***Preparing for the Season of Advent***

**The Advent Wreath helps us as we get ready to welcome Jesus at Christmas**

Light has always been a symbol of hope in the darkness. Long, long before Jesus was born, we know that the people of Eastern Europe made wreaths of evergreen branches and added lighted candles as a sign of hope during the dark days of winter. This was a reminder to them that after the darkest time of the year, spring would soon be with them. In the northern countries of Europe, lights were placed on wagon wheels and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn the wheel of the earth back towards the sun. By the 1500’s, Christians had adopted this tradition and were using **Advent Wreaths** as part of their preparations for Christmas. In the 17th century, the Advent Wreath was used throughout Germany to mark the time spent waiting for the birth of the Baby Jesus at Christmas. From Germany, this tradition spread to the rest of Europe and eventually all around the world.

***What does the Advent Wreath mean?***

* Usually, the Advent Wreath is made with 5 candles, 3 purple, 1 pink and 1 white, with a circle of evergreen leaves wrapped around them. This circle reminds us that God’s love for us has no end.
* The candles remind us that Jesus is the light that has come into the world. (See John 3;19).
* We use 3 purple and 1 pink candle to represent the four weeks of Advent. The colour purple is used because long ago, purple dye was expensive and only worn by royalty. Advent is the season of the coming of our King.
* The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent, Joyful Sunday, and it reminds us that we are now very close to Christmas. Long ago, Advent was a time of fasting, like Lent. People were allowed to break” their fast on Joyful Sunday, and the priest wore pink or rose coloured vestments at Mass. That tradition soon became part of the Advent Wreath.
* As we light the candles each week, we are reminded of our journey towards Christmas when we welcome the baby, Jesus. The people of the Old Testament waited a long, long time for this to happen. They waited, in JOYFUL HOPE for God to be with them. They called Him Emmanuel. We light the white candle on Christmas Day, because our waiting is over. God is with us! O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

***The Advent Wreath in the School or Classroom Sacred Space***

Place the Advent Wreath in your classroom Sacred Space. Light the candles during prayer time for the four weeks of Advent.

Week 1: Light ONE Purple Candle Week 2: Light TWO Purple Candles

Wk 3: Light TWO Purple Candles and ONE Pink Candle Wk. 4 Light ALL 4 candles

***The Jesse Tree***

* The Jesse tree is a very old Christmas tradition and first started in medieval times.
* It tells the story of Jesus’ family tree.
* Jesse is the father of the great King David in the Old Testament.
* The Jesse Tree shows us some of the important people in the Old Testament.
* We hang ornaments on the Jesse tree, which tell a story from the Bible about God’s people before Jesus was born.
* Each story shows God’s plan to save us and to prepare us for the coming of His Son, the Messiah.

***Figures and symbols for your Jesse Tree***

We usually hang Biblical symbols on the Jesse Tree. They represent figures and events from the Bible. You can find these symbols on [http://images.rca.org/docs/dicipleship/jessepatterns.pdf Cut](http://images.rca.org/docs/dicipleship/jessepatterns.pdf%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20Cut) them out, colour them in and attach a coloured string or ribbon to hang them on the branches of your “tree”.

**Can you find Jesus’ Ancestors in the Bible?**

Look in your Bible to find the names of Jesus’ family. Write each name on the space provided and match them to the symbol listed below.

**Bible reference Name Symbol**

Genesis 2:7-9 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 12:1-7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 37: 23-28 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 3:1-10 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Exodus: 20: 1-7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1 Samuel 16:1-13 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1 Samuel 17: 12-51 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Luke 3: 2-29 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 1: 18-24 (2 names) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Luke 2: 1-6 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Baby Jesus, 10 Commandments, stars in the sky, apple, burning bush, shell and water, sheep and shepherd’s crook, coloured coat, slingshot, tools and flowers.(lilies).