



Advent Bingo Activity Center

Overview

Participants of all ages will be able to recall their liturgical experiences of Advent and enhance their understanding of the Church's celebration of this season in a fun way. The focus of this Activity Center is primarily on Advent practices and symbols found in Catholic liturgy.

Participants each receive an **Advent Bingo card**. Each card has 25 squares that each contain a word or phrase. These words are the “answers” to questions that will be asked by the session facilitator. If you have more than 30 people playing at one time, then some of these participants will have identical cards and will claim “Bingo” at the same time. It's okay to have multiple winners! Be sure that when you print the cards for use, you keep the widest possible variety.

The session facilitator will explain the game to participants and ask the questions provided on **Facilitator's Instructions and Q & A**. Participants will be asked to raise their hands to respond to the question. When the response is correct, all participants who have that word on their Bingo card may mark that square. (Consider having teens help less experienced readers find their answers.) After each question, the facilitator might ask participants to expand on the given response or may give additional information.

For example, the facilitator may ask the question: “What is the Church's color for the season of Advent?” When someone answers “purple,” the facilitator can solicit or add input about why purple is used this season, how it compares to the purple of Lent, where in the church we will find the color purple, and so on. Additional information can be found in the **Advent Bingo Facilitator's Resource Guide**. A skilled facilitator will first call on participants to share what else they know about the topic rather than presenting it all himself or herself.

The facilitator can encourage participation in the game by suggesting something like: “Okay, this time I'm looking for a second-grader to give me an answer!”

Just as in regular Bingo, when a player has marked five squares in a line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, he or she calls out “Bingo!” If the person has correctly marked the squares, the facilitator should give him or her a small prize, and then continue the game without clearing the squares. Play can continue until the time is up or until all the questions have been asked and answered.





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Facilitator's Instructions and Q & A

Includes instructions for the facilitator and the Bingo caller's questions and answers

Instructions for the Activity Center Facilitator:

Invite participants to each take an Advent Bingo card and pen or pencil.

Explain that you will ask a series of questions. After each question, you will call on one person to answer the question. Once the correct response has been given, all players who have that answer in one of the squares on their Bingo card may mark that square with a big "X." After each question is answered, you might ask the whole group to discuss that answer.

Let the players know that, just as in a regular game, they should yell "Bingo!" once they have marked five squares in a line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When a participant claims "Bingo," check his or her card and then give a small prize.

Tell the other participants not to clear their cards, but instead to keep playing. Continue awarding Bingo prizes as needed. You don't need to use all of the questions. Use as many as time permits. You can lengthen the session by taking more time to discuss each response and give additional background information.

Questions and Answers

1. Which Church season comes before Christmas? (*Advent*)
2. How many weeks are in Advent? (*four*)
3. What day of the week is the first day of Advent? (*Sunday*)
4. What do we call the future time when Jesus Christ will come into the world again? (*the Second Coming*)
5. What is the church's color for Advent? (*purple*)
6. What does the word *Advent* mean? (*coming*)
7. During Advent, we prepare for Jesus Christ to come into our _____ for Christmas. (*hearts*)

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Facilitator's Instructions and Q & A (continued)

8. During Advent, what do we pray for? (*peace*)
9. During Advent, we remember God's _____ to send our Savior, Jesus.
(*promise*)
10. During Advent, we try harder to do what? (*help others*)
11. What did Jesus the Savior save his people from? (*sin*)
12. What Advent custom uses three purple candles and one pink candle to remind us that Jesus brings light into our darkness? (*Advent wreath*)
13. The circle of green leaves on an Advent wreath reminds us that God's love is what? (*eternal*)
14. In which week of Advent do we light the pink candle? (*Week 3*)
15. What is Jesus the light of? (*the world*)
16. God sent special people to remind everyone that God would keep his promises of love. We hear readings from the Bible about these people in church during Advent. Who are these people? (*prophets*)
17. What prophet from the Old Testament predicted the coming of the Savior? (*Isaiah*)
18. Who announced that Jesus the Savior was coming to the world?
(*John the Baptist*)
19. This next question has a four-part answer, and each of the four parts has its own square. Be sure to check your card after each part of the question is answered. What does John the Baptist ask us to do during Advent?
(*prepare, watch, repent, wait*)
20. Which angel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus? (*Gabriel*)
21. What did Mary say when God asked her to be the mother of Jesus? (*Yes!*)
22. Who was the cousin of Mary who was also the mother of John the Baptist?
(*Elizabeth*)
23. Who did an angel visit in a dream, saying "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife"? (*Joseph*)

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Facilitator's Instructions and Q & A (continued)

- 24.** What great feast of Mary's do we celebrate on December 8?
(*Immaculate Conception*)
- 25.** Which patron saint of children do we celebrate on December 6?
(*Saint Nicholas*)
- 26.** Which saint, whose name means light, has a feast day that we celebrate on December 13? (*Saint Lucy*)
- 27.** On what date during Advent do we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe? (*December 12*)
- 28.** From December 17 through December 23, our Church uses special prayers that help us remember how great God is and what God is like. These special prayers start with the word "O" and are called _____. ("*O*" *Antiphons*)
- 29.** What traditional Catholic prayer contains the greeting that Elizabeth gave to Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb"? (*Hail Mary*)
- 30.** What is the name of the prayer that Mary sang when she visited her cousin Elizabeth? (*Magnificat*)
- 31.** When we sing the song "O Come, O Come, _____," what is the name we use for Jesus that means "God with us"? (*Emmanuel*)





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Facilitator's Resource Guide

The facilitator may use the following information to help draw out deeper responses to the questions and to enrich the group discussions of those responses.

Advent Basics (Bingo questions 1–5)

- ✦ The liturgical season of **Advent** begins four Sundays before Christmas.
- ✦ There are always **four** Sundays of Advent.
- ✦ The first day of Advent is always a **Sunday**. November 27 is the earliest day that Advent can start. The first three weeks of Advent are each a full seven days. Depending on which day of the week Christmas falls, the fourth week of Advent may be only one day long or up to a full week.
- ✦ From the First Sunday of Advent until December 16, the focus of the Church's prayers and readings is more on the **Second Coming** of Jesus Christ than on his birth. After December 16, the focus shifts to a more direct preparation for the Lord's birth.
- ✦ The liturgical color for the Advent season is royal **purple**, the same color used during Lent. This color symbolizes the sovereignty (kingship) of Christ, whose arrival we are awaiting and contemplating. Purple is used in the priest's vestments, the altar and ambo cloths, three of the candles on the Advent wreath, and other church decorations. Because Advent is a time of intense spiritual preparation, the tone of the season is subdued. The richness of the royal purple reflects our reverence while we wait for the coming of the Lord.

Meaning of Advent (Bingo questions 6–11)

- ✦ The word *Advent* means "**coming**." The Roman calendar says that Advent is "a season of joyful and spiritual expectation."
- ✦ Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ. During Advent, the Church reflects on the coming of Christ, Prince of **Peace**, in three ways: (1) the birth of Jesus as a babe in a manger; (2) the rebirth of Christ's presence in the hearts of faithful people; (3) Christ's **promised** return to the world at the Second Coming.

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Facilitator's Resource Guide (continued)

- ✦ We do not wait for the coming of Christ in a passive way. Instead, Advent is an active season in which God's people ready their hearts and lives for Christ's presence. Here are some ways we can prepare our hearts: examine our lives (with change as needed), **help others**, repent for any **sin**, and through prayer.
- ✦ The notion of waiting for the Lord's coming is found in the many prophecies from the Old Testament read at this time of year (see "Prophets" below). The Bible tells us that God's children waited for a savior for thousands of years. During that time, God sent his prophets to remind the people that the savior would come one day as promised.

Advent Wreath (Bingo questions 12–15)

- ✦ Even before the candles are lit, the **Advent wreath** tells us something: the darkness before the light represents sin (see Isaiah 9:1, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light . . ."). The Advent season occurs in the very short and dark days of winter. This is the season when we anticipate that God's light is going to shine into our darkness.
- ✦ The Advent wreath is a circle, reminding us that God's love for us has no end. The evergreen branches, whose foliage never changes color, are used in the wreath to remind us that God's love is everlasting and **eternal**.
- ✦ The Advent wreath has four candles, one for each week of Advent: three purple candles and one pink. The pink candle, symbolizing joy, is lit on the Sunday of **Week 3** of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday. *Gaudete* means "rejoice."
- ✦ The four weeks of Advent remind us of the thousands of years of waiting for Jesus, our Savior. The lighting of the Advent candles represents the promise that Jesus Christ, the light of **the world**, will come. As the light of the Advent wreath grows, we share in the expectation of Isaiah, of John the Baptist, and of Mary for the fulfillment of God's promise to send a savior.

Advent People from Scripture and Saints (Bingo questions 16–27)

- ✦ **Prophets:** Through the ages, God's people waited for their promised savior. At times, they forgot or ignored God's promise or perhaps became impatient in waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. God sent prophets (such as Isaiah, Micah, and Malachi) to remind people of God's promises and to offer hope that God would keep those promises.

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Facilitator's Resource Guide (continued)

- ❖ **Isaiah** was the first to draw attention to a special baby, sent from God to be born of a young woman. That baby was going to be a sign to God's people of hope and of salvation. Isaiah proclaimed that the baby's name would be "Emmanuel."
- ❖ **John the Baptist** is one of the most colorful and challenging Advent characters. With his strange clothes and his diet of grasshoppers and wild honey, he came out of the desert demanding repentance and announcing, "The Lord is near" (Matthew 3:1–12). John the Baptist was a prophet who reminded people of God's promise to send a savior and encouraged them to **prepare, watch, repent, and wait** so that they would be ready when he appeared.
- ❖ **Mary**, Mother of God, is important during Advent as we think about the events that led to the arrival of the infant Jesus in the world. We recall, celebrate, and strive to imitate her willingness to play her part in God's plan of salvation, even though it must not have made sense to her. From Mary, we learn the greatest traits of a Christian: love, humility, justice, openness to God's grace, and willingness to act.
- ❖ The angel **Gabriel** visits Mary to deliver the message that God wants her to be the mother of Jesus. Although she is confused and perhaps frightened by this message, Mary says "yes" to God's plan (Luke 1:26–38).
- ❖ **Elizabeth** and her husband Zechariah are surprised when an angel approaches Zechariah to tell him that he and Elizabeth are going to have a son even though they are elderly and had previously been childless. The child born to Elizabeth and Zechariah was John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25).
- ❖ **Joseph**, husband of Mary, is visited by an angel in a dream. The angel encourages Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife and her son, Jesus, as his own son (Matthew 1:18–25).
- ❖ Feast of the **Immaculate Conception** (December 8): This holy day celebrates the fact that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was free from sin from the moment of her conception in the womb of her mother.
- ❖ **Saint Nicholas** (December 6): A fourth-century bishop from Asia Minor, Saint Nicholas is the inspiration for Santa Claus and is the patron of children. Known for his acts of charity, he often left gifts of food or money for those who were poor in the dark of night so that no one but God could see his good works. On this night in many countries, children put shoes outside their door to be filled with treats in memory of Saint Nicholas's great kindness.

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Facilitator's Resource Guide (continued)

- ❖ **Saint Lucy** (December 13): The name *Lucy* means “light.” In Scandinavian countries, girls wear a wreath of candles on their heads to remember Lucy. This fourth-century martyr chose to be a Christian when being Christian was illegal. She wanted to give up all her wealth and devote her life to those in need, but she herself became a victim of oppression. She teaches us that life in Christ’s light is a worthy goal, even in the face of persecution and death.
- ❖ Our Lady of Guadalupe (**December 12**) and Juan Diego (December 9): The Church celebrates the Virgin Mary’s appearance to Juan Diego in Mexico; she is patroness of the Americas. In 1531, Mary appeared as a humble Aztec maiden to a man named Juan Diego in Tepeyac, Mexico. When asked by the bishop to produce proof of her appearance, Juan Diego presented his cloak upon which the Virgin had left her image.

Advent Prayers & Music (Bingo questions 28–31)

- ❖ **“O” Antiphons:** O Wisdom; O Sacred Lord; O Flower of Jesse’s Stem; O Key of David; O Radiant Dawn; O King of All the Nations; O Emmanuel. The seven ancient “O” Antiphons are short intercessory prayers that begin with a title for Jesus drawn from Scripture and include the word “come” before each plea. Since the ninth century, “O” Antiphons have been part of Evening Prayer during the eight days that lead up to Christmas Eve. Today we hear them as the Gospel verse in weekday Masses from December 17 to 23. See **Advent Scripture Prayers** for the text of these prayers.
- ❖ **Hail Mary:** Elizabeth speaks several times in the first chapter of Luke. Her greeting to Mary is with us to this day: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” We continue to greet Mary this way each time we pray the Hail Mary. This traditional prayer, with its quotations from Gabriel and Elizabeth, is a wonderful prayer for Advent. See **Advent Scripture Prayers** for the text of this prayer.
- ❖ The **Magnificat** is Mary’s song of thanksgiving and praise to God. *Magnificat* is a Latin word meaning “to magnify or praise.” Mary proclaims this song in her visit to her cousin Elizabeth when both are pregnant. The text of the prayer can be found in Luke 1:46–55. This song, also known as the “Canticle of Mary,” is used daily in the liturgical life of the Catholic Church in evening prayer. See **Advent Scripture Prayers** for the text of this prayer.
- ❖ “O Come, O Come, **Emmanuel**”: Each verse of this hymn corresponds to an “O” Antiphon. The name *Emmanuel* means “God with us.”

