

Advent ritual - Week three

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Special to the Review

The following Advent wreath prayer is intended to help busy households make Advent a prayerful time during the rush of Christmas preparations. The language is fairly simple, intended to be used for personal prayer and reflection or by groups of adults or adults with children. Options are noted to allow for participation by a variety of members of a household.

Leader: With the start of this third week of the season of Advent, we are halfway to Christmas.

So, as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ and for the second coming of the Lord, we light three candles, including a special one of a different color.

n Light the first two candles on the Advent wreath again, and the third one — one that is a lighter color, usually pink or white. (Choose a different person for this task each week.)

n Read aloud Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28. (A different person might read each passage.)

Leader: Lighting the lighter-colored candle this week is a sign that what was dark is getting brighter, and joy is on its way. We can hardly wait to rejoice and sing at Christmas. We know that the wonder of the season tends to push all our sadness and sorrow away, so we start to feel that special feeling already.

The prophet Isaiah, in this third week of Advent, recalls for us what that joy is like. Feeling God in our lives lifts our spirits. And what is it that will make even the poor happy and the hurting healed? Praise for God and justice for others. St. Paul reminds us to pray, to be holy and to not let anything quench our joyous spirit.

Closing prayer: (Leader may read all, or others in the household may each read a segment.)

n Father in heaven, help us hear again the voice of John the Baptist crying out in the desert. Help us make straight the pathways of our own lives so that those paths lead to eternal life with you.

n God above, do good and avoid evil is so easy to say, yet so hard to put into practice. Be with us in each and every moment of each and every day so that we remain blameless and worthy of your coming.

n Help us, Lord, not to dampen the joy of others. Remind us this week to rejoice always and to pray without ceasing.

n Holy Spirit, guide us so that our lives may be testimony of the wonders and the love of God, so that others might believe through us.

Also see:

Advent ritual - Week two

Advent ritual - Week one