

THE ADVENT WREATH - **The Wreath of Light**

Originally the Advent Wreath might have been a cart wheel, wound with greens and decorated with lights, strung up in the halls of the sun worshipping tribes of Northern Europe. To appease their “hidden” god during the darkest Winter days, they took a wheel from their cart, sacrificing, as it were, its use, while they pondered about the blessings of light and life and implored the sun god to return to them. The Christians preparing for their feast of light and life, the Nativity of the Savior, found this wheel or wreath an appropriate means. Adding one light for each of the four Sundays in Advent, they think about the darkness without God after the Fall of Adam of Eve, the growing hope for salvation, enkindled in paradise, nourished through the ages by the prophets up to St. John, the Precursor, until the Morning Star who announces the coming of the Sun came forth: **The Virgin who bore a Son.**

The **wreath**, without a beginning or an end, stands for **eternity**. The **greens** for **life and growth**. The **four candles**, preferably of beeswax, blessed and set aside since Candlemas Day, present the ages “**sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.**” Each candle adds more light until on Christmas the light from the wreath sets off, as it were, the blaze of light on the “tree of life,” the Christmas Tree, for the time is fulfilled.

THE FOLLOWING IS A RITE USE EACH DAY WITH THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES
Begin with a few moments of silence. Have someone read from the scripture that is listed below:

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	ISAIAH 2: 1-5,	Is 4:2-6	Is 11:1-10,	Is 25: 6-10,	Is 26: 1-6,	Is 29:17-24	LK 1: 26-38.
2	ISAIAH 11:1-10	Is 35:1-10,	Is 40:1-11	LK 1: 26-38,	Is 41: 13-20	Is 48:17-19	SIR 48:1-4,9-11
3	ISAIAH 35:1-6-10	GN 49:8-10	JER: 23:5-8,	LK 1:5-25	LK: 1: 26-38,	LK:1: 39-45,	LK: 1: 46-56,
4	ISAIAH 7:10-14	MT 1:1-26					

Then have someone, who is designated as the leader, say the following prayer while someone else lights the candle.

“Father, we thank you for sending us your Son to awaken us to your presence in our lives. Help us to prepare the way for His coming. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.”

Conclude by singing:

***“O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lonely exile here. Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To you shall come Emmanuel.”***

If this candle ceremony precedes a meal, keep the candles burning for the duration of the meal. Add some background music, if desired, such as excerpts from Handel’s Messiah.

