

Interactive Advent Prayers

for use in worship, devotion, teaching, or a prayer installation

Advent Prayer Installation

Set Up – set up one or more prayer stations in a classroom, hallway, chapel, or narthex to remain through the season of Advent; advertize; encourage; participate; create a special time or worship service where you facilitate the prayer stations (optional)

Instructions:

Take a break from all the holiday madness and experience the *peace* and *expectation* of the season at our Advent Prayer Installation. Throughout the season of Advent, this space will be set aside as a place of prayer – a place where you can come to experience the joy, hope, love, and light of the season. Each prayer station is interactive, so take a little time to explore! You might pray before, during, or after worship on Sundays, but the Prayer Installation will be open whenever the church building is open so stop by anytime.

The Chrismon Tree

Set Up – a tree; a basket of chrismon; a display of the instructions; a display explaining the meaning, history, or use of different chrismons (optional)

Instructions:

A **chrismon** is one of a number of Christian symbols intended to represent aspects of the person, life or ministry of Jesus Christ and the life, ministry or history of the Church through a single image, emblem or monogram. The term chrismon comes from the Latin phrase *christi monogramma*, meaning “monogram of Christ”.

Spend some time looking through the chrismon ornaments. Choose one that seems right, and then take some time to pray for the church. Pray for our church, our denomination, or the entire Body of Christ which is the Church Universal. You might even take the ornament with you into worship. When you are ready, find the right place on the tree for your chrismon.

Wrapped in Swaddling Clothes

Set Up – baby clothes; washable markers; hang a string with clothespins; a display of the instructions

Instructions:

When a family is expecting a child, they often go through a time of ‘nesting’ to prepare their home for the birth – painting rooms, assembling cribs, folding stacks of tiny clothes, blankets, and diapers. Even though they were traveling, Mary was prepared with soft bands of cloth to swaddle her newborn child. As he grew, Jesus’ parents must have spent many hours making and washing clothes, feeding, rocking, and teaching their young son.

Consider how you might care for the Christ child. What would you wrap around Jesus’ tiny frame? How might you cradle the Lord of Hosts? How can you love God? Use the washable markers to write or draw your response on the baby clothes and hang them on the line. At the end of the season, the clothes will be washed and donated to families in need.

Laid in a Manger

Set Up – a manger or cradle; a rocking chair (optional); pictures of children in need from World Vision or similar organization (even better if you can write on the back some specific needs the child or children like this child might have); a display of the instructions

Instructions:

Advent is a time when we prepare for the birth of Christ, the moment when love took flesh, when the glory of God became a tiny child with no home but a stable, no cradle but a manger. God didn't come as a king, a merchant, a lawyer, or even a member of the 'middle class.' When God became human, God became poor.

Like so many children today, Jesus was born into a family living at a subsistence level. He was born in an occupied territory under an oppressive Roman rule. Matthew's gospel even describes the holy family as refugees, fleeing to Egypt to escape the King's murderous wrath.

Take a photo from the manger, settle into a rocking chair, and spend some time considering the struggles of children born into poverty today. Pray for this child, and others in need.

Light Shines in the Darkness

Set-Up – black cloth or fabric hung on wall or draped over a table, bench or pew (be prepared! Markers may bleed through); black markers; battery powered candles or real candles (be careful, fire hazard); a display of instructions

Instructions:

Advent is sometimes called the 'season of light.' When the nights are growing longer and the air colder, we light candles to keep away the growing darkness and to remind us that *'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.'* (John 1:5)

Take a moment to reflect how lightness and darkness play off one another in your life. Many of us have journeyed through a dark valley and we might dwell there now, with little hope to light the way. Some say 'the blacker the night, the brighter the dawn.' Others see the darkness as a blessing – creating a safe place to hide or allowing time for rest between bright hectic days.

Write on the wall with a black marker about the darkness or brokenness in the world or in your own life.

Light a candle to represent the lightness and hope you experience in your life or see in the world.

Light of the World

Set Up – hang white Christmas lights on a wall and cover with black/ blue fabric OR hang black/ blue paper on bulletin board to make the night sky; paper stars; marker; push pins or tape to affix star to sky; The Tiny Star by Arthur Ginolfi (optional); display of instructions

Instructions:

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them? - Psalm 8:3-4*

Read *The Tiny Star* by Arthur Ginolfi.

Consider the vast mystery of the universe – galaxy upon galaxy of stars and planets stretching out into infinite space. It's as humbling as it is glorious! How could we have any value in a universe so limitless? And yet, we believe that the God of the heavens came to earth and entered our existence – full of grace and truth.

You have value. You are loved by God.

- Take a moment to write your name on a star and place it on the night sky.
- Pray that you would be filled with the Light of Christ – that you will radiate love and light for all the world to see.

Luminarias

Set Up – “lunch size” paper bags (white or brown); pencils or pens; a bucket of sand and a scoop; votive candles (may be battery powered); a display of instructions; volunteers to help place and light the luminarias on Christmas eve

Instructions:

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' – John 8:12

Luminarias are traditionally lit on Christmas Eve to guide the spirit of the Christ child into a home or church. People line the streets and walkways creating elaborate displays by placing a candle and some sand inside a paper bag.

Use the paper bags to pour out your heart to God. Write the words that are in your heart. Write the names of loved ones who are not with us today. These simple bags will be our sack cloth.

The sand we place within them will be our ashes. Weighing us down. Holding us in place.

Within our sackcloth, nestled among the ashes, there is a light - a light that shines in the darkness, a light of peace, a light of hope, a light of love, a light to lead the way, or simply a light to mark your existence in this place.