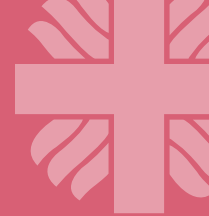


ADVENT WREATH GUIDE

Including schools/family blessing ceremony



The Advent wreath is a traditional centrepiece leading up to the Christmas season. A candle is lit on each of the four Sundays preceding Christmas. The first candle (violet) represents hope, the second (violet) peace, the third (rose) joy, and the fourth (violet) love. The central white candle is lit on Christmas Day and represents Christ.

The wreath itself is also symbolic. The circle of evergreen in which the candles are placed represents everlasting life. The seedpods, nuts and cones used to decorate the wreath are symbolic of life and resurrection, the laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering, pine and holly signify immortality, and fruits (such as apples) represent the nourishing fruitfulness of the Christian life.

The word 'advent' means 'coming'; lighting the candles on the Advent wreath symbolises the coming of Light (Jesus) into the world. The Advent Wreath teaches us about Christian preparation for celebrating Jesus' birth and making our hearts truly ready to receive Him.

The Advent Wreath can be a way to involve even very little children in learning about Christian preparation for celebrating Jesus' birth and making our hearts truly ready to receive Him.

Using the Advent Wreath in your home or classroom:

On the first Sunday of Advent, you might sprinkle the wreath with holy water and bless it before the first violet candle is lit. The appropriate Advent collect can be said as the candle[s] are lit each day of the week, followed by the blessing before meals, if you use the wreath at mealtime. The second Sunday two violet candles are lit; the third Sunday, two violet and one rose; and all candles are lit on the fourth Sunday. All four candles and the middle white candle are lit on Christmas Day.

Making the Advent Wreath a Daily Custom:

The Advent wreath helps us keep our thoughts focused on the coming of Christ at Christmas, so we should integrate it into our daily activities. This could be done during daily morning school assembly/prayer, or as a class at a set time of the day. Everyone gathers around the wreath and someone lights the appropriate candle(s). A leader prays the [Advent wreath prayer](#) for that week, and the candle(s) are left burning until the end of the day or for as long as possible. (For detailed instructions, see [How to Light the Advent Wreath](#).)

Adapted from Catholic Online and About.com

Blessing for the Advent Wreath (two examples)

Lord God,
Your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Saviour, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.

Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendour of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.

Amen

Lord our God,
We praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Saviour of every nation.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

© Books of Blessings, 1989, p. 650.

MAKE YOUR OWN ADVENT WREATH



Making Your Own Advent Wreath:

It is very easy to incorporate the Advent wreath into your preparations for Christmas. You will need five candles—traditionally, three violet, one rose, and one white, though you can substitute them all with white. If you want the candles to stay lit for a prolonged period of time you could use battery operated candles to reduce risk.

You will need some green leaves/branches to arrange around the candles. They don't have to be in a circle; you can place them in a straight line.

You can gather materials for the wreath from nature and assemble it individually or as a group. Suggestions include: evergreens, holly, pine cones, apples, laurel, nuts and seedpods.

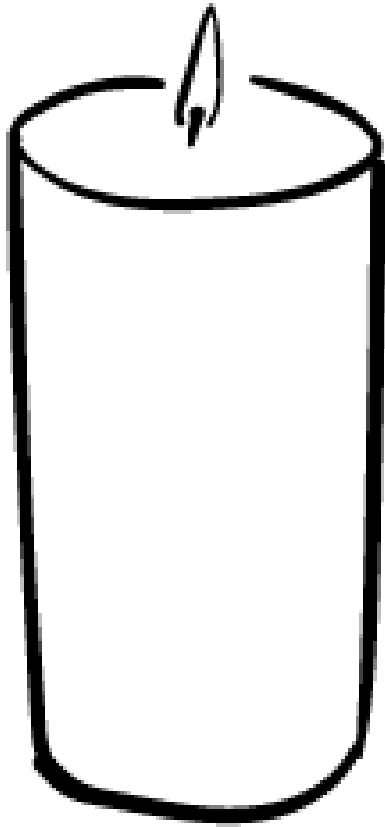
Make a paper Advent wreath.

Use the symbols on the following pages to create a paper Advent wreath.

- The seedpods, nuts and cones are used to decorate the wreath and are symbolic of life and resurrection.
- The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering.
- Pine and holly signify immortality.
- The apple represents the nourishing fruitfulness of the Christian life.

Participants can make their own individual wreaths using their handprints as the base on green paper or by using green paint. Or you could make a large Advent wreath on a wall in green, you can decorate it each day by printing and cutting out a symbol, writing a prayer on the back and pinning them to your Advent wreath.

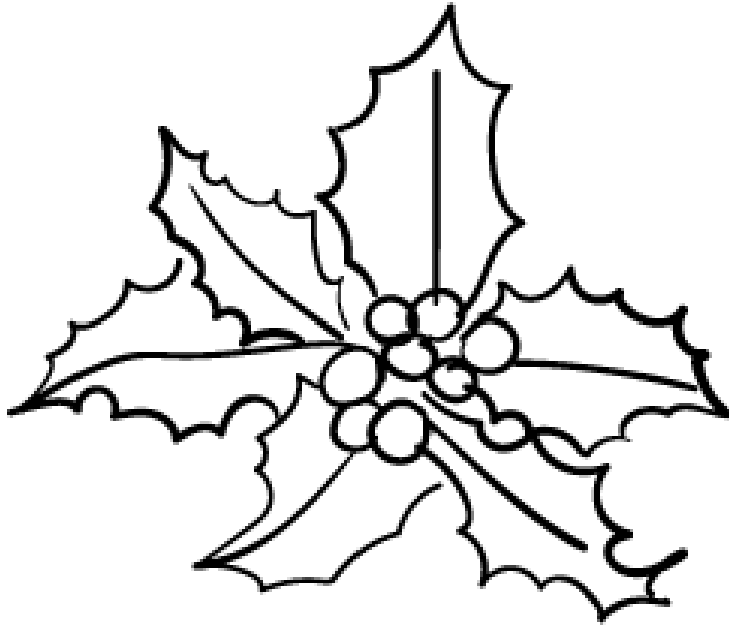




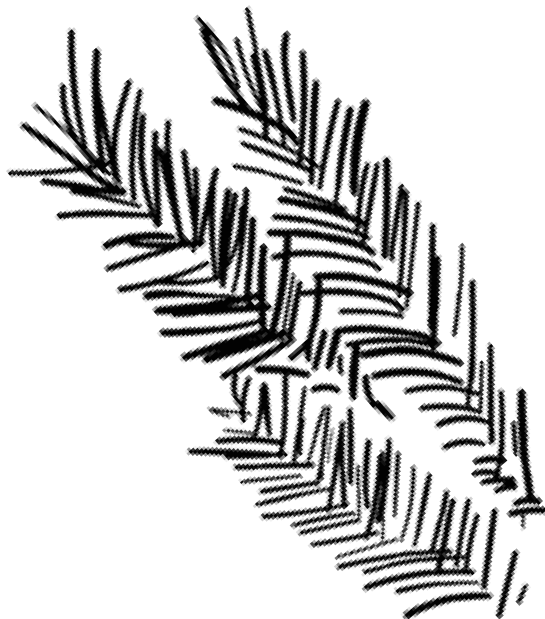
Christ Candle



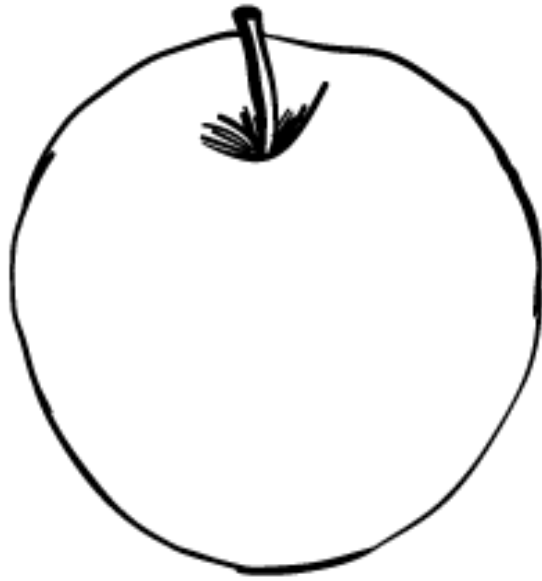
Seed Pods



Holly



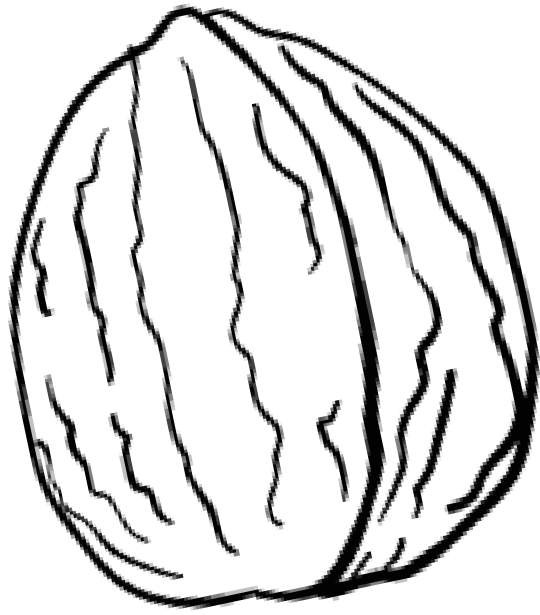
Evergreen



Apple



Pine cone



Nuts



Laurel