deep, slow breaths. When you are ready, slowly pray this prayer as you inhale and exhale your breath.

Inhale: Wonderful Counselor

Exhale: Guide me in Your hope.

Inhale: Mighty God

Exhale: Rule me with Your peace.

Inhale: Everlasting Father

Exhale: Fill me with Your joy

Inhale: Prince of Peace

Exhale: Teach me how to love like You

Inhale: Emmanuel

Exhale: I believe that You are with me

Reflectional Readings

On Mondays, spend some time reading one of the three provided devotional writings (*found in the back of this guide*). After reading, spend a few minutes reflecting on the questions provided.

Practices Guide

Silence, Solitude and Stillness

On Tuesdays, spend time in *silence, solitude, and stillness*.

Silence = refraining from speaking and actively thinking.

Solitude = withdrawing from the busyness of the day.

Stillness = sitting upright and physically still.

To engage in this practice:

- 1)** Find a quiet, comfortable place that would be the most distraction-free space for you. Perhaps it's a specific spot in your home, your car, or a quiet place in nature.
- 2)** Set aside a certain amount of time for you to do this practice. There is no length requirement. Spend however long you want or are able.
- 3)** Choose a word, phrase or an image that reminds you of Jesus. Let that word, phrase or image be the center of your focus during this time.
- 4)** For the remainder of the time you've set aside, try to be silent and still as best you can. Be gracious with yourself. If you find your mind drifting or your body fidgeting, just gently bring your attention back to your word, phrase or image.
- 5)** After the time is up, spend a few minutes reflecting on what this practice was like. How do you feel afterwards? How did you feel during? Is there anything you think the Lord might have been communicating to you?

Practices Guide

Abstain From One Thing

On Wednesdays, pick one thing to abstain from.

While the word abstinence is commonly used in conjunction with sexual activity or alcohol, through the lens of spiritual formation in Christ, this is a practice of refraining from something good in order to become more like Jesus. The sole purpose of this practice is not simply to prioritize self-control; it is to pull our attention away from any *gift* we have been given and draw closer to ***the Giver***.

To engage in this practice:

1) Choose one common thing in your life to refrain from. Some ideas could be: food, sugar, coffee, wine, social media, TV, music, video games, etc.

2) Pick one of the following amounts of time to practice abstaining from that one thing: **24 hours, 12 hours, 8 hours, 4 hours.**

3) If at any point you feel compelled to engage with that one thing during this time, gently bring your attention to the Lord; remind yourself of the purpose of this practice: **to draw closer to the Giver.**

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 12.9**, “But he (Jesus) said to me, **‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’** Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Practices Guide

Lectio Divina (or Scripture Reading)

On Thursdays, engage with Scripture following the steps of the classical practice of Lectio Divina. The purpose of this practice is not just *reading Scripture*; it is to allow your heart to embrace the deep truth of *who God is* and *what He has done*.

1 | Read (*lectio*)

Read the assigned Scripture (*see the daily schedule*). Underline, highlight, or write down **one word or phrase** that sticks out to you.

2 | Reflect (*meditatio*)

Reflect on that one word or phrase from the Scripture. Ask these questions: *What does this say about who God is? What does this say about what God has done? What does this say about who I am? What does this say about what the Lord is inviting me to?*

3 | Respond (*oratio*)

Talk to the Lord about this Scripture. Thank Him for His goodness that is displayed in this Scripture. Offer your heart to Him.

4 | Rest (*contemplatio*)

Take a few minutes to breathe deep and simply rest in the truth of this Scripture.

Practices Guide

Sacrificial Service

On Fridays, find a way that you can intentionally and lovingly serve someone in your community. What is something you can give up to serve another? Maybe it's your time? Your money?

Maybe it's generously paying for someone's groceries. Maybe it's baking a batch of cookies for your neighbor. Maybe it's writing a handwritten note to someone. The person you serve can be a family member, a close friend, a co-worker, or someone you just cross paths with.

Whatever it is, the purpose of this practice is not to achieve something but to find yourself participating in the ceaseless movements of God's generosity and grace for *all people*.

Sabbath

On Saturdays, spend time practicing Sabbath.

Sabbath = a time of resting in God.

The purpose of this Sabbath rest is not to just to spend a day doing nothing, but it is to delight in the Lord. Do something that you *love* to do. Maybe it's going on a walk, exercising, painting or baking. Whatever it is, *do it with the Lord*. Look for how the Lord is present with you in the moment, delighting in you as you delight in Him.

*Feel free to make any adjustments to these practices in order for them to flow well with your personal schedule.

The sole purpose of this is for you to **be with Jesus**,
become like Jesus and **love like Jesus**.

WEEK ONE

December 7 | Sunday

Worship / Prayer

December 8 | Monday

Reflectional Reading
Pause

December 9 | Tuesday

Silence, Solitude, Stillness

December 10 | Wednesday

Abstain From One Thing

December 11 | Thursday

Lectio Divina
Psaln 46

December 12 | Friday

Sacrificial Service

December 13 | Saturday

Sabbath

Spotify playlist:

Pause



Family Engagement Idea

Immanuel Walk: As a family, bundle up and go for a walk together. As you walk, point out everything you see (trees, leaves, sky, water, etc.) Then ask this question: what do these created things tell us about God the Creator?

WEEK TWO

December 14 | Sunday

Worship / Prayer

December 15 | Monday

Reflectional Reading
Remember

December 16 | Tuesday

Silence, Solitude, Stillness

December 17 | Wednesday

Abstain From One Thing

December 18 | Thursday

Lectio Divina
Luke 1.46-55

December 19 | Friday

Sacrificial Service

December 20 | Saturday

Sabbath

Spotify playlist:

Remember



Family Engagement Idea

Names of God: As a family, write down on sticky notes all the names of God you can think of (feel free to use your Bible or Google for more). Put all the sticky notes on a wall in your house and take some time to talk about what each name communicates about who God is and how you, as a family, might have experienced God through His names.

WEEK THREE

December 21 | Sunday

Worship / Prayer

December 22 | Monday

Reflectional Reading
Center

December 23 | Tuesday

Silence, Solitude, Stillness

December 24 | Wednesday

Abstain From One Thing

December 25 | Thursday

Lectio Divina
John 1.1-18

December 26 | Friday

Sacrificial Service

December 27 | Saturday

Sabbath

Spotify playlist:

Center



Family Engagement Idea

Prayer Circle: As a family, gather in a circle to pray together. During this time of prayer, do your best not to ask God for anything but simply spend the whole time telling God about how much you love him. Thank him for specific things He's done in your family. You can have one person pray or take turns praying.

December 8 | Pause

It's projected that for the year 2025 Americans alone will spend around one trillion dollars in the months of November and December for holiday shopping. This busy time, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, is, to say the least, a shopping frenzy. It's also during this time when you see a different side of people—especially when you're driving in traffic or in line at Target on Black Friday. As chaotic as this time can be, it is important to remember that there is absolutely nothing wrong with buying gifts for those you love—it's especially a way we practice God's generosity. But if we truly want to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and love like Jesus, then we have to ask this question: *how are we pursuing Jesus during this time? Or, how is Jesus pursuing me during this time?*

One of the best words that could describe our modern day is “hurry.” Often surrounding the holiday season are slogans like “Don't wait to shop!” or “Hurry in!” And in the midst of such a fast-paced, instant-consumption world, the idea of waiting seems counter-cultural and almost foolish. But what if waiting is actually the wisest, most beautiful way to spend our time? What if the best way to sync up with Jesus is not by doing more or collecting more, but simply pausing? Pausing to be still. Pausing to be silent. Pausing to just be, slowly and truly. Just think, in all of our hurry, how many beautiful things do we miss because we're off to the next thing? What if we just pause to be present and see the beauty all around us? And what if, in those quiet, still, present, everyday moments with Jesus, we are reminded that He is all we need. That He is enough.

For in those present moments, we remember the name

He is **Wonderful Counselor**.

He is **Mighty God**.

He is **Everlasting Father**.

He is **Prince of Peace**.

He is **Emmanuel**.

He is our King and our Savior, and he draws near.

O come let us adore Him.

Let us not hurry off.

O come let us adore Him.

Reflection Questions

1) *When you take time to pause, what immediate, nagging thought (such as “I don't have time”) distracts you from staying in that moment?*

2) *When you take time to pause, what emotions arise within you?*

3) *How can you create small ways for you to take time and space to pause and be present with Jesus?*

December 16 | Remember

At the core of this Advent season is an invitation to embrace a joy that is beyond any circumstance; a joy that gives us peace and steadies us in chaos; a joy that fills us with a bubbling wonder for even the most simple, mundane things in our lives. Such a joy is grounded in one constant, powerful truth: **God is with us.**

But if you're honest, even in the midst of such a truth (whether you've known and believed in it for a while or are just now considering it), do you still find yourself struggling to discover or experience that joy in your life? Do you find yourself sinking in stress, unable to gather contentment in your season of life?

If that's you, please know, you are not alone in that struggle. So much can be said about this struggle, but what is perhaps most helpful to see is that at the root of this struggle lies our very own tyrant-like need to control: to control outcomes, or other people, or situations; to be in complete control of what we have, or what we do, or what other people think or say about us. In a lot of ways, this need to control acts as an emotional defense mechanism that attempts to protect us from what we often fear most: *our own vulnerability and our fear of the unknown.*

But what if recognizing this deep need to control is also the first step in finding joy? What if the truth that God is with us is not meant to be just a churchy slogan or Christian cliché said around the holidays, but is actually a balm of healing that soaks into our souls, embracing our deeply rooted need to control? And the power that comes in such a healing is when we release our grip on trying to be God and simply let God be God.

In accepting His healing, fully embracing the reality of the truth, God is with us, we remember who God is: The One who holds all things together; The One whose perfect love casts out all fear; The One whose light will not be overcome by darkness; The One who walks beside us at every moment.

The author M. Robert Mulholland Jr. said that *"It is only when we are no longer afraid to let go that we will discover the power of God to hold us."*

As we remember Him, may we remember His name.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

And when we remember His name, may we find the courage to release all control to Him, giving everything and everyone to Him.

Reflection Questions

- 1) Where do you see the need to control things the most in your life?
- 2) What is most difficult about releasing control to God?
- 3) What is one small thing you can release to God right now?

December 22 | Center

Like a ship tossed around by the wind and the waves, it is far too easy for us to become distracted and drift away from *our anchor*. Especially in this holiday season, with all the hurry pulsing through our veins, the anxiety filling our minds, the events claiming our calendar, the items piling up on our to-do lists, and the aching in our hearts as another year passes by, it is easy for us to let our attention be divided into a thousand different directions.

But what remains constant as we are distracted is the loving, gracious presence of Jesus. As an *anchor for our souls*, he remains steady, unshakeable in the chaos of the sea, and graciously patient with us as we attempt to fight the waves on our own.

In every moment of the day—both in the chaotic and the mundane—His grace is always reaching out to us, ready to anchor, to pull us closer in love. But he awaits our invitation. He waits for us to pause and release control, inviting Him to be our center and source of strength.

The theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that *"The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come."*

The more we recognize how much we can't control, the more we understand how much we desperately need the Lord. And we find ourselves longing for more and more of Him.

The good news is that **Christ has come, Christ is with us now, and Christ will come again soon.**

And as we celebrate His arrival, delight in His presence, and await His return, may we remind ourselves that He is always worthy of our undivided attention and affection. May we remember His name, spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ***"His name shall be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."***

May we center ourselves on Him. May we anchor our whole being to the One who holds all things together.

Reflection Questions

- 1) How would you describe what your attention is like in this season of life? Divided? Focused?
- 2) What do you think it means for you to hear that Jesus is always worthy of your undivided attention and affection?
- 3) How can you uniquely pause to be still, release control, and center yourself upon Jesus today?

