

Advent



What is Advent?

Advent is the start of the Christian year.

It is a time for Christians to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

It is also a time for Christians to look forward to a time when Jesus will come again.

The word 'Advent' comes from a very old word 'Adventus' which means the arrival of something or someone important.



When is Advent?

Advent is the four weeks before Christmas.

It starts on the nearest Sunday to November 30th. This year (2020) it starts this Sunday 29th November

Advent lasts until midnight on Christmas Eve.

Advent is a time for Christians to wait and prepare for Christmas



Who celebrates Advent?

Advent is originally a time for Christians to prepare for Christmas. They remind themselves of the need to prepare their hearts and lives for Jesus, who they believe is the Saviour of the world.

However, many people who are not Christians also celebrate Christmas and they also prepare for Christmas. People buy their Christmas presents and decorate their homes for the festival.

Some Christians use Advent as a time of fasting before a celebration – a little like Ramadan comes before Eid.

Normally, people meet together with friends, family and colleagues before the main celebration of Christmas itself. Lockdown will probably mean that this happens online in 2020.



How is Advent Celebrated by Christians?

Churches display an Advent crown or Advent wreath during Advent.

There are four candles standing in the circle. In the centre there is a fifth candle.

The Advent wreath is a circle of evergreen branches.

During advent, in some churches there are no flowers

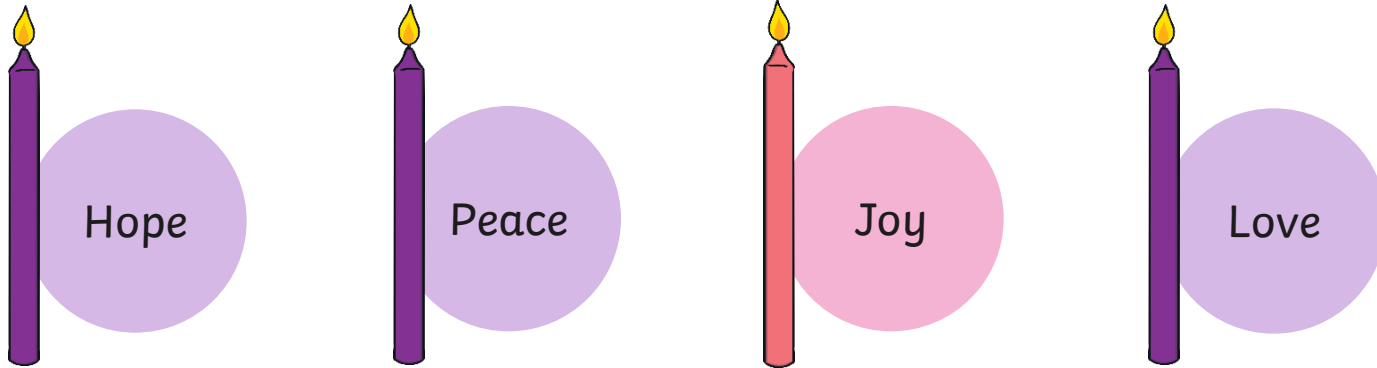


How is Advent Celebrated?

The circle of evergreen branches is a reminder that God does not change.

The candles remind Christians of the light of God.

A new candle is lit each Sunday during Advent until all four candles are burning. Each candle has a different meaning:



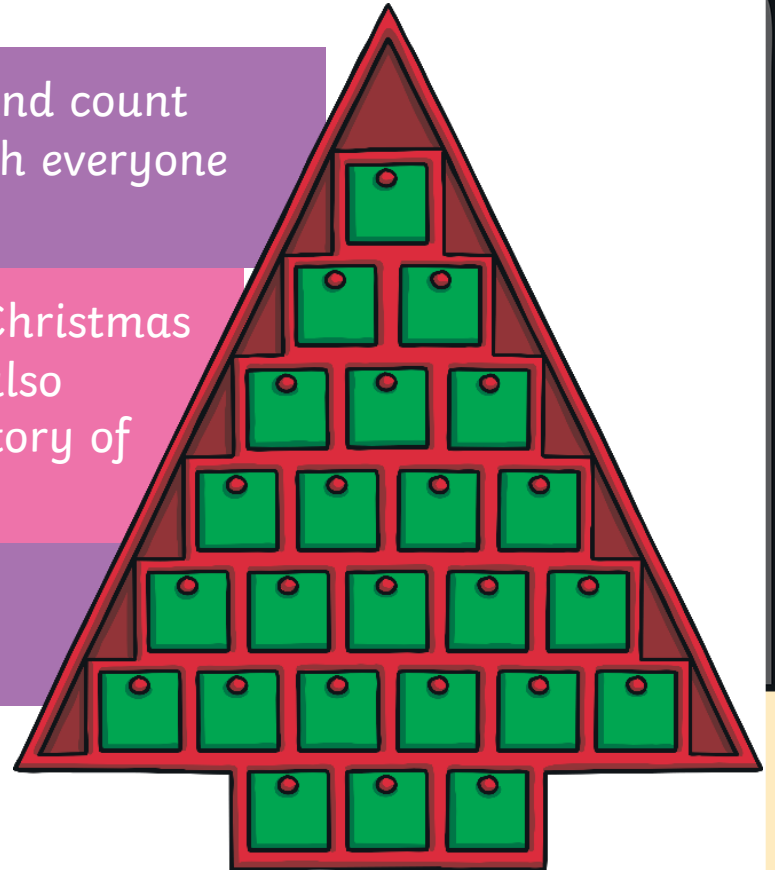
The final candle is lit on Christmas day to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Advent Calendars

Advent calendars start on 1st December and count down to Christmas. They are popular with everyone who is eagerly waiting for Christmas.

Each day a door is opened and shows a Christmas picture. Christian advent calendars will also contain a Bible verse telling part of the story of when Jesus was born (the Nativity)

Some Advent calendars have a chocolate treat hidden behind each door!



Traditional and modern Advent calendars



Christingles

Children often have fun making Christingles during Advent.

The cocktail sticks represent the four seasons.

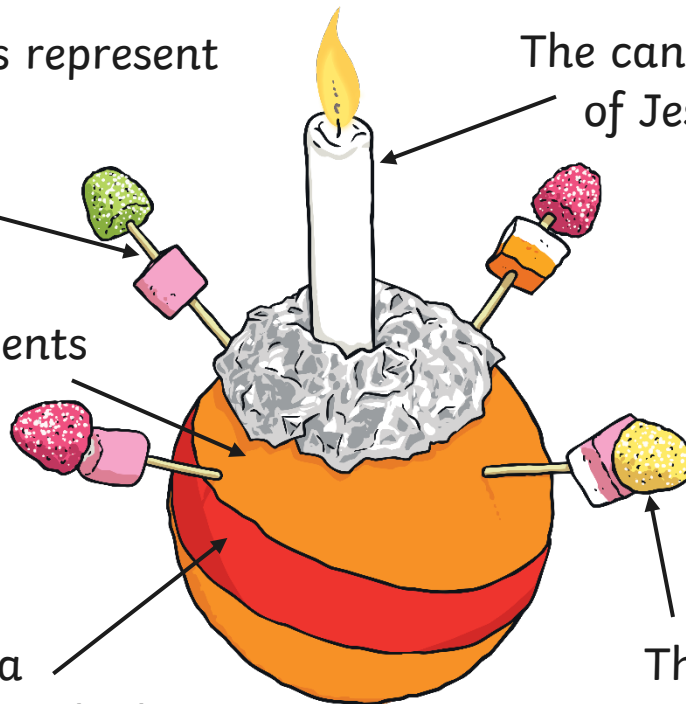
The candle reminds Christians of Jesus, light of the world.

The orange represents the world.

Christingle means 'Christ's Light'.

The red ribbon is a reminder that Jesus died.

The sweets or dried fruit represent all of God's creations.



Advent Around the World

Germany

In Germany, at Advent you need to check your shoes before putting them on.



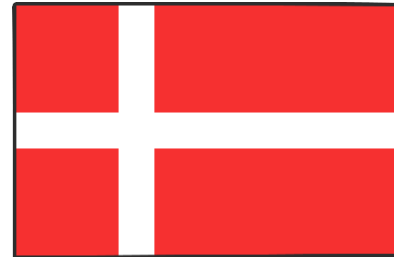
On the 6th December, Saint Nikolaus comes and puts sweets in children's shoes during the night.

Advent Around the World

Denmark



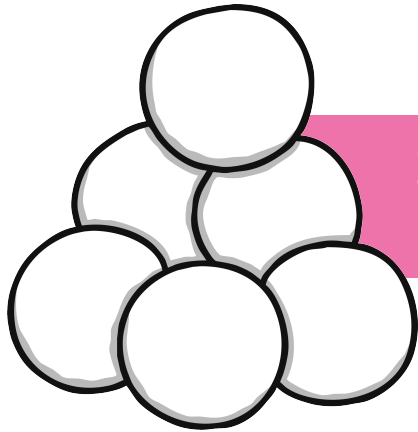
In Denmark, families burn calendar candles.



The candle is burnt a little each night until it is finished on Christmas Eve.

Advent Around the World

Finland



In Finland, families have ice or snow lanterns burning in their gardens.

