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CELEBRATING ADVENT IN YOUR HOME

The built-in sense of expectancy makes the season of Advent an opportunity to share the faith with our loved ones.

by Kathryn A. Schneider and Robert M. Hamma



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From the day the tree is taken down and the decorations put away, children everywhere begin the long wait for next Christmas. From their point of view, Advent lasts all year long! This built-in sense of expectancy makes the actual season of Advent for us—their parents, grandparents, or godparents—one of our most privileged opportunities to share our faith with them.

Unfortunately, it's also the time of year when the pace of life is the most hectic. We're feeling pressured to get the shopping done, to get the Christmas cards in the mail, and to make all the plans for Christmas Day. Sadly, the hope of Advent is reduced to the hope that we'll get everything done, and the anticipation of Advent turns into the anxiety that we may not.

It's certainly possible that, when we do stop and remember that this season is one of preparation for the coming of Christ, we'll recognize that we're trying to do too much. Or maybe we'll see that we're not doing what we truly want to do to prepare for Christmas. Perhaps then we can try to do just one thing fewer or one thing more. But even if we can't, just the act of pausing to remember is in itself an act of getting ready.

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FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

REFLECTION: Stay awake! Be ready! As Advent begins, the liturgy reminds us that we are also preparing for the coming of Christ at the end of the world. We cannot know the time of Christ's coming, but it will be like a thief in the night. The Lord is coming, and his coming is both frightening and filled with hope. On that day we will each have to give an account of ourselves. On that day the swords will be beat into plowshares and "the Lord, our justice, shall reign."

✱ LIGHT ONE PURPLE CANDLE.

SCRIPTURE: "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all . . . so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus" (1 Thes 3:12–13).

PRAYER: Jesus, you are the light of the world. Teach us to leave the darkness behind and to live in your light. Help us not to hurt each other by our words and actions. Make us thoughtful and generous so that we can be ready to greet you when you come.

RESPONSE: Come, Lord Jesus!