

Born the King

2019 CANDLE LITURGIES

These liturgies aim for flexibility based on your context. They are written with the intent to include a variety of people of all ages. It's important to include those who might not have a nuclear family present in your church. Instead of always using members from the same family, these liturgies encourage a wider participation, offering the opportunity for representatives from multiple families to participate each week.

When deciding whom to ask to participate, consider choosing readers who may not always get asked to be involved—as an illustration of the hope we have for a kingdom for all people (although be mindful of people's personal preferences and allow them to decline to participate if they feel uncomfortable).

The questions in these readings are open-ended for the purpose of including younger participants and/or non-readers in the lighting process. While very young children may be unable to light the candle, they can be included by blowing out the candle (with assistance) at the end of the service. Another option for including young children could be having two wreaths: one that uses real candles that adults can light, and a smaller one made accessible to younger learners, perhaps with electronic candles they can turn on themselves or a large coloring page where a new candle is colored in each week. The internet is rife with resources and ideas for this type of accommodation if you're interested.

Be mindful that the scripts provided here offer the opportunity for some on-the-spot answers from children. If your participants (whether children or adults) aren't comfortable engaging each other in that way, they can skip the *italicized* text and read just the **bold** parts for a more traditional candle-lighting process. Be creative and use whatever works for your community's context.

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2019

The HOPE Candle

Adult: Have you ever waited for something you've wanted for a very long time, but then it's finally coming?

Child(ren): [hopefully a response in the affirmative]

Adult: What was it?

Child(ren): [various responses]

Adult: We call that feeling of being really excited, and finding it difficult to wait, "anticipation." In the church we are beginning a season of anticipation called Advent. Advent is a time when we look ahead in the calendar, toward Christmas, when we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, but Advent is also a time when we look much farther ahead, to when Jesus will come again someday. Why do you think we are so excited to look ahead to Jesus's birth?

Child(ren): [various responses]

Adult: We aren't only excited about his birth, but we also anticipate when he comes again to make all things right. While we wait, we hope. We know that God keeps promises, so we have hope that Jesus will come back. But it can be hard to wait, right? What can we do while we are waiting for Jesus to return?

Child(ren): [allow various responses, but if needed, guide them to think about loving and caring for others and/or preparing our hearts for Jesus]

Lighting the Candle

During Advent we light candles to help us think about waiting for Jesus with anticipation. Today we light the HOPE candle, because we know that, while we are excited for Jesus to come, we can wait because we have hope that Jesus keeps his promises. After we light the candle, we'll say a prayer.

[Light the first candle.]

Prayer

Let's pray.

God, we anticipate many things in our lives, but most of all we anticipate you coming back to make all things right. Help us to hope while we wait, and prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth. Amen.