

ADVENT REFLECTIONS—FACILITATORS GUIDE
A Contemplative Candlelight Gathering: Fourth Sunday

Pre-Work Set aside 30 - 45 minutes to read through this guide and make your own notes for what you need to prepare to say, read and do (to lead this sacred time to your family and friends).

Select a partner to help you facilitate the session. You may want to alternate the lighting of the candles and reading of scripture (and anything else you may want to add in, e.g. a poem). If you have a musician in your midst, they can help lead the singing and playing of music. Otherwise, find the music online so you can play it to sing along with.

Aside from the music that you'll be singing along to (that's found in the bulletin and insert), you'll want to select 2 pieces of contemplative music 3-5 minutes each. For example, you can choose Gregorian Chant Radio on Pandora (if you like this, it's an easy way to find some soothing music to play).

Set up room with chairs to accommodate guests in a circle around a small table with the wreath and candles on it (center Christ candle and 4 pillar candles).

Arrange other candles around the room for a lovely, candlelit light so you can turn down/off house lights.

Print the accompanying Advent Reflection bulletin (you will need to play with the one-sided to two-sided printing or just go with one-sided) and carol insert (you'll want to cut in half) to give to your guests.

You will notice time counts in the left margin expressed as :01, :03, etc. These are simply offered to give you an idea of the timing.

Say/Do :01 We are here tonight to set aside some peaceful time as a gift... we are invited to step out of the noise and busyness of the season and spend this time in God's presence.

Advent is part of the Christian tradition, AND the themes of Advent- hope, love, joy and peace - speak to every human heart on any spiritual path. Relax and breathe... as we enter this time of contemplative prayer, meditation and reflection. You may want to spend a moment to discuss contemplative prayer (simplest definition is resting in God).

The season of Advent is when we focus on the coming of Christ:

- We celebrate the coming of Christ in the past
- We look forward to the coming of Christ in the future
- And there is a third way in which we, contemplatively, open ourselves to the coming of Christ. We anticipate, look for and long for His coming into the PRESENT...into this very moment. One of the titles or names of Christ is "Emmanuel", which means...God with us.
- **Light the Christ Candle** and say a few words about His presence in our midst; invite everyone to relax, breathe and enjoy this peaceful time. Let us take some moments of reflection to become more aware of God's loving presence that surrounds us and supports us tonight, as we listen to some quiet music and allow ourselves to just BE.

Play :03 **A piece of contemplative music (3-5 minutes)**

Say :07 An opening prayer asking the Spirit's love and grace to be present and moving in our midst as we celebrate this fourth week of Advent. Review the last three weeks of Advent and introduce this week's theme, PEACE.

- The first week, the Advent theme was HOPE (and lights a candle and says a word about the HOPE we have in God)
- The second week, the Advent theme was LOVE (and lights the second candle and says a word about the LOVE we know in God)
- And last week, the Advent theme was JOY (and lights a candle and says a word about the JOY we find in Christ)
- This week, the Advent theme is PEACE (light the last candle and say a word about the peace we have in Christ)

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Read :13 **Reading for Reflection Philippians 4:5-7 (found in the bulletin); you may like to read it twice with silence in between.**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Play :16 **A piece of contemplative music (3-5 minutes)**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Play/Sing :22 **Instruct everyone to the carol insert with the lyrics for Oh Come Oh Come Emmanuel and invite everyone to sing!**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

IDEA :28 **This can be a moment where you can talk about peace or invite people to share a word about when they have encountered the peace of Christ during the last year.**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Play/Sing :38 **Instruct everyone to the carol insert with the lyrics for It Came Upon The Midnight Clear and invite everyone to sing!**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Read :44 **Isaiah 9:2-6 (found in the bulletin); you may like to read it twice with silence in between.**

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Play/Sing :48 **Instruct everyone to the back of the bulletin for the closing song, Silent Night and invite everyone to sing!**



ENCOUNTER GOD • BE RENEWED

SILENCE FOR 2 MINUTES

Say :54

To close the evening, I'd like to offer a blessing...

May God bless and keep you always; God Bless You With Joy, Peace, Happiness; May God bless you and keep you safe; May God Bless you with Many More Joyful Years, Good Health & His Sweet Presence; May God bless you today & always!