

Chapter S-1: Advent

Liturgical Year: Advent

CHAPTER FOCUS

In the Old Testament, God promised to send a Savior, and he prepared his people for the Savior to come. The New Testament stories show us that God kept his promise. Each year during Advent, we wait and do many things to prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, at Christmas.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (CCC) REFERENCES

The Nativity was prepared from the beginning: 522–24

Jesus (Hebrew, “God saves”): 430–35

Unity of the Old Testament and New Testament: 122, 128–30

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

An old adage advises against praying for patience, as you will be sent opportunities to practice that virtue. Advent is a time of waiting. This waiting should be one of joyful expectation rather than dread and anxiety. Like waiting for a wedding or a birth, there is preparation involved, even some discomfort or pain. It is not a passive waiting. However, the joy that comes at the end is a reward for all that came before. During Advent, we join with the whole Church and with all ages from the fall of man to our present day in anticipation for the coming of the promised Messiah. We must be ready. We must prepare our hearts to receive him. But his coming is ultimately the fulfillment of all we hope and long for. While Advent joins us to the Old Testament waiting for Christ’s manifestation, which came at the Nativity, it also reminds us that Christ will come again. We look to see Christ, who will come as the just King and set all aright. Read the below passage from the *Catechism* and reflect on how we can live this anticipation in our daily lives.

When the Church celebrates *the liturgy of Advent* each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming (cf. Revelation 22:17). (CCC 524; emphasis in original)

*Do you long for Christ to be present and active in your life?
Why or why not?*

Have you adopted traditions or practices during Advent to keep in mind the expectation of Christmas?

Think of one or two ways you can continue the expectation of Christ’s coming throughout the year.

Chapter S-1	Liturgical Year: Advent
Key words	Advent, Church year
Activities (Materials needed for the Optional Activity can be found on page 8 of the Teacher's Manual.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Prepare Your Heart for Jesus! • Optional Activity: Preparing Jesus' Manger • Activity: Advent Wreath Color by Number
Chapter aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will begin to understand that during the Church year, we celebrate the life of Jesus. • Students will learn that Advent is the beginning of the Church year. • Students will come to a greater appreciation of Jesus as God's gift to us. • Students will understand that they need to prepare their hearts for Jesus during Advent.
Preparation <i>Let's Prepare Our Hearts</i>	Choose one or more of the following: Opening Prayer in the Student Text <i>Lectio Divina</i> —Mark 1:3 Sacred Art— <i>St. John the Baptist Preaching</i> , Raphael
Proclamation <i>Let's Proclaim the Good News</i>	During Advent we prepare for Jesus to come into our hearts.
Explanation <i>Let's Learn about Our Faith</i>	Let's Read God's Word: Mark 1:3 Focus 1: During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus, who is the promised Savior. Focus 2: During Advent, we prepare our hearts to celebrate Jesus' coming at Christmas (things we do in our daily lives). Focus 3: We celebrate Advent in special ways (liturgical celebrations and activities). Let's Remember Our Faith: Review Focus Points
Application <i>Let's Live Our Faith</i>	Preparing our hearts for Jesus
Celebration <i>Let's Celebrate Our Faith</i>	Choose one of the prayers in the Preparation.

Optional Song and Bible Verse Activities

The following optional song and Bible verse activities can be done before each lesson.

Prepare Our Hearts Song (Optional)

At the beginning of each class, you may teach the students the song below to prepare them to open their hearts to all that Our Lord is going to teach them.

Advent Song

(Sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

We prepare our hearts,
We prepare our hearts,
In Advent we prepare our hearts
To celebrate Christ's Birth!

We prepare our hearts,
We prepare our hearts,
Hopefully, peacefully,
Joyfully, lovingly,
We prepare our hearts!


Bible Fun! Activity (Optional)

Read God's Word and then teach the motions below to help the students learn the verse. This can be done at the beginning of each lesson to help them prepare their hearts and minds to hear God's Word.

- The special Bible verse we will be learning this week is the following: "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).
- Let's act like we are John the Baptist and hold our hands up to our mouths, as if we are telling the whole world to be ready for the coming of Jesus, when we say **"prepare the way of the Lord."**
- Let's practice together: (while holding your hands up to your mouths as if shouting to the world) **"Prepare the way of the Lord."**

CHAPTER S-1

Liturgical Year: Advent

 **“Prepare the way of the Lord.”** (Mark 1:3)



Let's Pray

Dear God, thank you for your love. Help us to prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent season. Amen.



Let's Proclaim the Good News

During Advent we prepare for Jesus to come into our hearts.

We wait for Christmas.

Chapter S-1 1

Let's Prepare Our Hearts

Optional Activities on p. 3 of the Teacher's Manual:

Prepare Our Hearts Song
Bible Fun! Activity

Prayer

Choose one of the following for prayer:

- Opening Prayer in the Student Text
- *Lectio divina*
- Sacred art reflection

Opening Prayer in the Student Text

Say the Opening Prayer in the Student Text. Begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.

Dear God, thank you for your love. Help us to prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent season. Amen.

Lectio Divina

Lead the students in *lectio divina* on Mark 1:3: “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Instruct the students to fold their hands reverently and bow their heads in prayer during reflection. A detailed explanation of *lectio divina* can be found in the front matter of the Teacher's Manual.

Reflection:

- Jesus, I want to prepare my heart for when you come this Christmas.
- I want to receive your love at Christmas.

Sacred Art Reflection: *The Nativity*, by Barocci

Direct the students to look at the painting on page 2 of the Student Text.

What does it look like is happening? (Answers may vary.)

The man in the red robe is Saint John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin. He is teaching people that Jesus is coming soon. His message is “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Mark 1:3).

Does it look like the people are listening? (Answers may vary.)

We should also prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming.

Let's pray together:

Dear Saint John the Baptist, you taught people to prepare their hearts for Jesus. Help me to get ready for Jesus' birthday at Christmas by loving him and others more. Amen.

Introduction

Turn to page 1 of the Student Text.

We all have had to wait for something. It may be waiting for a parent to come home, waiting for a birthday, waiting for the school bus, waiting for our turn . . .

- ***Have you ever had to wait a long time for something?*** (Answers may vary.)
- God's people had to wait a very long time for Jesus to come into the world.
- ***Do you prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas?*** (Answers may vary.)

Let's Read God's Word

"Prepare the way of the Lord."

(Mark 1:3)



God's people waited a long time for the Savior. Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for Jesus' coming.



2 Chapter S-1

Let's Proclaim the Good News

During Advent we prepare for Jesus to come into our hearts.

Let's Read God's Word

Teachers may use one Focus Point each week of Advent, or complete this lesson in one class.

Lesson Focus 1: During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus, who is the promised Savior.

Open the Bible and read the following.

Our Bible verse this week is the following: "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).

- The Bible tells the story of how God prepared his people for our Savior, Jesus, to come. We can read the Bible to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming.

The Bible tells us the beautiful story of God's love. It is divided into two parts.

- The first part of the Bible is called the Old Testament. The Old Testament tells the story of God's love and how he promised to send a Savior. **Demonstrate** by flipping through the Old Testament.

- **With so many pages, does it seem like it is a long story that tells us about how God's people had to wait a long time for the Savior to come? (Yes.)**
- The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament. The New Testament tells about how God kept his promise to send a Savior; it tells the story of Jesus, who came into the world as our Savior. **Show the New Testament pages.**

Go back to show the Old Testament pages. God's people *did* have to wait a long time for the Savior to come—hundreds and hundreds of years.

- During the time of the Old Testament, while his people waited, God *prepared* them for the Savior.
- God prepared his people for Jesus in many ways. He showed them his love; he taught them to trust him and to pray to him; he showed them that he would never leave them, even if they failed to love him; and he taught them how to love one another by giving them the commandments to love him and one another.
- **Can you think of any stories where God prepared his people for the Savior? (Answers might include any Old Testament stories they know.)**

Every year we celebrate the birthday of the Savior, Jesus, on what day? (Christmas.)

- Just like God prepared his people for the coming of the Savior in the Old Testament, we prepare for his birthday which is Christmas. There are four weeks before Christmas that we spend waiting and preparing for Jesus to come. Advent is what we call the four weeks of waiting and preparation for Christmas.
- **Can you say "Advent"? (Repeat with the class.)** The word "Advent" means "coming," because during the Advent season we are preparing for the coming of the Savior.

In the beginning of the New Testament (the part of the Bible that tells us about Jesus), John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, helped to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).

- Look at the painting on page 2 of the Student Text. Here, John the Baptist is telling the people to prepare for Jesus because he is our Savior.
- During Advent, we should listen to the words of John the Baptist, as we wait and prepare for Jesus' coming on Christmas Day.
- **Can you say "prepare the way of the Lord"? (Repeat with the class.)**

Conclusion: God prepared his people for the coming of the Savior. During Advent, we prepare for Jesus' Birth on Christmas.



We Prepare Our Hearts

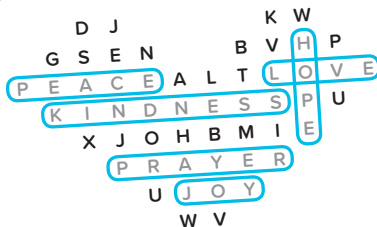
We prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus. We are sorry for our sins. We do kind things for others.



Advent: Prepare Your Heart for Jesus!

Find and circle the words below.

HOPE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE
KINDNESS
PRAYER



Chapter S-1 3

- We can also prepare to celebrate Jesus' Birth at Christmas and open our hearts by doing some acts of kindness for others. **What is an example of an act of kindness that we could do for someone?** (Answers may vary.)
- **Can you think of any other ways that we can prepare for Jesus as we prepare for his Birth during Advent?** (Answers may vary.)
- **What prayers can we say to prepare for Jesus' Birth?** (Answers may vary.)
- **What ways can we be good at home and in school to prepare our hearts for Jesus?** (Answers may vary.)
- During Advent, we can also read some of the stories from the Bible that prepare us for the coming of Jesus. We can especially read the story about the Annunciation, when the angel came to Mary and asked her to be the Mother of Jesus.
- We can also read about Saint John the Baptist and how he asked God's people to be sorry for their sins in order to prepare for the coming of Jesus.
- **What other Bible stories would you like to have your parents read to you during Advent?** (Answers may vary.)

Conclusion: During Advent, we prepare for Jesus by being sorry for our sins; showing acts of kindness toward one another; praying; and reading the Bible and lives of the saints.

Activity: Advent: Prepare Your Heart for Jesus!

Turn to page 3 of the Student Text.

Ask the students to find and circle the indicated words.

Optional Activity: Preparing Jesus' Manger

See page 8 of the Teacher's Manual.

Let's Learn about Our Faith

Lesson Focus 2: During Advent, we prepare our hearts to celebrate Jesus' coming at Christmas (things we do in our daily lives).

What kind of things does your family do to get your home ready for Christmas? (Buy gifts, decorate the home, etc.)

- It is good to prepare our homes for Christmas. **Can you think of anything else that we should prepare for Christmas?** (Answers may vary.)
- We should also prepare our hearts for Jesus to come.
- Look at the picture on page 3 of the Student Text. Here we see an empty manger where baby Jesus will sleep. When Jesus is born, he will fill the world with his love. He will especially bring love into each of our hearts. So, it is important that we prepare our hearts to receive his love.

There are many ways that we can prepare our hearts for Jesus.

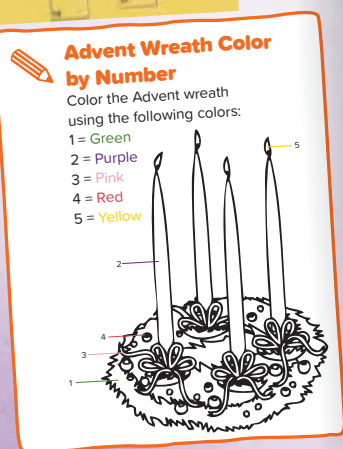
- Look at the picture of John the Baptist on page 2 of the Student Text. John the Baptist told the people to prepare the way of the Lord by being sorry for their sins.
 - **Should we also prepare for Jesus by being sorry for the times we have done wrong?** (Yes.)

We celebrate Advent in many ways.



Let's Live Our Faith

Preparing our hearts for Jesus.



4 Chapter S-1

Let's Learn about Our Faith

Lesson Focus 3: We celebrate Advent in different ways (liturgical celebrations and activities).

During Advent, the color purple is used at Mass. Purple is a color that is used to remind us to be sorry for our sins.

(Turn to page 4 in the Student Text.)

There are four weeks of Advent. We use an Advent wreath to count the weeks. Each week of Advent, we light another candle.

- Just like purple is used at Mass, three of the candles in the Advent wreath are purple.
- On the third week of Advent, we light a rose (pink) candle. Rose or pink reminds us that Jesus is coming soon and that he gives us joy. On the fourth week of Advent, we know that Christmas is very close.

We can also use an Advent calendar like the one on page 4 of the Student Text to celebrate Advent. In an Advent calendar, each day gives us a special prayer to say or something we can do to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming. We can even make our own Advent calendars.

- **Does your family have an Advent calendar? What kind?** (Answers will vary.)

Another special thing we can do during Advent is to set up a Nativity scene in our homes, but without the baby Jesus since he has not come yet.

- This will remind us that we are preparing for Jesus' coming. We can also say a short prayer when we walk by the Nativity scene.

During Advent, there are many ways that we can prepare for Jesus' coming.

- Teachers might share other things that they or their families do. **Are there other things that you or your family can do during Advent to prepare for Jesus' coming?** (Answers may vary.)

Conclusion: During Advent, we use the color purple to remind us to be sorry for our sins, and we have special activities to remind us that Jesus is coming.

Activity: Advent Wreath Color by Number

Turn to page 4 of the Student Text.

Ask the students to color the Advent wreath using the following colors: 1 = Green, 2 = Purple, 3 = Pink, 4 = Red, 5 = Yellow.

Let's Live Our Faith

Use a purple cloth on a prayer table with a Bible.

The best way that we can prepare to celebrate the Birth of Jesus is to prepare our hearts to welcome him so that we can be good and holy and love God and others.

During the season of Advent, we can do things that help us to love God and others more perfectly. Here are some ideas of things that we can do:

- Place an Advent wreath on our dinner tables, and light a new Advent candle each Sunday and pray when our families have dinner.
- Choose a person each week in our families or at school and try to do kind things for him.
- Ask our families if we can help serve meals at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.

What are some other things that we can do to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus? (Answers may vary.)

Is there something special our class can do during Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming? (Answers may vary.)

Let's Remember Our Faith

God's people waited as he prepared them for the Savior. During Advent we prepare our hearts for Jesus to come on Christmas.



Let's Pray

Dear God, Thank you for your love. Help us to prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent. Amen.

Chapter S-1 5

or

Dear Saint John the Baptist, you taught people to prepare their hearts for Jesus. Help me to get ready for Jesus' birthday at Christmas by loving him and others more. Amen.

Chapter S-1 Optional Activity

Preparing Jesus' Manger

Materials:

- Small paper lunch sack for each student
- Yellow construction paper, precut into thin strips
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- 4 craft sticks for each student
- Small Ziploc bag for each student
- Precut strips with instructions for parents (see instructions below)

This project will create a manger for the students to take home to share with their families. This will encourage them to continue to prepare their hearts to celebrate Jesus' Birth with their families, even during their Christmas break from school.

Before class, form a manger with the bottom of the lunch sack by cutting each sack approximately two and a half inches from the bottom of the bag, and precut enough yellow construction paper with a paper cutter for each student to have at least ten to twenty strips of paper for the hay. You may have the students count the number of strips as they each put their hay into small Ziploc bags. Next, have them write their names on the bag of hay and on the bottom of their lunch sacks. Finally, to form the legs of the manger, have the students open the lunch sack and tape or glue two craft sticks in the form of an X and then glue one set to both of the sides of their little mangers.

Remind the students that Advent is a time for us to prepare our hearts to celebrate Jesus' Birth. Ask the students to tell you specific ways they can prepare their hearts (being kind, praying, doing chores, etc.). Tell the students to come up with lots of ideas—you will want Jesus' manger to be very padded so that he will be very comfortable. Explain that they will take the mangers home and have their parents write all of their good deeds on their little strips of hay so that they can fill their mangers for baby Jesus.

Before class, print out and cut into strips the instructions for the parents. Slip the instructions into each of the student's bags.

The following is an example of a short note to the parents explaining the directions for this activity, since they will be completing it at home:

Dear Parents,

This Advent your child has been preparing his heart to celebrate the Birth of Jesus by doing lots of good deeds. Please help him to make a soft, special place for the baby Jesus by writing any good deed you see him do on his yellow "hay," then let him place the "hay" in his little manger. Remind him how happy he makes Jesus with each of his good deeds.

Let's Remember Our Faith

Review the lesson by asking the students the following:

Did God's people have to wait a long time for the coming of the Savior? (Yes.)

What do we call the four weeks of preparation for Christmas? (Advent.)

What color do we use during Advent to remind us to be sorry? (Purple.)

What do we use to count the four Sundays of Advent? (Advent wreath.)

Let's Celebrate Our Faith

Choose one of the following prayers, which are from the Preparation section. Begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.

Dear God, thank you for your love. Help us to prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent. Amen.

or

Dear Jesus, we want to prepare our hearts for when you come this Christmas. We want to receive your love at Christmas. Amen.