

# ADVENTure:

a self-directed walk pondering  
the true meaning of Christmas

**Advent** -- Advent is a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ, embracing the four Sundays prior to Christmas. Some believe the four weeks of Advent symbolize the 4,000 years of darkness in which the world was enveloped before the coming of Christ.

**Advent Wreath** -- An Advent wreath is a tradition of the Advent season. The wreath is decorated with greenery and a large white candle, called the Christ Candle, stands in the middle of the wreath. Four candles are placed into the wreath surrounding the central candle. These may be all blue, all purple, or three purple and one pink. These candles are lit on successive Sundays in Advent, one for each week. The pink one is lit on the third week and the Christ Candle is lit on either Christmas Eve or Christmas day.

Why the pink candle? In the earliest years of the church, the only church season was Lent, the seven weeks prior to Easter. Lent was a season of fasting and prayer as the church commemorated the crucifixion of Jesus. The traditional color of banners in the church during this time was a deep purple, signifying royalty, repentance, and suffering. During Lent the church lit seven candles, one for each week of the solemn season. However solemn the season, the story of Lent also has a twinge of hope and joy since the death of Christ prefigured the resurrection. So, on the third Sunday of Lent, the church was encouraged not to fast, but to feast. In ancient times on this particular Sunday the Pope would honor a citizen with a pink rose, and as time passed the priests wore pink vestments on this day as a reminder of the coming joy.

When the season of Advent was instituted the church viewed it as a mini-Lent, a time for reflection and repentance (thus the purple). In so doing, the church adopted the first four candles of Lent and changed the third candle of Advent to pink in honor of the Lenten tradition. This is why we have a pink candle in our Advent Wreaths. To further heighten the sense of anticipation of Christ's coming during Advent, the church named each candle in the wreath -- the first being **hope**, the second **peace**, the third **joy**, and the fourth **love**.

In this room you will find five stations – representing the five candles of the Advent wreath. Each station focuses on a different character(s) of the Christmas story. At each you will find scriptures to read and ponder, as well as an activity to do if you'd like.

It is recommended that you visit the stations around the outside of the room first and finish with the white Christ station near the center/front. You can move through the stations as quickly or slowly as you'd like.

### What to do:

1. Turn on the CD player inside the door.
2. Light all five candles & return lighter to its place by the CD player.
3. Visit stations around the outside of the room, following directions at each station.
4. Visit center station, also following directions there.
5. THANK GOD for the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, Our Savior.
6. Please blow out all candles.
7. Turn off CD player.
8. Tell a friend – spread the news – tell them how Jesus met you here as you took time out of this hectic season to honor Him—the true reason for the season!!

If others are in the room with you, please keep all talking to a minimum. Others around you may be praying. Thank you.