

Theme: Advent

What is Advent?

The Advent season is understood by Christians as the time of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth of Jesus. Advent includes the four Sundays before Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Each Sunday in Advent has a special theme. Here at Leaside United our Advent themes are: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. This year we will mark each Sunday by lighting a candle on the advent wreath and singing a verse from the hymn **Hope Is a Star** (Voices United # 7). Our advent wreath has five candles: three blue candles, one pink candle and a white candle in the middle. Blue (or sometimes purple) is the colour that churches use to distinguish the Advent season, the pink candle represents Joy and the white candle is called the Christ candle. The children have learned that the light of the Christ candle represents the light within each of us and that we carry that light always.

Sunday school: the Godly Play Advent Stories

Godly Play describes Christmas as a time of mystery and a time of journeying. It teaches about Advent using five wooden cards, each bearing a symbol.

The first card shows a hand pointing the way. This is called the Prophets card. Prophets are learned people who had a close connection to God. The prophets gave hope by saying that the Messiah would be born one day and would be like a light shining in darkness. The second card shows the road to Bethlehem and represents Mary and Joseph and their journey to Bethlehem. They faced many unknowns but had faith that it would all work out.

How can you mark advent at home?

One way you can mark advent is by having an advent wreath at home. Each week (maybe Sunday lunch, dinner or another meal that you regularly eat together), you can light the candle and talk about what it means to each of you (hope, peace, joy, love).

Advent calendars are another way of marking advent, but consider ways to keep it from just being about treats. For instance, you might try a reverse advent calendar (focus on giving) or a Random Acts of Kindness calendar. There are lots of ideas out there!

Reverse Advent pdf: <http://www.mooseintl.org/members/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WOW-Reverse-Advent-Calendar.pdf>

Random Acts of Calendar pdf:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0QZy7RvMKu8NExNaU1nM1J1VVk/view>

