

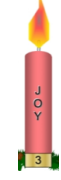





# ADVENT -O

This activity is an invitation to help us in our spiritual preparation for Christmas. May it prove to serve us as a reflective time and a fruitful time to experience the good that comes from our waiting for God's great gift to us at Christmas.

 <b>HOPE</b>	 <b>LOVE</b>	 <b>JOY</b>	 <b>PEACE</b>	 <b>CHRIST</b>
Read the Advent Reflection "A Present of Presence"	Refrain from TV and spend the time with family or friends	Read Psalm 150:1-6 Sing a Christmas carol	Watch the news and pray for those in need	Spend an hour in the adoration chapel
Go for a walk or drive, look at the natural world and pray for the environment	Pray for CWL members	Read Proverbs 12:18-18 Practice "holding your tongue", give someone else the last word.	Attend weekday mass	Read Philippians 2:5-8 Reflect on the significance of God taking on human flesh to be with us
Read Mark 12:41-44 Make a donation to the food bank	Read Matthew 5:43-48 Pray for help with a difficult relationship		Read Psalm 150:1-8 Say thank-you to someone	Read Matthew 10:17-23 Refrain from shopping for a day
Pray a rosary for families	Read Luke 26 – 38 Reflect – When do you say yes to God?	Read Matthew 5:13-16 Call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while	Take a nap	Read Matthew 5:13-16 Send a handwritten note to a friend
Go to reconciliation	Read Colossians 3:12-15 Forgive someone	Attend the A Christmas concert	Pray a rosary for peace	Pray for an increase in faith in our parish

Return your Advent-O card in January.

- Prizes will be awarded for: 2 lines, Around the World, and Full Card



## A PRESENT OF PRESENCE

God sent a present into the world, the gift of the loving presence named Jesus. The gospel stories indicate that Jesus gave few material things to people. What he gave most was his personal presence, gifts that were treasures of the heart: belief in self, inner healing, peace of mind, compassion, forgiveness, dignity, and justice. This loving presence lives on in us and is the central focus of Christmas gift-giving.

Like Jesus, we can give from our inner abundance, gifts from the heart. Moments lovingly spent with another through prayer or through personal presence carry more beauty and have more endurance than anything material we could give. What greater gifts could we share than ones that reflect the one Great Love we have known in the person of Jesus: our care and concern, our hope, our joy, our understanding and forgiveness, our patience.

When we reflect upon our hurried pace of life, we see how deeply we are entrenched in western culture. We see how Advent gets lost in “the Christmas rush.” The messages are all around us: “Buy this and you will be happy. Buy that and you will prove your love.” Sharing presence is hard to do in a culture that keeps promoting material things as a sign of how much we love others. Sharing presence is difficult in an environment that encourages us to be as busy as possible so that we will be rich, successful, and important – and able to buy more things.

When we are busy, rushed, and pressed it is easy to miss awareness and union with those around us and those in our larger world. Advent is a good season to be more deliberate in sharing the present of presence every day. It may be through a phone call, a letter, an e-mail, a visit, sending kind feelings or through the bonding of prayer as we focus love and attention towards those who need the strength of God to be with them. Let us choose “being” over “doing” and when Christmas arrives may we be more aware of the power of Jesus’ presence within us and our ability to warm the lives of others because of this great Gift of Love.

**Prayer:** God of Love, you were so generous, sending the presence of your Son to dwell among us and to tell us who you are. Encourage us during this Advent season to continue sharing in his loving presence through our attentiveness, given in prayer and in deeds. You, who dwell within us, remind us to let go of our busyness and hurriedness so that we can be with others in a living way. Convince us that “being” is as important as “doing”. Thank-you for your strengthening presence. Thank you for being with us. Amen.

Joyce Rupp, Out of the Ordinary