



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA** 

Advent December

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

Prayer for Advent Week 1

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Advent is a special time when we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. It is a time of waiting, hope, and love. Let's gather together as we wait for the birth of Jesus, just like the people in the Bible did long ago.

Suggested Song: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (simple version)

Leader: We begin our Advent prayer by lighting the first candle on the Advent wreath. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Each week, we will light a new candle to show that our hearts are growing brighter as we get closer to Christmas.

(Light a purple candle on the wreath.)

Leader: As we light this candle, we remember that Jesus is the light who brings hope to the world. Let us pray together:

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, and fill our hearts with hope. Help us to wait patiently for you.



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Leader: Let us listen to these words from Isaiah about hope.

Isaiah 9:1, 5

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone... For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Leader: This verse tells us about the hope we have because Jesus, the Savior, is coming. He will bring light to our world, just like the sun brings light after

a dark night. Jesus will be our king, and he will help us have peace. We can be hopeful because God is sending his Son to help us.

Leader: Now, let's remember that Jesus is the light of the world. I will pass around a small candle (battery-operated or a small safe light). As you hold the light, think about how you can bring light to others by being kind, loving, and helpful.

Leader: Let us pray together, asking God to help us be ready for Jesus.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to be our light. Help us to wait with hope, knowing that Jesus is coming soon. May we share his love with our families, our friends, and everyone around us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer for Advent Week 2

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Suggested Song: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (simple version)

Leader: We begin our Advent prayer by lighting the second candle on the Advent wreath. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Each week, we will light a new candle to show that our hearts are growing brighter as we get closer to Christmas.

(Light a second purple candle on the wreath in addition to the first purple lit candle.)

Leader: As we light this candle, we remember that Jesus is the light who brings peace to the world. Let us pray together:

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, and fill our hearts with peace. Help us to wait patiently for you.



Gabriel visits Mary, painted ceiling, Ely cathedral by Bob Embleton, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Leader: In Luke 1:26-38, when the angel visits Mary, we hear about peace. One day, the angel Gabriel came to Mary to tell her she would have a baby and that baby would be Jesus. Mary was scared and nervous. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is happy with you. You will have a baby and his name will be Jesus. He will be very special. He is the Son of God." This story reminds us that God gives us peace, even when we might feel afraid or unsure. We can trust God's plan, just like Mary did.

Leader: Now, let's remember that Jesus is the light of the world. I will pass around a small candle (battery-

operated or a small safe light). As you hold the light, think about how you can bring light to others by being kind, loving, and helpful.

Leader: Let us pray together, asking God to help us be ready for Jesus.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to be our light. Help us to wait with peace, knowing that Jesus is coming soon. May we share his love with our families, our friends, and everyone around us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer for Advent Week 3

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Suggested Song: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (simple version)

Leader: We begin our Advent prayer by lighting the third candle on the Advent wreath. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Each week, we will light a new candle to show that our hearts are growing brighter as we get closer to Christmas.

(Light the rose-colored candle on the wreath in addition to the two purple lit candles.)

Leader: As we light this candle, we remember that Jesus is the light who brings joy to the world. Let us pray together:

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, and fill our hearts with joy. Help us to wait patiently for you.

Leader: In Luke 1:39-45, we hear joy. This passage about the visitation tells us about when Mary, already pregnant with Jesus, went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, also pregnant. When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, her baby jumped inside her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said, 'Mary, you are blessed because you will be the mother of the Savior! How happy I am to be with you!'



Metropolitan Museum of Art, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Leader: When Mary visited Elizabeth, both were so happy to be together. Elizabeth's baby, John (who would grow up to be John the Baptist), jumped for joy when he heard Mary's voice, because he knew that Jesus, the Savior, was coming. This story teaches us about the joy that comes from knowing Jesus is with us.

Leader: Now, let's remember that Jesus is the light of the world. I will pass around a small candle (battery-operated or a small safe light). As you hold the light, think about how you can bring light to others by being kind, loving, and helpful.

Leader: Let us pray together, asking God to help us be ready for Jesus.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to be our light. Help us to wait with joy, knowing that Jesus is coming soon. May we share his love with our families, our friends, and everyone around us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer for Advent Week 4

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Suggested Song: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (simple version)

Leader: We begin our Advent prayer by lighting the first candle on the Advent wreath. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. This week, we will light our final candle to show that our hearts are growing brighter as we get closer to Christmas.

(Light the final purple candle on the wreath in addition to the other three lit candles.)

Leader: As we light this candle, we remember that Jesus is the light who brings love to the world. Let us pray together:

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, and fill our hearts with love. Help us to wait patiently for you.

Leader: In Matthew 1:18-25 we hear about love. Mary and Joseph were going to get married, but before they were married, Mary became pregnant with a baby by the Holy Spirit. Joseph was worried because he didn't understand, but then an angel appeared to him in a dream and said, "Don't be afraid to marry Mary. The baby is from God. His name will be Jesus, and he will save people from their sins."

Leader: Joseph was kind and loving, and he wanted to take care of Mary. When he found out that Mary was going to have a baby, he was confused, but God sent him a message through an angel. The angel told Joseph that the baby was very special: he was Jesus, the Savior. This story shows how much love Joseph had for Mary and Jesus, and how God loves us by sending Jesus to save us.

Leader: Now, let's remember that Jesus is the light of the world. I will pass around a small candle (battery-operated or a small safe light). As you hold the light, think about how you can bring light to others by being kind, loving, and helpful.

Leader: Let us pray together, asking God to help us be ready for Jesus.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to be our light. Help us to wait with love, knowing that Jesus is coming soon. May we share his love with our families, our friends, and everyone around us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



Martino Altomonte, PDM-owner, via Wikimedia Commons

Reading of Sacred Scripture

Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Image from Canva

Gospel Reflection

This month's Gospel is from the apostle Mark. He tells us that we always need to be ready because we do not know when Jesus will come. Have we heard that before?

Growing up I sure did. Mom would tell me and my brothers and sister to pick up the house because Dad would be home from work any minute and she wanted him to come home to a clean and peaceful home with toys put away and supper on the table. Mom wanted us to show that we loved our dad too! We would sit anxiously looking out the big front window, waiting. When we saw the car pull up out in front of our house, we would all run outside to see Dad and hug him until he smiled and laughed. We were all happy Dad was finally home.



Image from Vecteezy

Advent is a time when we prepare for Jesus to come into the world, just like he did on that first Christmas day long ago. But what can we do to prepare, to get ready for Jesus? First, we can clean our hearts. We can go to reconciliation and tell God

that we are sorry for any bad choices we have made. We can ask for his help, so we do not make the same bad choice again. We can pray to the Blessed Mother to ask for her to talk to Jesus and tell Jesus we want him to come into our life. We can do extra chores to help our family and neighbors. We can share food or toys with others who have less. We can go to Mass to say thank you to God for being our Father on earth and in heaven. We do not know when our Savior will come again, but we can be ready! And being ready will make our Lord Jesus Christ smile and laugh when he comes again.

This is a fun video of kids reading and reflecting on Mark 13:33-37. <https://youtu.be/t-tY5wY3tKc>

Faith in Action

Advent is a beautiful season which takes place during the four weeks before Christmas. It is a time when we wait patiently for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. During Advent, our Catholic faith tradition inspires us to prepare our hearts as we prepare to welcome Jesus. As a family we can celebrate this wonderful season of anticipation by spending time in prayer, reflection, doing good works, enjoying quality time together, and having fun.

Each week during the season of Advent there are different themes that remind us of what is to come: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Each week we wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus. Making an Advent wreath is a favorite tradition to celebrate the season. The green color and circular form of the wreath reminds us of God's never-ending love for us. You can make an Advent wreath using simple materials you find around the house. You can repurpose a wreath you already have from your Christmas decorations, gather greenery from your yard, use green construction paper, or color white paper with green crayons. You can even make a wreath out of Play-Doh. In selecting how you want to create your Advent wreath, gather as a family, pray about it, and invite each member to share what kind of Advent wreath they would like. Talk about what Advent is and how you would like to celebrate it as a family. Invite all members of your family to contribute to this discussion and decision-making process.



Once you have decided what you will use to make your wreath, gather those materials and also four candle holders and four candles – three purple, one pink. The purple candles represent hope, peace, and love. Purple is also a royal color, befitting the coming of a King – our Lord, Jesus Christ. The pink or rose-colored candle represents a time for celebration or great joy. For added color, you may add purple and pink ribbons to your wreath or the candle holders, corresponding to the colors of the candles.

You can make an Advent wreath that suits your family's resources and needs, it is up to you. The important thing is to include the whole family in making your wreath and engaging in the activities of the Advent season, where all members can make a contribution.

Here are a few resources to give you some ideas about making your own Advent Wreath:

How to Make an Advent Wreath – From St. Mary Magdalen Parish and School, November 28, 2020.

<https://youtu.be/dcOuxO7Tuy4>

Easy Advent Wreath Craft for Kids By Craft Club For Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUMOKCtHu-s>

DIY Advent Wreath Play - Doh – Urban Village Church-West

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2792552527625854>

When your Advent Wreath is complete, place it in a prominent place where everyone can see and access it. One place might be the center of your dining room table where you can gather around it each evening at a meal. As you gather around your Advent wreath, bless your wreath by spending time in prayer. Make up your own prayer or use one from the resources provided below. Sing your favorite Advent song – like “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” or another song that celebrates the season (please see resources below). Light the first purple candle each night for the first week during dinner time, starting on



Image from Canva

the first Sunday of Advent. Light two purple candles the Second Sunday and week, then two purples and the pink candle for the third Sunday and week, and finally all of the candles for the fourth and final Sunday and week before Christmas. Say special prayers, sing songs, and reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love each week.

A fun way to reflect on, celebrate, and put faith into action during the season of Advent is to create an Advent Blessing Jar. Each family member can make an Advent Blessing Jar. Use one jar per family member and 24 wide craft sticks. The sticks represent the approximately 24 days of Advent leading up to Christmas. Talk with each other about the season of Advent and what each of the themes of hope, peace, joy and love mean to you. Have each member draw a picture or write on the craft sticks a blessing that they would like to share with others. Cut out drawings and glue them to the top of the craft stick. Draw symbols like a cross representing going to church, prayer hands for saying prayers, or a heart to symbolize caring for others. Each day take a decorated craft stick and put into action what is on the stick.

Some ideas to include in your Advent Blessing Jar might be:

- Go to Church as a Family
- Bake Cookies for a Neighbor
- Visit a Nursing Home to sing Carols
- Have a Family Game Night
- Read Luke's Gospel Chapter 2:1 – 21
- Pray
- Collect Gently used Clothes and Donate them to Persons in Need
- Help Set the Dinner Table
- Clean My Room
- Wash the Dishes
- Call Grandma and Grandpa
- Collect Gently Used Toys and Donate them to Persons in Need
- Sing Christmas Carols



Image from Vecteezy

Give Thanks to God for.....
Help a Neighbor with Bringing in Their Groceries
Pray as a Family
Read a Christmas Story
Make Christmas Cards
Light the Advent wreath
Reach out to Someone who is Hurting

Whatever you do to celebrate the Advent season, do it together as a family and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate. Share at the dinner table what you did that day to celebrate the season and how it made you feel. Encourage and support each other on this beautiful Advent journey. Be inspired by the season of hope, peace, joy and love as you prepare for the coming of the greatest gift of all - our Lord, Jesus Christ.



Image from Vecteezy

Additional Resources

Catholic Advent Prayers for the Whole Family – Dynamic Catholic

<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/advent/advent-prayers.html>

Advent Crafts for the whole family – Catholic Sprouts

<https://catholicsprouts.com/advent-ideas-catholic-families/>

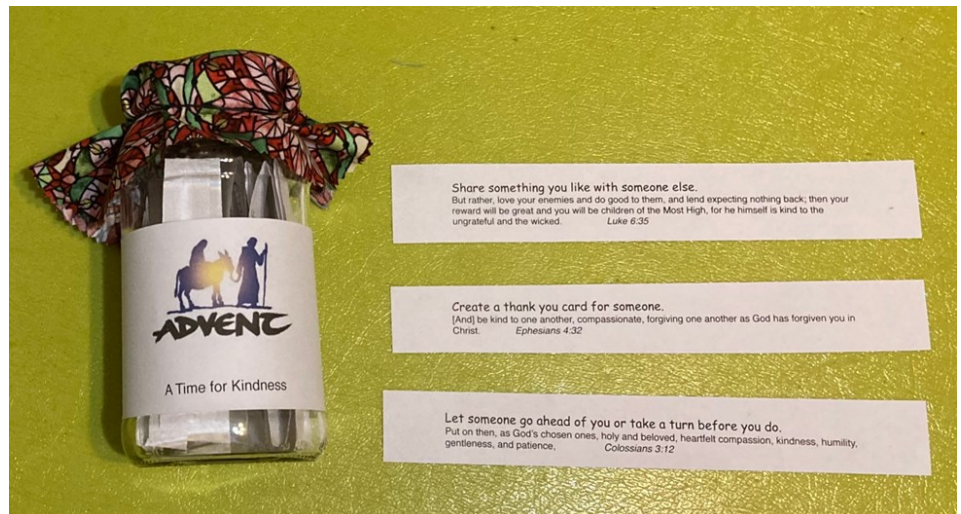
Advent Music - Songs of Advent & Catholic Christian Advent Hymns

<https://youtu.be/6yvVSG4ncMc?feature=shared>

Activities with Children

The Advent season consists of four weeks of preparation before the celebration of Jesus' birth. Some families use an Advent calendar to keep track of the days until Christmas. Perhaps your family will consider using an "Advent Jar" as an alternative to the calendar. The jar can be filled with kindness activities that are paired with Bible verses. By implementing an Advent Jar, family members can prepare for Jesus' arrival by participating in a daily act of kindness and reciting a Bible verse.

Each day during Advent, a family member picks one slip from the jar. The slip can be chosen in the morning or the prior evening - whatever time of day works best for your family. Read the kindness activity aloud and then recite the prayer. Suggestions or substitutions may be made to help all loved ones have a better understanding of what is expected. (Many of the following kindness activities came from "100Acts of Kindness for Kids"; you can refer to this resource for alternative ideas.) At the end of the day, family members discuss how they were able to carry out the act of kindness and, therefore, how they are preparing themselves for the day our Savior was born.



Directions for creating an Advent Jar:

1. Print the list
2. Cut into strips
3. Decorate a jar
4. Place strips into your family's Advent Jar

Create a thank you card for someone.

[And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Ephesians 4:32

Send a card to a service member.

So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.

Galatians 6:10

Tell someone why they are special to you.

[L]ove one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.

Romans 12:10

Feed the birds.

For every animal of the forest is mine, beasts by the thousands on my mountains. I know every bird in the heights; whatever moves in the wild is mine.

Psalms 50:10-11

Do a chore for someone without them knowing.

You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Return someone's shopping cart at the store.

Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:6

Share something you like with someone else.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Luke 6:35

Check in on an elderly neighbor.

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others.

Philippians 2:3-4

Let someone go ahead of you or take a turn before you do.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience

Colossians 3:12

Pick up litter.

Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

Plant something.

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

Ephesians 2:10

Donate outgrown clothes.

Whoever cares for the poor lends to the Lord, who will pay back the sum in full.

Proverbs 19:17

Bring flowers to someone.

Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8

Bake cookies for a neighbor.

In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Acts 20:35

Tell someone how much you love them.

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble.

1 Peter 3:9

Donate a book to a doctor's office.

Light shines through the darkness for the upright; gracious, compassionate, and righteous.

Psalms 112:4

Hold the door open for someone.

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25:40

Donate food to the food pantry.

Lavishly he gives to the poor; his righteousness shall endure forever; his horn shall be exalted in honor.

Psalms 112:9

Read a book to someone.

Whoever confers benefits will be amply enriched, and whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Proverbs 11:25

Say hello to everyone you see.

She opens her mouth in wisdom; kindly instruction is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31:26

Invite someone to play on the playground.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Wave at kids on school buses.

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

1 John 3:18

Help make dinner.

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10

Give high fives to a friend.

Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Saint for December

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Feast Day December 12

A long time ago in Mexico, there was a man named Juan Diego. He was a kind man who loved God very much. One day, while Juan Diego was walking to church, he heard a beautiful voice calling his name from the top of a hill.

"Juan Diego!" the voice said.

Juan Diego looked up and saw a beautiful lady standing on the hill. She was wearing a bright blue robe, and the sun seemed to shine around her. She looked very kind, and Juan Diego was amazed.

"I am the Mother of God," she said. "I want you to tell the bishop to build a church on this hill, so that I can help the people of this land. Tell him that I love them very much and that I will always care for them."

Juan Diego was so surprised. He wasn't sure how to do what the lady asked. But the kind lady told him not to be afraid. She said, "Go, and I will help you."



Guadalupe el Tricolor, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

So, Juan Diego went to the bishop and told him what the lady had said. But the bishop didn't believe him. He said, "How do you know this is true?"

Juan Diego felt sad, but the lady appeared to him again. She said, "Don't worry, Juan Diego. I will show the bishop that this is really from me. Go back to the hill, and I will give you a sign."

Juan Diego went to the hill and found beautiful roses blooming there, even though it was winter and there should have been no flowers. He picked the roses and wrapped them in his cloak.

When he returned to the bishop, he opened his cloak and showed the roses. But something amazing happened: when Juan Diego opened his cloak, the image of the beautiful lady appeared on the cloth! The lady's face and robe were now imprinted on the fabric.

The bishop saw the image and knew it was a sign from God. He believed Juan Diego, and he built the church on the hill, just like Our Lady had asked. Many people came to pray, and they were filled with peace and love.

The people called the beautiful lady "Our Lady of Guadalupe," and she became a mother to everyone who needed help. Her image still helps people today to know that she loves them, just like a mother loves her children.



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Suggested Activities:

Pray an adapted Rosary together as a family. See <https://experience-wellbeing.com/praying-the-rosary-with-kids-repost/> for ideas of how to adapt to work with kids and read <https://uploads.weconnect.com/mce/23b23be9da2519c88f11c084310bcc0bf14417f8/Events/OLG2020/Rosary%20Our%20Lady%20of%20Guadalupe%202020%20ENGLISH.pdf> for mysteries adapted to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

- Find images of Our Lady of Guadalupe online or in your community.
- Eat at a Mexican restaurant and retell the story.
- Take red roses to the statue of Mary in your church.

December Resources

“100 Acts of Kindness for Kids,” Coffee Cups and Crayons. January 12, 2015, <https://www.coffeecupsandcrayons.com/100-acts-kindness-kids/>

“Advent Crafts for the whole family,” Catholic Sprouts <https://catholicprouts.com/advent-ideas-catholic-families/>

“Advent Music - Songs of Advent & Catholic Christian Advent Hymns” <https://youtu.be/6yvVSG4ncMc?feature=shared>

“Bendicion de la corona de Adviento,” USCCB, prayer (Spanish), <https://www.usccb.org/es/prayers/bendicion-de-la-corona-de-adviento>

“Blessing of an Advent Wreath,” USCCB, prayer (English), <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-advent-wreath>

“Catholic Advent Prayers for the Whole Family,” Dynamic Catholic <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/advent/advent-prayers.html>

“Easy Advent Wreath Craft for Kids,” Craft Club For Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUMOKCtHu-s>

“DIY Advent Wreath Play - Doh,” Urban Village Church-West <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2792552527625854>

“How to Make an Advent Wreath,” St. Mary Magdalen Parish and School, November 28, 2020. <https://youtu.be/dcOuxO7Tuy4>

“What is Advent?” USCCB, December 2023, <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/advent>

“What is an Advent Wreath?” USCCB Resources, 2021, video - <https://www.usccb.org/resources/what-advent-wreath>