



SOCIETY OF  
MISSIONARY  
CHILDREN



# Advent Resource 2017

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Advent is taken from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming" and is considered to be the beginning of our Church Year. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December this year, and ends on Christmas Eve (24<sup>th</sup> December). For most Christians, the season is one of anticipation and hope. The most common themes used for the four weeks of Advent are **Hope, Peace, Joy** and **Love**. Traditionally the primary colour of Advent is **purple or violet**, which reflects the fasting and waiting that forms part of the build-up to Christmas. It is also the connection between the birth and death of Jesus (a Lenten connection). On the third Sunday of Advent the colour changes to **pink or rose** in anticipation of the end of fasting and the start of rejoicing for the birth of the Saviour (this Sunday is sometimes celebrated as *Gaudete Sunday* meaning "rejoice.")

Set up a Prayer Space in your classroom or parish centre. You can do this by covering a small table with a purple/violet cloth and getting the children to make an Advent Wreath with some foliage from evergreen trees and holly trees in the garden. You will also need one white candle, one pink candle, and three purple candles. If you can't find coloured candles, simply use coloured ribbons around white candles instead. At the beginning of each week during Advent take some time to light the appropriate candle in your Advent Wreath and use the prayers in this resource book to bring the children together in prayer. Invite the children to discuss what each candle/theme means, particularly what it means to each one of them personally. The resource book also includes our Advent activity calendar for 2017 and our Christmas colouring competition! Remember, everything is available online at [www.wmi.ie](http://www.wmi.ie) to download and photocopy.

# Week 1

## light the first purple candle

The first purple candle represents HOPE

**Leader:** Father in heaven, we need the warmth of your love in our hearts and the light of your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with HOPE when Jesus comes.

**Reader:** Jesus said, "Let your goodness shine out like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly Father will touch the lives of others." (Matt 5:16-17)

**Leader:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,  
In our own little way help us to bring hope  
to children who are afraid, sad or alone.  
We ask you to bring hope for tomorrow.  
Through us, shine your light of HOPE upon them.  
Amen



# Week 2

## light the first and second purple candle

The second purple candle represents PEACE

**Leader:** Father in heaven, very soon the birth of your Son, Jesus, will light up the world. May his quiet coming bring us true inner peace.

**Reader:** To us a child is born, to us a son is given and he will be called the Prince of Peace. His kingdom will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. (Is 9:6-7)

**Leader:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,

Help us to bring peace to those around us.

Look after children who live in conflict at home,  
at school and in their country.

Help us to throw your blanket of peace around their shoulders  
and comfort them with our friendship.

Amen



# Week 3

## light the first two purple candles and the rose candle

**The rose candle represents JOY**

**Leader:** Father in heaven, we know that you love all your people. Your love brings the gift of joy to our hearts.

**Reader:** May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again, rejoice! Show a gentle attitude towards everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need with a thankful heart. (Phil 4:1-6)

**Leader:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,  
We think of all the unhappy children in the world today.  
We ask you to bring a little joy to their hearts this Christmas.  
Thank you for the joy we feel as we celebrate  
the birth of Jesus.  
Amen



# Week 4

## light the three purple candles and the rose candle

The third purple candle represents LOVE

**Leader:** Father in heaven, bless our families and bring us a spirit of understanding and love. May our homes be places of peace and laughter and may your love shine from each of us.

**Reader:** Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or proud. Love is not rude, selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs. Love is not happy with lies but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up. Love is forever. (1 Cor 13:1-8)

**Leader:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Dear God,  
In everything we do and say, help us to show love to others.  
Today we ask your blessing on our circle of love and prayer.  
Keep us forever safe in the warmth of your love.  
Amen



# Christmas Day

**The white candle represents JESUS CHRIST**  
Encourage the children to light this candle at home

**Prayer:** Baby Jesus, bless us today, your special day. We light this white candle to welcome you as our Saviour. As we carry you to our family crib, we think about what you have taught us. You taught us to share with others, you taught us to help one another, you taught us to be friends and you taught us to pray. When we look at the light of the candle we remember these important lessons.

**Gospel Story:** Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem to register for the census ordered by Augustus. The time came for Mary to have her baby and he was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger. On a hillside near the town, some shepherds were watching over their sheep. Suddenly, an angel appeared and the sky was filled with God's glory. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, for I have great news for you. Today a baby has been born in Bethlehem, he is Christ the Lord. You will find him lying in a manger." The sky was filled with the sound of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth!" The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and soon found the stable. There in the manger lay a tiny baby. They told Mary and Joseph what they had seen and heard that night, and they shared their amazement. Mary listened carefully and cherished all these things in her heart. The shepherds went back to their sheep on the hillside, singing God's praises for everything had been as the angel had said. (Luke 2:1-20)



# Christmas Eve (A Poem)

On Christmas Eve my mother read  
The story once again  
Of how the little child was born  
And of the Three Wise Men.

And how by following the Star  
They found Him where He lay,  
And brought Him gifts; and that is why  
We keep our Christmas Day.

And when she read it all, I went  
And looked across the snow  
And thought of Jesus coming  
As He did long ago.

I looked into the East, and saw  
A great star blazing bright;  
There were three men upon the road  
All black against the light.

I thought I heard the angels sing  
Away upon the hill...  
I held my breath...it seemed as if  
The whole great world stood still.

It seemed to me the little Child  
Was being born again...  
And very near...and THEN somehow  
Was NOW...or NOW was THEN.

*(Grow in Love, Fourth Class)*

As the Pope's official  
children's charity for  
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Children supports the physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing of children around the world. It encourages children to pray together for each other and for children living in poverty and fear. It also encourages children to share whatever they can, no matter how little, to help with the material needs of their brothers and sisters in need.