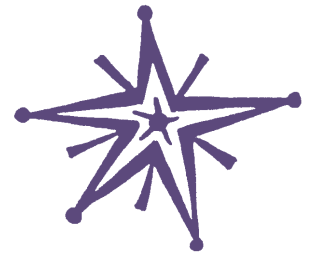


# Blessing of an Advent Wreath

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent



The Advent Wreath is a wonderful tradition to help us **visibly mark** the passing of time before Christmas in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the **First Sunday of Advent** or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated in the home, it is appropriate that it is blessed by a parent or another member of the family.

*All make the sign of the cross*

**Leader:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**All:** Who made heaven and earth.

*Scripture Reading (Select one):*

**Isaiah 9** lines 1-2 & 5-6

**Isaiah 63** lines 16-17 & 19, or

**Isaiah 64** lines 2-7

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

*Prayer & Blessing*

**Leader** (all join hands):

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.

May the 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.

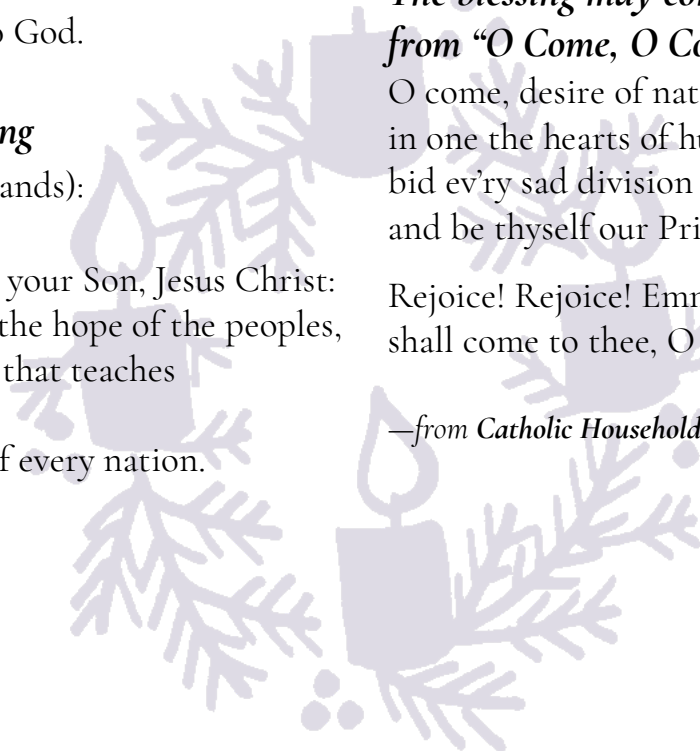
**All:** Amen.

*The blessing may conclude with a verse  
from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":*

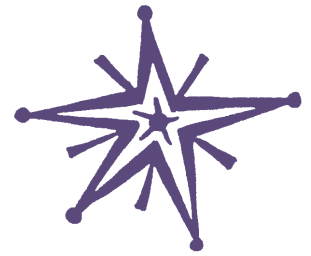
O come, desire of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of humankind;  
bid ev'ry sad division cease  
and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

—from *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*



# Prayers for Weekly Lighting of the Advent Wreath



The Scripture readings for each Sunday in Advent take us along a journey of **waiting and preparing** for the birth of the Savior. Each week, the Prophets (Isaiah & company), and the Gospel readings move us through our anticipation of Jesus' birth with themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.

As you light your Advent Wreath each Sunday, say the prayer for that week. This is a wonderful ritual to do **before Sunday dinner** so the warm glow of the candles can be a **reminder of the Light of Christ** to come as you share a meal with loved ones. For families with children, encourage your children, who are able, to light the candles and lead the prayers.

## ***Week 1: Hope (light 1 purple candle)***

Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.

## ***Week 2: Peace (light 2 purple candles)***

Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.

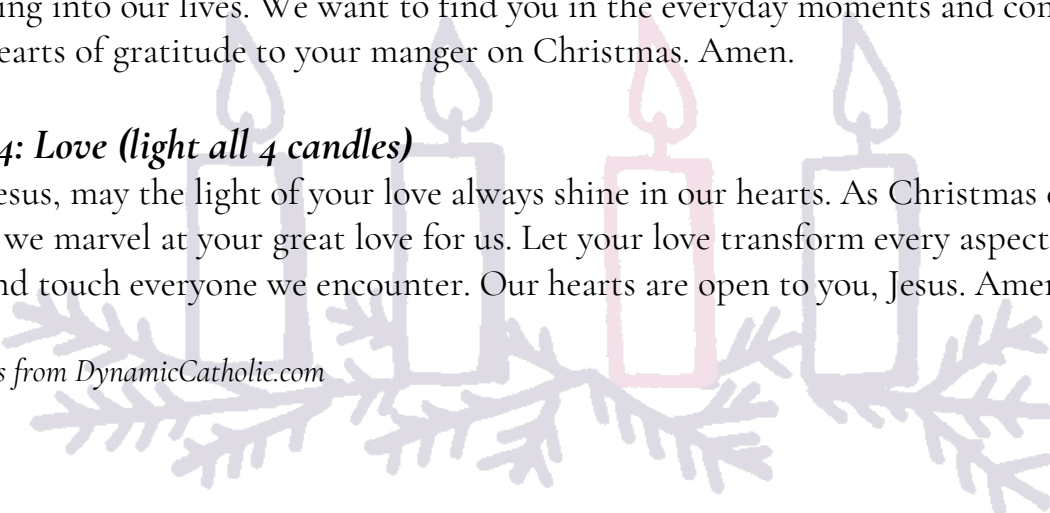
## ***Week 3: Joy (light 2 purple candles and 1 pink "joy!" candle)***

Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

## ***Week 4: Love (light all 4 candles)***

Dear Jesus, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Amen.

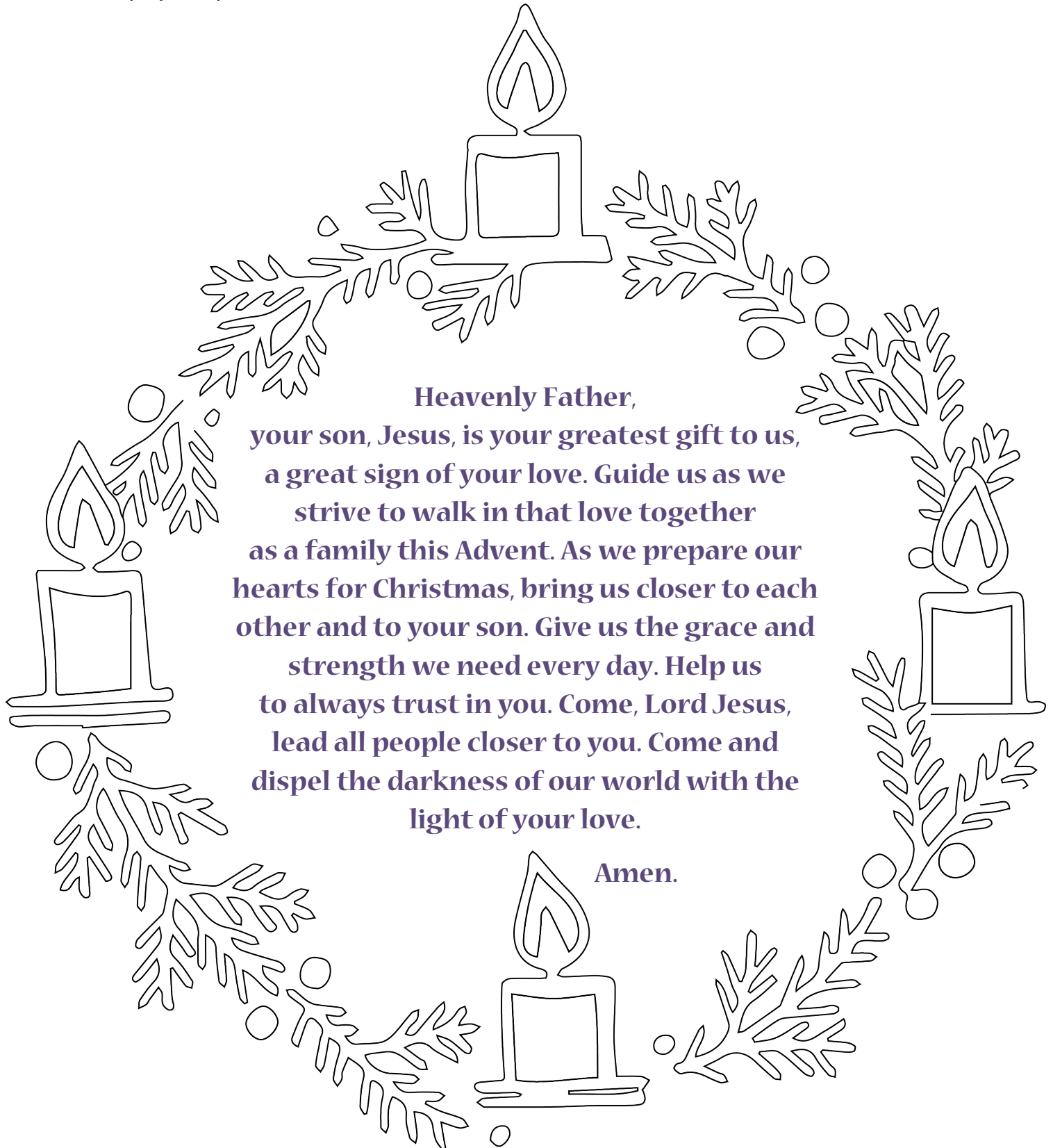
- Prayers from [DynamicCatholic.com](http://DynamicCatholic.com)



# Advent Prayer for Families

Families are encouraged to pray this prayer together to help center your family life on the true meaning of Advent: preparing our hearts for the coming of the Lord. Ask your children to cut out the image and color the wreath. Hang it on your fridge to use at mealtimes or before bed.

—Prayer from *DynamicCatholic.com*



# The "O Antiphons" of Advent



The Church has been singing the "O" Antiphons since at least the eighth century. The O Antiphons are seven responses, sung or recited, to introduce the canticle of Mary (the Magnificat) at evening prayer from **December 17 to December 23**, which is the *octave* before Christmas.

These antiphons are based on Isaiah's prophecies and refer to the **different ancient titles given to the Messiah**. You will find them in the Book of Isaiah: 11:2–3 & 28:29 (Dec 17) 11:4–5 & 33:22 (Dec 18) 1:1 & 11:10 (Dec 19) 9:6 & 22:22 (Dec 20) 9:1 (Dec 21); 9:5 & 2:4 (Dec 22) and 7:14 (Dec 23).

## How to pray and teach the O Antiphons

We can bring these antiphons into our own prayers, as reminders of God's promise of redemption through the Messiah, who we are joyfully awaiting. We can use them as **introductions to our own prayers**, especially to begin our prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord. We can teach them to our children with the hymn, **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** or help them **create ornaments** in the shape of "O"s with each antiphon on the inside to hang on the tree or as a banner before Christmas.

Regardless of how you incorporate these ancient words into your Advent prayer life, let them speak to you, and maybe they will become part of your family traditions. —*from Loyolapress.com*

### December 17: O Sapientia

O Wisdom of our God Most High,  
guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

### December 18: O Adonai

O Leader of the House of Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

### December 19: O Radix Jesse

O Root of Jesse's stem,  
sign of God's love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!

### December 20: O Clavis David

O Key of David,  
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:  
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

### December 21: O Oriens

O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those  
who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death.

### December 22: O Rex Gentium

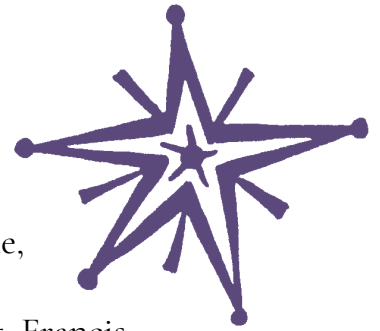
O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man,  
whom you formed from the dust!

### December 23: O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!

—*from Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

# Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene



Did you know that St. Francis of Assisi made the Christmas crèche, or manger, for Christmas Eve of 1223? He wanted to remind everyone why we celebrate Christmas, the Nativity of the Lord. St. Francis made the nativity scene in the style of a typical Italian manger, familiar to people in the village, in order to make the scene more real to everyone. He wanted everyone know that Jesus was born to be with them, and he wanted all people to recognize themselves in the Nativity scene.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on Christmas Eve or at another suitable time. When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it is blessed by a parent or another family member.

## *All make the sign of the cross*

**Leader:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**All:** Who made heaven and earth.

## *Scripture Reading (select one)*

**Luke 2:1** (lines 1-8) or

**Isaiah 7:10** (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

To our lives he brings joy and peace,  
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,  
bless all who look upon this manger;  
may it remind us of  
the humble birth of Jesus,  
and raise our thoughts to him,  
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,  
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

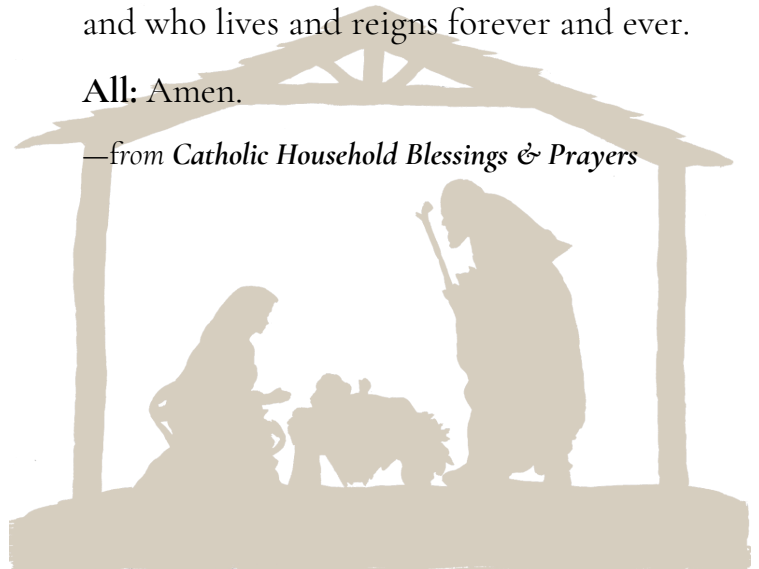
**All:** Amen.

## *Prayer & Blessing*

**Leader** (all join hands):

God of every nation and people,  
from the very beginning of creation  
you have made manifest your love:  
when our need for a Savior was great  
you sent your Son  
to be born of the Virgin Mary.

—from *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*



# Blessing of a Christmas Tree



Christmas trees were first found in medieval plays about Jesus that depicted the *tree of paradise* and the *Christmas light* or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the world. According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and remains in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany on January 6. The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing. In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member on Christmas Eve or another suitable time.

***When all have gathered, a song can be sung.***

**Leader:** Makes the sign of the cross

**All:** Amen

**Leader:** Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

**All:** Amen.

***In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:***

**Leader:** My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

***Scripture Reading (select one)***

Titus 3:4-7

Ezekiel 17:22-24

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

***Intercessions***

**Leader:** Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.  
**R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.**

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

***The Lord's Prayer:*** After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

**Leader** (all join hands):  
Lord our God,  
we praise you for the light of creation:  
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.  
We praise you for the light of Israel:  
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.  
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:  
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of  
Peace,  
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,  
let your blessing come upon us  
as we illumine this tree.  
May the light and cheer it gives  
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.  
May all who delight in this tree  
come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
**All:** Amen.

*The lights of the tree are illuminated.*

### **Conclusion**

*The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:*  
May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace  
and joy, now and forever.  
**All:** Amen.

*The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”:*

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

—from *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

