



Holy Family Parish
Religious Instruction - Grades K-5
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Lesson 6 - Advent

Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. These are the four seasons of nature. The Church has different seasons too, which we call liturgical seasons. We don't have time to go through all of them now, but I want to talk about the season that helps us get ready for Christmas. This season is called Advent.

These days before Christmas are not just for putting together your Christmas list. Advent is four weeks of special time set aside to help us get ready for when Christ comes again. I'm sure you already know that Christ came as a baby boy over 2,000 years ago, but did you know He also comes to us in the Sacraments, and will come again.

Have you ever had to prepare for something really special like a concert, a play, the end of school or the start of a vacation? This time can be exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time. It's exciting because you know the great event is approaching, but nerve-wracking, because there are things you need to do to get ready. That's a lot like Advent: we're excited, because God is coming, but we also must make sure we are ready when He comes. The season of Advent helps us to do that. We have special customs and traditions that help us to focus on God's coming.

Color Violet: Advent is similar to Lent, but not as strict. Violet is used by the Church to show sorrow, penitence and preparation. It reminds us that we're not perfect and we have things to work on. Ask yourself: Am I strong enough to give up something for Advent? What do I need to do better? How are my relationships? How is my prayer life? What about my bad habits? Take some time to think about these questions this Advent.

Advent Wreath: The wreath is made out of evergreen branches, which tell us that only God is eternal, while time here is passing. There are three purple candles representing penance and one rose color representing joy, which give us a balance of penance and joy during this season. The candles remind us that Christ's light is coming into the world.

Nativity: A nativity scene helps us to recall that this event truly happened! The custom of displaying figures showing the birth of Jesus Christ can be traced back to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223. Do you have one in your house? If not, put it on the top of your Christmas list.

Christmas Tree: The tree in the garden of Eden led to Adam and Eve being kicked out of Paradise. The Christmas tree (traditionally hung with apples) reminds us that Christ brings new life and light into the world by His birth. Ornaments representing, angels, stars, hearts, flowers and bells etc. are hung to show us the way in which God blesses us with goodness.

Our Lady: The Blessed Mother has a very special role to play in Advent. Did you ever stop to think that if it wasn't for your mom, you wouldn't be here? Well, without our Blessed Mother, Our Blessed Lord could not have come into the world. Therefore, we remember her during Advent, because she who prepared for Christ's First Coming, will also prepare us for His Second Coming.

Exercise:

Learn and memorize the Angelus Prayer and say this every night at dinner with your family starting this Advent. (The V is voice of the leader and R is the response.)

The Angelus

V. The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

R. Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary...

V. And the Word was made Flesh:

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

R. that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray:

(All together) Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

Lesson 6: Take-home Quiz

1. Write down the name of two colors seen during Advent?
2. What do each represent?
3. What does the season help us to get ready for?
4. Who is the Mother of God?
5. Who can help us prepare for Christ's coming?
6. Which saint gave us the Nativity scene?
7. How many weeks are there in Advent?
8. What prayer should we say every day to remember Christ's birth?
9. About how many years ago did Christ come?
10. Christ came as a baby and he will come at the end of time. In what other way does He come to us?