



THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTMAS

A JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT

The Certainty of Christmas

A Journey through Advent

What is Advent?

Advent means “coming” and is a time of waiting and preparation as we look forward to the day when we celebrate the coming of Christ to our world, God in human form, on Christmas day. The season of Advent covers the 4 Sundays before Christmas day. Advent is also the start of the Church year.

The Sundays of Advent are often focussed around the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. This resource centres around an Advent Wreath, the lighting of candles for each of these themes, and engaging with Bible stories in the lead up to Christmas Day. In uncertain times it is good to create daily and weekly rhythms and routines as anchors or lighthouses to help us stay firm and find our way when the storms of life come with such unpredictability. It is our hope and prayer that these resources will be a part of that for you and your family.





Advent Wreaths

Advent Wreaths are a way of marking the season of Advent, the four Sundays preceding Christmas and the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. The first candle is lit on the first Sunday and then again at each dinner time across the week. In the second week two candles are lit each time, the third week three and the fourth week four.

Traditionally, holly or pine wreaths are made with holders for five candles. Surrounding a central candle the wreath is laid on a table or stand or suspended from the ceiling.

Make an Advent Wreath

There are many videos on YouTube showing you how to make an Advent centrepiece for your dining table. At its simplest you'll need something green to make a circle with and five candles. Different traditions have different coloured candles, but for these activities we've chosen green, blue, yellow, red and white.

1. Make a circle with the greenery (you could use an oasis circle which you can purchase from a craft shop, or even use some playdough you've made). Using herbs in your display gives a nice fragrance.
2. Arrange the candles with the white one in the middle.
3. Arrange this all on a wooden board or a dinner plate will protect your table from any wax that might run down the side of the candles.
4. Remember to water it occasionally if using fresh greenery.

Hope, Peace, Joy, Love

Another great resource you can make use of is the [Kiwi Advent Illustrations](https://www.strandz.org.nz/adventillustrations.html). These are kiwi designs of the four words of Advent, beautifully illustrated for all ages to colour in. They are from our friends at Strandz, the hub of Children and Families Ministries in the Anglican Church of New Zealand.

See <https://www.strandz.org.nz/adventillustrations.html>

Hope/Tūmanako

First Sunday of Advent

Colour: **Green**

Ask someone to read out the following (more than one can do this):

Today is the first Sunday of Advent - the time when we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

We light a candle each week to remind us that Jesus brings light into the dark places of the world.

*We light the candle of HOPE to proclaim that God's light is coming into the world. (light the **green** candle)*

Read the Bible together

Luke 1:5-25

Engage with the Bible

- I wonder which part of the story you like the best?
- I wonder which part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder where we can find HOPE in this story?
- I wonder what certainty there is in this story?

Bunting activity

You will need: paper, scissors, felt pens, string, stapler

Cut out triangle shapes from paper and write the word HOPE on them. Decorate, attach to the string and hang up. Alternatively you could cut out lots of small triangles, write one letter per triangle and make a long string of them to decorate your Christmas Tree. You could also use the word TŪMANAKO.



Closing prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the Hope that we can find in Jesus, today and every day. Amen

Peace/Rangimarie

Second Sunday of Advent

Colour: **Blue**

Ask someone to read out the following (more than one can do this):

Today is the second Sunday of Advent – the time when we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Grass withers, flowers fade, but God's word lasts forever.

*We light this candle as a symbol of our HOPE (light the **green** candle)*

*We long for the day when peace and goodwill is real across the world. We light this candle as a symbol of PEACE (light the **blue** candle)*

Read the Bible together

Luke 1:26–38

Engage with the Bible

- I wonder which part of the story you like the best?
- I wonder which part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder where we can find PEACE in this story?
- I wonder what certainty there is in this story?

Bunting activity

You will need: paper, scissors, felt pens, string, stapler

Cut out triangle shapes from paper and write the word PEACE on them. Decorate, attach to the string and hang up. Alternatively you could cut out lots of small triangles, write one letter per triangle and make a long string of them to decorate your Christmas Tree. You could also use the word RANGIMARIE.

Closing prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the Peace that we can find in Jesus, today and every day. Amen

Joy/Harikoa

Third Sunday of Advent

Colour: **Yellow**

Ask someone to read out the following (more than one can do this):

This is the third Sunday of Advent – the time when we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Tell of a world where the desert sings, rejoices and blossoms.

Where everyone will want to dance and sing for joy.

*We wait in HOPE and PEACE (light the **green** and **blue** candles)*

*The God in whom we rejoice, prepares our hearts for the coming of the Lord. We light the candle of JOY. (light the **yellow** candle).*

Read the Bible together

Luke 1:39-56

Engage with the Bible

- I wonder which part of the story you like the best?
- I wonder which part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder where we can find JOY in this story?
- I wonder what certainty there is in this story?

Bunting activity

You will need: paper, scissors, felt pens, string, stapler

Cut out triangle shapes from paper and write the word JOY on them. Decorate, attach to the string and hang up. Alternatively you could cut out lots of small triangles, write one letter per triangle and make a long string of them to decorate your Christmas Tree. You could also use the word HARIKOA.

Closing prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the Joy that we can find in Jesus, today and every day. Amen

Love/Aroha

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Colour: **Red**

Ask someone to read out the following (more than one can do this):

This is the fourth Sunday of Advent – the time when we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

No other word captures what we know of our God better than the word Love.

*We wait in HOPE, and PEACE, and with JOY. (light the **green**, **blue** and **yellow** candles).*

We light the candle of LOVE to proclaim God's LOVE shown to us in the child born in Bethlehem.

*We await the birth of God's LOVE this Christmas. (light the **red** candle).*

Read the Bible together

Luke 1:57-80

Engage with the Bible

- I wonder which part of the story you like the best?
- I wonder which part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder where we can find LOVE in this story?
- I wonder what certainty there is in this story?

Bunting activity

You will need: paper, scissors, felt pens, string, stapler

Cut out triangle shapes from paper and write the word LOVE on them. Decorate, attach to the string and hang up. Alternatively you could cut out lots of small triangles, write one letter per triangle and make a long string of them to decorate your Christmas Tree. You could also use the word AROHA.

Closing prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the Love that we can find in Jesus, today and every day. Amen

Christmas Day

25 December

Light the **green**, **blue**, **yellow** and **red** candles.

Ask someone to read out the following (more than one can do this):

God, creator and giver of life, be born in us again as you were long ago.

Be born in us again and again in the words and deeds of faithful people.

Be born in us as love, as joy, as peace, and as hope for justice.

*As we light this candle, may your light come to all people. Amen. (light the **white** candle)*

Read the Bible together

Luke 2:1-21

Engage with the Bible

- I wonder which part of the story you like the best?
- I wonder which part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder how we can be a part of this story?
- I wonder what certainty there is in this story?

Closing prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for the Hope, the Peace, the Joy and the Love that we can find in Jesus, today and every day. Amen

Romans 8:38–39

I am sure that nothing can separate us from
God's love—not life or death, not angels or
spirits, not the present or the future, and not
powers above or powers below.

Nothing in all creation can separate us from
God's love for us in Christ
Jesus our Lord!

Meri Kirihimete
Merry Christmas

Scripture Union New Zealand
www.sunz.org.nz

