

The Advent Wreath

Like the Christmas tree, the advent wreath is a custom that has its roots in an ancient non-Christian culture. It was adapted for Christian celebrations and has become a favorite advent tradition.

The wreath is made of a circle of evergreen branches. Four candles (three purple and one pink) are arranged around the wreath. The wreath could also be made in poster fashion and pinned to a bulletin board. (Pin on a bright paper "flame" to "light" each candle.) The circular form of the wreath, with no beginning and no end, is a symbol of eternity. The purple candles (lit on the first, second and fourth Sundays of Advent) symbolize our advent waiting; the pink candle (lit on the third Sunday) symbolizes joy.

It is easy to add solemnity to the lighting of the advent candle. It is as simple as a Scripture reading, followed by praying for people you know who need prayers and then the lighting of the candle. The service could be done with the room darkened and conclude with the Our Father.

It is a beautiful custom to light the wreath before family meals and family prayer times. During Advent, four people are front stage in the Gospels: Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist. Look up in your Bible and read Luke chapter 1 and Matthew chapter 1 verse 18 and following and find out why.



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