

ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Fortitude

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Compassion, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity

PRINCIPAL/EMCEE:

Today, we come together to pray as a school community in the spirit of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting. We wait for the birth of Jesus, who came to show us God the Father's love and to free us from sin, so that we could be with him together forever. We wait for him to be born again in our hearts, our classrooms, our homes, our parish community, and in the whole world. Let us begin this celebration of joyful waiting by singing

Opening Song

(Sugg.: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*)

Opening Prayer

LEADER:

God our Father, you created us to be with you forever, and sent your Son Jesus to lead us to eternal life. We ask you now to help us pray with one heart and one mind as we begin this Advent season. We make this prayer to you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please be seated.

Lighting of Advent Wreath

LEADER:

The Advent wreath is **green, the colour of new life and hope**. Green reminds us of the newborn Jesus, who came to show us the way to everlasting life. Green reminds us of the gift of new life we received at baptism. Green also reminds us that we are people of hope, because God is always with us, to raise us up when we are sad, when we are sick, and even when we die.

The Advent wreath has **three purple candles** and one pink candle. Purple is the colour of kings and queens. It is also the colour of *penance*: the small sacrifices we make to welcome Jesus in our hearts, in our neighbour and to prepare ourselves to meet him on Christmas day.

Pink is the colour of Joy. It reminds us of the joy of meeting Jesus at Christmas.

EOCCC: *Our Language, Our Story 1.0*, 2009.

The Advent wreath is made in a circle, with no beginning or end. It reminds us of God's everlasting love, which has no beginning or end.

A teacher lights a single candle, which a student holds, in front of the assembly.

We light our Advent wreath from a single candle. This candle reminds us of Jesus, who comes to us as Light of the World.

Student lights candle(s) on Advent wreath, taking light from candle held by student/teacher.

Optional Song: *Advent Candle Song* (or other suitable song)

Advent Prayers With Responses

LEADER: After each prayer, please respond: "COME, LORD JESUS"

Student 1.

Winter is coming, Lord Jesus. The sky is dark by suppertime, and it is colder every day. We wait for you, Light of the World, to warm our hearts with your joy.

We respond...

COME, LORD JESUS

Student 2.

The trees outside have lost their leaves. But the pine and spruce will always have their green needles. Green is the colour of life and hope. We wait for you, Prince of Peace, to bring new life and hope to our world.

We respond...

COME, LORD JESUS

Student 3.

Our days begin early and end when we sleep. But your love, O Lord has no beginning or end. We wait for you, Emmanuel, to show us the Father's everlasting love.

We respond...

COME, LORD JESUS

Student 4.

We live in warm homes and fall asleep under blankets and sheets. Lord Jesus, you came to us as a baby, born in a chilly stable. The heat from animals, a bed of straw and rags kept you warm. Son of God and Son of Mary, help us to welcome you in the poor and hungry.

We respond...

COME, LORD JESUS

Gospel Reading

Leader: Let us listen to the Word of God.

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Luke:

God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and his kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "I am not yet married, how can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come over you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason, the holy child will be called the Son of God."

"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Response to the Reading

Song: (Sugg.: *Advent Counterpoint*)

Prayer of the Faithful

LEADER:

Let us present our prayers to God the Father as we prepare to meet Jesus.

1. Let us pray for peace in the world. That all Christians and people of good will might become peace-makers in their actions and words, so that every one living where there is war and fighting will know the peace of Christ's coming. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
2. Let us pray for the Church. That in this time of waiting, all Christians will grow in faith, love and unity. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
3. Let us pray for our Pastor, Father _____, and for Bishop Smith. May our Lord Jesus bring them his peace, and strengthen their faith in this Advent season. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
4. Let us pray for the people in our community who are sick and lonely. That they might find hope and comfort as we reach out to them this Advent and Christmas. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
5. Let us pray for our teachers. May the newborn Jesus strengthen them with wisdom to guide us in using our gifts and talents to serve Christ in one another. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
6. Let us pray for all of our parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, friends and relatives. May the coming of Jesus bring them peace, good health and safety always. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER
7. Let us pray for all of us, that the Holy Spirit may fill our hearts with love, that we may welcome Jesus in everyone with compassion and kindness. We pray to the Lord...
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER

Optional: Arranging of Manger

LEADER:

Now we would ask our students from the Grade One and Grade Two classes to come forward with straw for the manger. Each bundle of straw placed in the manger is a sign of their Advent prayers and activities. This straw reminds us that we want our hearts to be like the manger -a place where the newborn Jesus can find rest.

(Other grades can bring up different symbols of their Advent preparations [eg. animals, figurines, star, angels, etc, **without baby Jesus figure**]).

Students bring up straw and place it in manger, other students place intentions or symbols in or around nativity scene.

Let us stop for a moment to bring our own private intentions before God in the quiet of our hearts.

And now, let us bring all of our prayers and needs to God the Father in the words that Jesus taught us. Our Father...

Closing Prayer

LEADER:

Lord, God, you show us the tenderness of your love in Mary's newborn Son. Like Mary, may we always be ready to say "yes" to your plan, so that Jesus may be born in us. We ask you to prepare our hearts to welcome him, so that like the angels who announced his birth, we too might greet his coming with joy. We ask you this through this same Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL SONG: (Sugg. *O Come Divine Messiah*)