

## Symbols of Christmas

Advent is a time of waiting for the arrival of Jesus -it is a four-week season dedicated to reflective preparation for the arrival, "advent", of Jesus [Christ's Nativity](#) at Christmas time. Each week of Advent focuses on a different theme - hope, peace, joy, and love.



### **The Advent Wreath**

The Advent Wreath has special candles added to it - three purple candles and one pink candle.

**The First Sunday in Advent** - The first purple candle, lit on the first Sunday of Advent, is called the prophecy candle. It sets the tone for the season as it represents hope and expectation for the coming Messiah

**The Second Sunday of Advent** - The second purple candle, sometimes called the "Bethlehem Candle," is lit. This candle represents love and peace - both God's love for us and ours for him and others - and symbolizes the manger where Jesus was born. Lighting the second Advent candle reminds us of Jesus' life of love for us.

### **The Jesse Tree**

Jesse was the father of King David. We decorate a Jesse tree with illustrated ornaments that symbolize the people, prophesies, and events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The Jesse tree ornaments tell the story of God in the Old Testament, linking the Advent season with the faithfulness of God through 4000 years of history. " *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots, a Branch will bear fruit.*"



**The Third Sunday of Advent** - The third candle—a pink one. This candle, often called the Shepherd's Candle or the Joy Candle, represents joy, such as the joy the shepherds experienced when the angel told them that Christ was to be born. The Advent season is now half over, and Jesus' coming—both his first coming, liturgically, and his second coming, historically.

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent** - Traditionally, this purple candle has been called the "Angel Candle" or Candle of Love and represents the peace that Christ's birth brings to earth. The Jesse Tree and Advent Wreath both bring to conclusion the theme of repentance throughout the Advent season. The Jesse Tree tells the story of God bringing his people out of exile through Jesus Christ, and the Advent Wreath expresses the peace that we experience through God's redemption.

The white candle at the center of the Advent wreath, which is often called the "Christ candle." This white candle symbolizes the purity and light of Christ. It is typically lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to represent the arrival of Jesus Christ, who is seen as the "Light of the World" and the embodiment of purity and holiness. Jesus Christ is the righteous, immaculate, pure Savior. He is the light come into a dark and depraved world.

## Other Symbols of Christmas



**Christmas Tree** - the trees represent the birth and resurrection of Jesus and their everlasting life with God. That belief is further carried out by a tree's triangular shape symbolizing the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit).

**Star** - represents the bright star that shone brightly over the town of Bethlehem on the night that Jesus Christ was born. In the Nativity Story - the Star of Bethlehem guided the three kings (also known as the wise men or magi) to find baby Jesus in a stable. The Christmas Star has also come to represent hope and peace.

**Bells** - The ringing of a bell during the Christmas season represents the proclamation of joy and happiness for Christ's birth. The Christmas bell signifies that Jesus is always watching over us and protecting us. The presence of bells can also be traced back to pagan winter celebrations, where they were rung to drive away evil spirits.



**Candy Canes** - Shaped like a shepherd's staff and a J to represent Jesus as the Good Shepherd who guides and protects his flock. The white stripes on the candy cane represent purity and the innocence of Jesus as a newborn baby. The red stripes symbolize the blood that was shed by Christ during his crucifixion, ultimately providing salvation for all mankind. The hard, peppermint-flavored center of the candy cane is symbolic of Jesus' firmness in his teachings and the strength he provides to those who follow him. While not explicitly spiritual, the breakable nature of candy canes allows them to be shared with others, which can be seen as a metaphor for spreading goodwill and kindness during the holiday season.



**Angels** - Angels, like stars, are traditional Christmas tree toppers, and that is because these messengers of God played prominent roles in the Nativity of Jesus. Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, delivering the message from God that she would bear His son. Another angel visited Joseph in a dream to inform the carpenter that he should place his trust in Mary. And later in the Christmas Story, three angels appeared in the sky over Bethlehem to announce the birth of the Christ child.



**Poinsettia** - Like an evergreen tree, a poinsettia plant can be kept alive all year long, while the shape of the petals resembles a star. The colors of the Christmas plants are symbolic as well. The bold red reminds us of the blood Jesus shed on the cross in His sacrifice for humankind, while the white poinsettia is a symbol of purity, good cheer and happiness.

***Wishing Everyone, A Very Merry Christmas Season and  
All the Best in 2025!***

