



CHRISTMAS JOY

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

At Home Resource

Christmas Joy Offering 2020

Advent Wreath Lighting

Supplies:

Advent Wreath (Families can create a paper plate wreath using the model described on the attached Activity Page or a wreath that they already have), matches, Bible, a hymnal (optional)

Gather:

Each week, begin this time by having members of your family share:

- a time that they felt that God was with them, and
- the name of one leader that stood out in their life this week that they would like to pray for (could be an elected official, teacher, coach, church leader, supervisor, etc.).

At the conclusion of this time of sharing, move into a time of prayer using this one or one of your own:

God with us, as we look forward to the joy of Christmas, may we set aside our worries, our distractions and even our preparations to enter into a time of devotion together. We give thanks for the ways that we have felt the gift of your presence with us (insert specific moments of thanksgiving) and we give thanks for the leaders whose names we raise to you now (insert names shared). We bring our prayers to you as we light our Advent wreath, preparing our hearts and our homes to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.

Read from Scripture:

The Scripture for week 1 follows the theme of the Christmas Joy Offering, with the rest of the readings following each Sunday's Revised Common Lectionary readings:

Week 1: Matthew 1:18–23

Week 2: Isaiah 40:1–11

Week 3: Isaiah 61:1–4

Week 4: Luke 1:26–38

Christmas Eve: Luke 2:1–14

Sing a Hymn or Carol:

Choose a hymn or carol that is meaningful to your family that you can sing each week. Some suggestions from “Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal” that would be particularly appropriate for Advent include:

- “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” (#82)
- “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (#88)
- “Wait for the Lord” (#90)

Light the candle:

Invite children to be involved in this — toddlers can put the sticky-note “flame” on the paper wreath, or can assist an adult in lighting the candle and school-aged children can take part in the reading. Feel free to adjust or paraphrase as feels appropriate for your family.

At the beginning of each lighting of the candles:

God has given us the perfect gift — Jesus, Emmanuel — God with us.

On the First Sunday of Advent, and at successive lightings:

The angels brought good news of comfort and the promise that Jesus is coming to save us from our sins. With joy, we wait for the promise of Emmanuel — God with us.

Light the first candle.

On the Second Sunday of Advent, and at successive lightings:

As prophets predicted, we remember the stories and proclaim the ways Jesus comforts us and brings good news to our world.

Light the second candle.

On the Third Sunday of Advent, and at successive lightings:

We wait for the coming of the Christ-child who brings hope to a world in need and gladness to those with sad hearts.

May we hear the words of the prophet to our generation.

Light the third candle.

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and at successive lightings:

With the Angel Gabriel, we rejoice in God’s power to bring Jesus into the world and remember that “nothing will be impossible with God.”

Light the fourth candle.

On the eve of Christmas, or on Christmas Day:

With the choirs of angels, we sing: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth!”

Light the center Christ candle.

Close with a song *Tune: “Frere Jacques”*

God is with us (echo: God is with us),

What a gift! (echo: What a gift!).

Waiting and expecting (echo: Waiting and expecting),

Christmas joy (echo: Christmas joy).

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