



# ad·vent

/ˈad,vent/

*noun*

The arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. The first season of the Christian church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays.

*synonyms*

arrival, appearance, emergence, materialization, occurrence, dawn, birth, rise, development

## **WHY SHOULD WE CELEBRATE ADVENT?**

In a season that is busy with shopping, family, meals, decorating, and traveling, we often forget what all the busyness is about; or at least what it *should* be about. Observing the season of Advent is a way to interrupt the busyness and re-orient our hearts and minds toward the arrival of Jesus. Advent expands the Christmas celebration to include the four weeks prior to it. In doing so, our observance becomes a practice that can help aim our wandering hearts and quiet our busy souls as we reflect on the Christmas story. Advent helps us remember and dwell on what God has done for us in sending Christ. It's also a way for us to link arms with the generations that have gone before us, and experience their same anticipation as they eagerly awaited the coming Messiah who would take away the sin of the world. Lastly, it helps us to long and pray for the return of Jesus and his establishment of the New Heaven and the New Earth. This will be our eternal dwelling place, filled with peace and light beyond imagination.

## **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

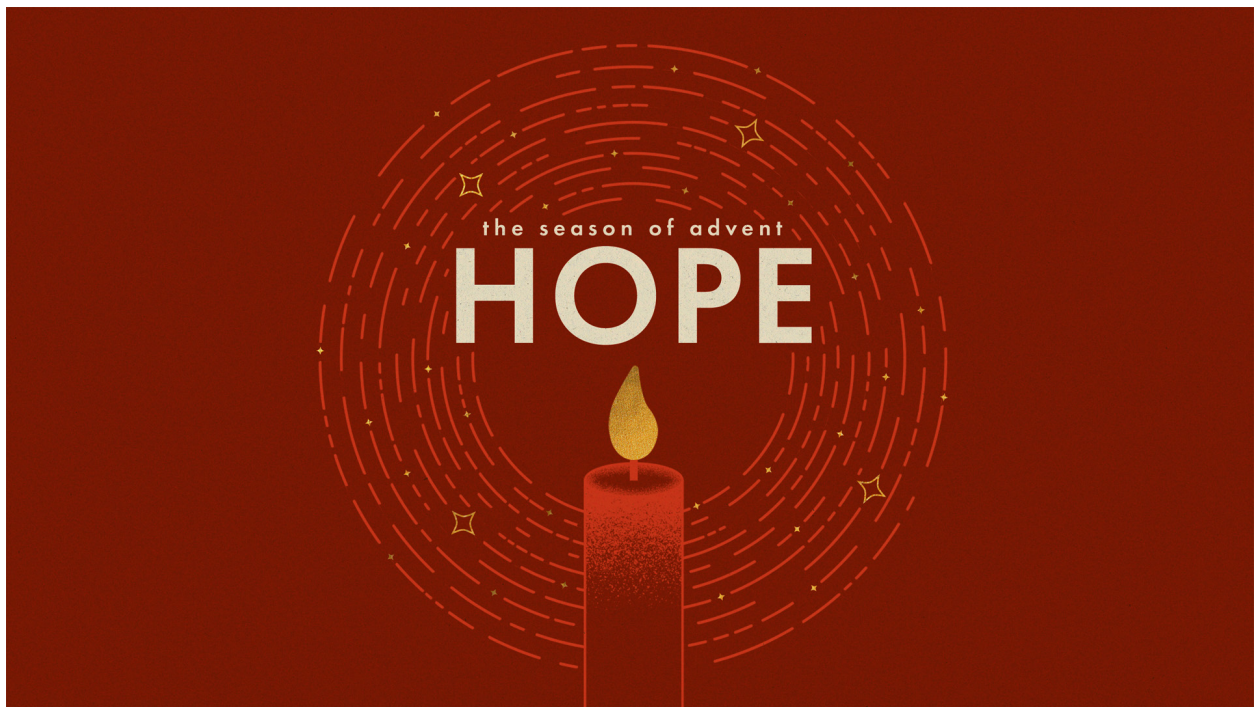
Our hope is that this guide will be a tool that helps you carve out some intentional time with God, friends, and family throughout the Christmas season. Each week includes a passage of scripture, a devotional, reflection questions, a prayer, songs, and activities. Before you get too busy, pick a day, time, and place that you can carve out 30 to 60 minutes to engage with the content each week leading up to Christmas. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you and talk through what you are learning. If you have children, consider making this a special weekly activity to build anticipation toward Christmas.

## **ADVENT WREATH HOW-TO GUIDE:**

- 1) Gather four candles of your choice (any kind will do).
- 2) Place them in a line or circle on a surface that won't be damaged by wax.
- 3) Optional: Spruce it up with some holly, ribbon, or winter greenery. Light a candle each week during your time of reflection. Each week is meant to build toward the next, until all four candles are lit during your Advent reflection time.

Parents, kids love lighting the candles! Help them understand anticipation, excitement, joy, and longing as they light each candle.

Week 1



**Light the First Candle**  
**Read the Devotional**  
**Reflect**

“For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
*Wonderful Counselor...*”

Isaiah 9:6

**T**here’s no shortage of “counselors” in our world today. From family and friends, to our social media feeds, to books and blogs, to commercials and billboards, it seems as if everywhere we look someone is trying to “counsel” us into trying the latest diet, subscribing to a certain parenting strategy, or buying their newest product. Our world is overrun with “counselors,” yet much of the counsel they give is unhelpful.

At the same time, however, we need wise counsel in order to navigate the twists and turns of life. Although we don’t like to admit it, we don’t have it all figured out, we don’t know everything, and in order to flourish in the world we need help along the way.

When the book of Isaiah was written, God’s people Israel had wandered from God and were not flourishing as a nation; you could say they had listened to human counselors instead of God. And, while the book of Isaiah contains words of judgment against the people for turning from God, it also proclaims incredible hope that God is on his way to set all things right again.

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. -*

Isaiah 7:14

Immanuel, God with Us, the Messiah, is coming. He's coming to restore the relationship between God and his people, he's coming to right every wrong, he's coming to defeat sin and death once and for all. And he's also coming to be a *Wonderful Counselor* to his people.

The Messiah is the King to whom every knee will bow (Is 45:23), and yet he also comes to give counsel to his people. Normally a king surrounds himself with counselors to help him rule, but *this* King would both rule and stoop to *provide* counsel to his people!

And the counsel he gives will be better than any human counsel. This word *wonderful* (pele' in Hebrew) doesn't just mean "really good," it actually points to something "miraculous." The Messiah God's people were longing for wouldn't just provide really good counsel, his words would be the best counsel anyone could ever give.

And part of the hope we have in this Advent season is that we don't have to look forward to the coming of this *Wonderful Counselor*. He has come and his counsel is ours for the taking!

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. - John 1:14*

Immanuel has come and is no longer simply a hoped for Messiah, he's the risen and reigning Jesus! And this Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, the King of the Universe, is also the *Wonderful Counselor*, helping his people navigate their way in the world.

Jesus' counsel, in contrast to human counsel, is perfect because he's the divine Word, full of truth, and by him all things were created (Col 1:16). And therefore we know that we can and should trust Jesus' guidance for our lives. We can and should trust what Jesus says about every part of our lives – our relationships, our finances, our families. We, as God's people, don't have to wander aimlessly through life, we don't have to rely on human knowledge and wisdom, we get to sit under the teaching of the *Wonderful Counselor*.

Even then, though, sin still has its way in the world and in our lives. So, while Jesus' teachings lead us down the path of flourishing in a broken world, they don't lead us to a perfect life always full of happiness and totally free from suffering. At least not yet.

But because Jesus is the *Wonderful Counselor* who is also the reigning King, we know that he deserves our trust when it comes to how we live now and he deserves our trust that he will make all things right one day. Jesus as the *Wonderful Counselor* provides us hope that we have the best place available to go for guidance for our lives in the here and now. But Jesus as the *Wonderful Counselor* provides even greater hope that he knows how to right every wrong in the end!

Immanuel, the Word, has come and he's broken into our broken world, but the work isn't finished. He will come again to finish his work. Our job, in the meantime, is to trust him. We trust that he knows what's best for us even when the world around us is

counseling us otherwise. And we trust, even in the midst of our suffering and sadness, that one day *he will wipe away every tear from (our) eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore* (Rev 21:4).

## **REFLECTIONS**

Consider where you look for counsel on how to live your life? Are you explicitly or implicitly receiving poor counsel from somewhere? What changes do you need to make to submit yourself to the counsel of Jesus?

What areas of your life do you need to trust Jesus with in this Advent season?

How does it encourage you that Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor?

## **PRAYER**

Wonderful Counselor, we are exhausted by the many voices telling us how to live our lives. In this Advent season, help us clear our minds of the noise and fill our minds with you. We confess and repent of the ways we are living according to the wisdom of the world instead of your wisdom. Help us live under your guidance in the day-to-day. And, in our suffering and sadness, help us trust that you are coming back to make all things new.

## **HYMNS & SONGS**

O Come O Come

Emmanuel Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

## **SPOTIFY PLAYLIST**

Search for redemptionchurch

[Songs of Advent](#)

## **ACTIVITY**

Plan to go look at Christmas lights or see a Christmas performance one evening this week with your friends, your spouse, or your family. Use that time to consider what is one hope you have for this Christmas season. Ask your friends or family the same question.

## **Luminance**

Mitch Park, 1501 W Covell Rd, Edmond, OK 73003

5pm - 10pm Daily

## **Christmas in the Park**

Chisholm Trail Park, 2200 S Holly Ave, Yukon, OK 73099

6pm - 11pm Daily

MAY YOU BE FILLED WITH HOPE IN CHRIST

This guide was written and distributed by Redemption Church of  
Oklahoma City.

All scripture is quoted from the ESV Bible.

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