



Advent - A Time to Wait, Learn, and Grow

By Rev. Jan Wilton, Homeschool Representative

*Advent—a word that means “coming.” The four weeks before Christmas is the Advent season when Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. This preparation may include praying, fasting, and thinking about one’s spiritual life.**

Around Thanksgiving, the pastor reminded the church that they would soon be participating in Advent. She said it would be a time to wait for the Lord’s coming, together as a church, even as they remember the Israelites and their time of waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Many churches celebrate the Advent season by lighting candles on an Advent wreath and reciting scriptures. They also share information about the meaning of the season.

The church looks forward to Advent even though waiting can be challenging. The church anticipates the celebration of the coming of our Savior as a baby. It also reflects on the words of Isaiah, the prophet, who speaks about the anticipated fulfillment of God’s promise of a coming Savior. God’s people had to wait a long time for His coming. The time of waiting had been long and difficult.

A Wonderful Learning Project

Learning about Advent can be a wonderful project for homeschooling families. Reading, research, and vocabulary opportunities are endless. What is Advent? What does the word mean? What is the history of Advent? A time of waiting? Waiting for whom, why, when, how, where? This is an opportunity for a creative learning experience for the homeschool family. The family can research a part of world history in the time and location of the readings from Isaiah, the prophet, and how he spoke to the anticipated fulfillment of God’s promise of a coming Savior, the Son of God, which had been the hope of the people. What was the world like during the time of the prophets? Studying the history and geography

surrounding the prophetic books of the Bible can be a way for all school-age children to understand God's active involvement throughout history.

Engage middle and high school students in research about the world in the time of Isaiah. What were the events that increased the longing of the people for the Messiah to come? The Old Testament ends with Malachi, without a word in the Bible about what happened for the next 400 years. Wondering about this time gap may develop a curiosity for further research. Younger students could explore maps and study the culture. The preschooler can be involved in the wondering of what, why, when, where, and how there was a period of 400 years without any messages from God. All age levels can learn about the patience needed to wait.

More Than Lighting a Candle

When coupled with spiritual growth for the family, we can begin to see Advent as more than just lighting a candle. We begin to feel the anxiousness of the ancient people who yearned for the coming of the Promised One, Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. It then propels us to look forward to the second Advent, the second coming of Jesus!

Consider checking out [Come Peasant, King](#) from The Foundry Publishing. These lessons for Advent 2021 can be purchased for appropriate ages which can be used by homeschool families during this season. The Foundry's overview summary states:

Advent is an intentional season marked by reflections on hope, peace, joy, and love as we remember and anticipate the coming of Christ, but Advent is not marked only by reflection and waiting. During this uniquely Christian season, disciples of Jesus are also called to act in specific ways that, however small, God wants to use for kingdom purposes. In *Come Peasant, King* Olivia Metcalf reminds us that, as we prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of Christ, we also engage in a willingness to fully surrender to the call of God on our lives, wherever that may lead us.

Yes, it is that time of year again. Let the waiting begin in our hearts and homes. May the people in your home experience hope, peace, love, and joy this season of Advent.

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*Melissa Hammer, *Faith Words for Kids, A Dictionary for Parents, Teachers, and Children*, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2011