

Advent

AT EPIC 2020

THE MEANING OF ADVENT:

Advent means arrival. Advent season is a tradition that arose in the 1800s to slow down in the weeks leading up to Christmas to ponder Christ's birth. Jesus ushered in hope, peace, joy, and love through Himself. This Advent as the Epic family, we will observe this each week online during our Sunday gatherings, and we encourage you to do so as well at home.

HOW TO:

Collect 5 candles. Any size or shape or color will do. Assemble them on a plate at your kitchen table. Consider putting a label on each: hope, joy, love, peace, Christ.

WEEK 1: HOPE (NOVEMBER 29)

Biblical hope is to wait. To put our trust in what God will bring about, certain He will fulfill His promises.

Bible Project Video: epicsf.com/week1

Scripture: Lamentations 3:24; Jeremiah 29:11

Prayer: *God, You are wonderful. And I mean full of wonder. How creative are You to put on skin and come and live among us? To take the route of a young girl who was wide open to Your work*

through her. You entered planet earth to give us hope. It wasn't so clear that night or the following or the season that followed, but we see it now. God, You are our hope. We put our trust in You. Nothing else can do it for us. We've tried and now confess this worthless effort. Come and make Your presence known right where we sit in this moment. And let Your hope rule and reign in our hearts this Advent season. Amen.

WEEK 2: PEACE (DECEMBER 6)

Shalom. Complete. Whole. Erene (Greek). Ask someone about their shalom? Is anything missing from your life? To bring shalom means to make complete, restore. Jesus is the whole, He completes me. Through Him, we help create peace in our relationships and with humanity. We participate in the life of Jesus. This is hard work. We are called to take what's broken and restore it.

Bible Project Video: epicsf.com/week2

Scripture: John 16:33

Prayer: *Jesus, as we face trouble in this world, remind us that You have overcome the world. Would you flood our minds, hearts, and souls with your peace today? May we be people who receive your peace and then share it with the world around us. We ask in the name of Jesus our Prince of Peace, Amen.*

WEEK 3: JOY (DECEMBER 13)

While we wait, we choose joy. This is how Advent is linked together. This is the Christian life. This is the Jesus way. This is what Christmas is all about. We can be full of joy when we believe Jesus has overcome death and lives in us. Joy doesn't mean pain isn't present.

They both can be. It's just that joy hovers up and over the pain.

Bible Project Video: epicsf.com/week3

Scripture: Psalm 16:11

Prayer: *Exalted Creator, Fill me with your spirit that I might be more like you. Let me dwell not on this world, but what is good and true. Bear my yoke so I might dance with joy upon this land. For through your son that soon will come, salvation is at hand.*

Worldly bliss and passions fade. Worries now arise. Free my heart to worship you and see truth through the lies. Your path is the path of life where my joy is found. "Teach my song to rise to you" and amplify its sound.

Joy is hope in Christ alone. I patiently await the last of seven trumpet's sound and my eternal fate. Fill me with your hope, oh God. Grace me with your peace. Guide me in your faithfulness and joy will never cease.

Amen.

WEEK 4: LOVE (DECEMBER 20)

New Testament writers looked to experiences to best explain God's love. What experiences show His love to you? Your love for God is mirrored by your love for others. This is how Jesus lived - love. It doesn't run out in our lives when we are attached to Him.

Others -focused, self-giving love.

Bible Project Video: epicsf.com/week4

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13: John 3:16

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for the perfect Love that you show us. Thank you for giving us your only son, the ultimate act of Love, so that we may be in union with you for eternity. Let your love shine through us that we may love each and every person around us in the same gentle, caring, and unconditional way. Amen.*

WEEK 5: CHRIST (DECEMBER 24)

With each Sunday in Advent we have drawn nearer and nearer to Christmas. We are hours closer and closer to Christ.

Scripture: Luke 2:25-32

Prayer: *God, You have revealed Your light to us tonight. We see you in the birth of Your Son, Jesus, Emmanuel, You are with us. Release us in peace as you promised. Send us out on Christmas Day to share the joy, peace, love, and hope we find in You. You are the Joy to our world. The Peace in our storms. The Love that Wins and the Hope we have for tomorrow. We celebrate and worship You in this moment. We take Your light with us into the coming year. In Christ's Name, we pray, Amen.*

Book resources:

Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas by Plough Publishing

Waiting Here for You: An Advent Journey of Hope by Louie Giglio

The Wonder of the Greatest Gift: An Interactive Family Celebration of Advent by Ann Voskamp