

# A WALDORF INSPIRED ADVENT CELEBRATION GUIDE



# The Festival of Advent

In the Southern hemisphere, Christmas falls near the Summer Solstice when the light is at its strongest and we celebrate the triumph of light at its greatest point in the yearly cycle.

It can be challenging to develop a sense of inwardness, patience and contemplation when the Spirit of the Earth is on its outward breath. As the year draws to an end we increasingly spend time outside enjoying "the sun in the heavens".

With the long warm days, intense light and balmy nights we are drawn out into the elements rather than into "the sun in our hearts".

To balance this we can consciously choose to "receive the light" and celebrate what is both universally human and universally spiritual.

Celebrating Advent can provide an opportunity for some quiet 'breathing in' during this outwardly busy time of year and help your children to practice preparation, reverence and patience through the ritual of counting the weeks and days to the special celebratory event that is Christmas.



The celebration of the festival of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. As we celebrate through the lighting of candles, reciting verses and singing songs, spending time together as a family, sharing stories, crafting and baking together, these four weeks become increasingly filled with warmth and love as we approach the light of Christmas day. We can create an atmosphere of quiet anticipation, joy and wonder as we take the time to slow down and nurture our own inner light during this time.

This guide presents one way to celebrate the festival from a Waldorf perspective; each family should feel free to add to or take away from what is presented here to suit their own values and lifestyle.

# Preparing the Advent Wreath

The first step is to create an Advent wreath that will become the centerpiece for the Advent festival activities. This can be a simple wreath made from evergreens (similar to the ones hung on doors at this time of year), with a place for four candles.

Materials can be gathered to create one by hand, or a purchased wreath can be used. Next, we add a place for four candles, typically tapers, which are equally spaced around the inside of the wreath. Advent candle rings are available for sale for this purpose, or you can use four candle holders. Beeswax tapers are particularly nice as they give off a warm glow and have a lovely scent, but any four candles will do. Some traditions use red candles. Set it up in a spot where the family can gather around comfortably.

Alternatively an Advent spiral can be made from evergreens and the four candles equally spaced on its path.





# Celebrating the Four Kingdoms of Nature

Each week a different kingdom of nature is celebrated and items representing that kingdom are lovingly added to the wreath. This represents a gradual awakening of the whole world to the light of the season.

Week one: the mineral kingdom is honored and crystals, special stones, shells and minerals are added.

Week two: the plant kingdom is honored and favorite plants such as roses, berries, leaves, seed pods, bark, moss, and pine cones are added.

Week three: the animal kingdom is honored and nativity figures, wooden, felted or beeswax sculpted animals are added.

Week four: the kingdom of humankind is honored and figures from the nativity such as Mary, Joseph and the shepherds as well as other human figures may be added.

# Daily Advent Celebration Rhythm

(Detailed weekly guides can be  
found below)

1. Start by singing the song “Quiet! Quiet! (see song sheet) as you gather around the wreath.
2. Then sing the verse from the Advent Candles song for the week (see song sheet) “One little candle...” for week one, “two little candles...” for week two, etc.
3. Light a match and speak the verse of the week as you light the candle(s)(see below for a printable list) “The first light of advent...” On week two you will light two candles and say verse one while lighting the first candle, and verse two while lighting the second candle, and so on for weeks three and four.
4. Sing the verse(s) for the week from the song “People Look East”. A new verse is added each week, meaning you will sing two verses during week two, three verses during week three, etc. There is a fifth verse that is sung only on Christmas Eve.



# Daily Advent Celebration Rhythm (continued)

5. Place the elements from that week's kingdom of nature to the wreath. Children can take turns being the one to add something, each child can add one item, or the whole family can participate (although this can add up to many items on the wreath as you're doing this every night for four weeks!) Special things can be gathered ahead of time. For example you can have a basket of crystals, stones, and shells ready, or you can go on a hunt together to find special items for the week. Over time you may find that the children will spontaneously collect things that they wish to add for that week's particular kingdom.

6. If you have an Advent calendar you can open the day's window now.

7. You can do a special activity while the candles are burning like singing Christmas carols, or telling a story, however I recommend keeping your activity relatively short (10-20 minutes) so as not to let the candles burn down too much.

8. To support this peaceful mood, I recommend using a candle snuffer to put out the candles. You can suggest "as we put out the candles we take the light into our hearts" and say, "Candle, candle, burning bright, thank you for your Advent light".



# First Week

As you gather around the Advent wreath, sing:

“Quiet, quiet, make not any noise. Listen, listen to the holy voice.  
Christmas time is drawing near, the Jesus child (or the Child of Light)  
is coming here. Quiet, quiet, make not any noise.

Sing verse one from the Advent candles song:

“One little candle lighted in the wreath. The earth below begins to  
glow”.

While lighting the first candle say:

The first light of Advent,  
It is the light of stones,  
Stones that live in crystals,  
In seashells, and in bones.

Sing the first verse of People Look East

Add element(s) from the mineral kingdom to the wreath

Open the next window if you have an Advent calendar

Sing songs, or read/tell a story

Put out the candle with the verse:

Candle, candle burning bright,  
Thank you for your Advent light.



# Second Week

As you gather at the Advent wreath, sing:

“Quiet, quiet, make not any noise. Listen, listen to the holy voice.  
Christmas time is drawing near, the Jesus child (or the Child of Light)  
is coming here. Quiet, quiet, make not any noise.

Sing verse two from the Advent candles song:

“Two little candles lighted in the wreath, the plant lifts up a blossom  
cup”.

While lighting the first candle say:

The first light of Advent,  
It is the light of stones,  
Stones that live in crystals,  
In seashells, and in bones.

Then light the second candle with this verse:

The second light of Advent  
It is the light of plants,  
Plants that reach up to the sun,  
And in the breezes dance.



Sing the first and second verses of People Look East.

Add element(s) from the plant kingdom to the wreath.

Open the next window if you have an Advent calendar

Sing songs, or read/tell a story

Put out the candle with the verse:  
Candle, candle burning bright,  
Thank you for your Advent light.

# Third Week

As you gather at the Advent wreath, sing:

“Quiet, quiet, make not any noise. Listen, listen to the holy voice. Christmas time is drawing near, the Jesus child (or the Child of Light) is coming here. Quiet, quiet, make not any noise.

Sing verse three from the Advent candles song:

“Three little candles lighted in the wreath, the animals run to see the sun”.

While lighting the first candle say:

The first light of Advent  
It is the light of stones,  
Stones that live in crystals,  
In seashells, and in bones.

Light the second candle with this verse:

The second light of Advent  
It is the light of plants,  
Plants that reach up to the sun  
And in the breezes dance

.



# Third Week

continued

Light the third candle and say:

The third light of Advent  
It is the light of beasts,  
The light of hope that we may see  
In greatest and in least.

Sing the first, second and third verses of People Look East.

Add element(s) from the animal kingdom to the wreath.

Open the next window if you have an Advent calendar

Sing songs, or read/tell a story

Put out the candle with the verse:

Candle, candle burning bright,  
Thank you for your Advent light.



# Fourth Week

As you gather at the Advent wreath, sing:

“Quiet, quiet, make not any noise. Listen, listen to the holy voice. Christmas time is drawing near, the Jesus child (or the Child of Light) is coming here. Quiet, quiet, make not any noise.

Sing verse four from the Advent candles song:

“Four little candles lighted in the wreath, a baby (or child) is born to warm the earth, to fill the cup, to light the sun, to lift me(or us) up ”.

While lighting the first candle say:

The first light of Advent,  
It is the light of stones,  
Stones that live in crystals,  
In seashells, and in bones.

Then light the second candle with this verse:

The second light of Advent  
It is the light of plants,  
Plants that reach up to the sun  
And in the breezes dance.



# Fourth Week

continued

Light the third candle and say:

The third light of Advent  
It is the light of beasts,  
The light of hope that we may see  
In greatest and in least.



Light the fourth candle and say:

The fourth light of Advent  
It is the light of man.  
The light of love, the light of thought,  
To give and to understand.

Sing the first, second, third and fourth verses of *People Look East*. \*On Christmas Eve add the fifth verse.

Add element(s) from the kingdom of humankind to the wreath.

Open the next window if you have an Advent calendar

Sing songs, or read/tell a story

Put out the candle with the verse:  
Candle, candle burning bright,  
Thank you for your Advent light.

# Verses for Advent

The first light of Advent,  
It is the light of stones,  
Stones that live in crystals,  
In seashells, and in bones.

The second light of Advent,  
It is the light of plants,  
Plants that reach up to the sun,  
And in the breezes dance.

The third light of Advent,  
It is the light of beasts,  
The light of hope that we may see  
In greatest and in least.

The fourth light of Advent,  
It is the light of man.  
The light of love, the light of thought,  
To give and to understand.



# Songs for Advent

## Quiet! Quiet!

Quiet ! Quiet ! Make not any noise!  
Listen, Listen, to the Holy Voice.  
Wonder is now coming near,  
Jesus Child/the Child of Light is coming here.  
Quiet ! Quiet ! Make not any noise.

## Advent Candles

One little candle lighted in the wreath; the earth below prepares to glow.

Two little candles lighted in the wreath: the plant lifts up a blossom cup.

Three little candles lighted in the wreath: the animals run to see the sun.

Four little candles lighted in the wreath: a baby is born to warm the earth, to fill the cup,  
to light the sun, to lift me up.



# Songs for Advent

continued

## People Look East

People, look east the time is near, of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the rose, is on the way.

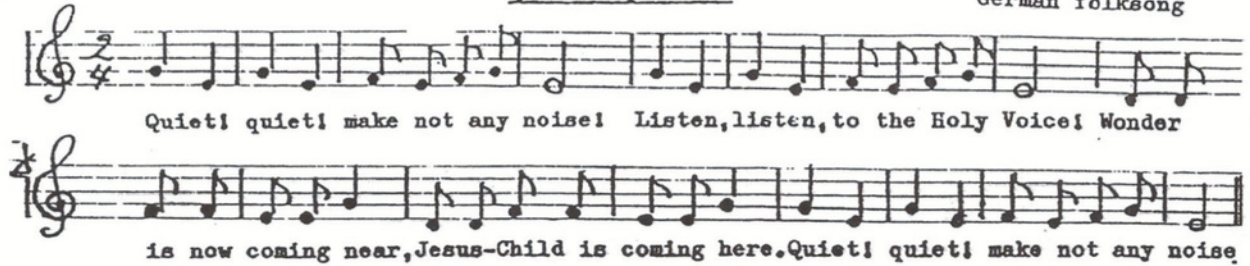
Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even in the hour when wings are frozen He for fledgling time has chosen.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch when night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim, Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and the moon together. People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels announce to man and beast he who cometh from the East.  
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the lord/child is coming. People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the lord/child is on the way.

Quiet! quiet!..

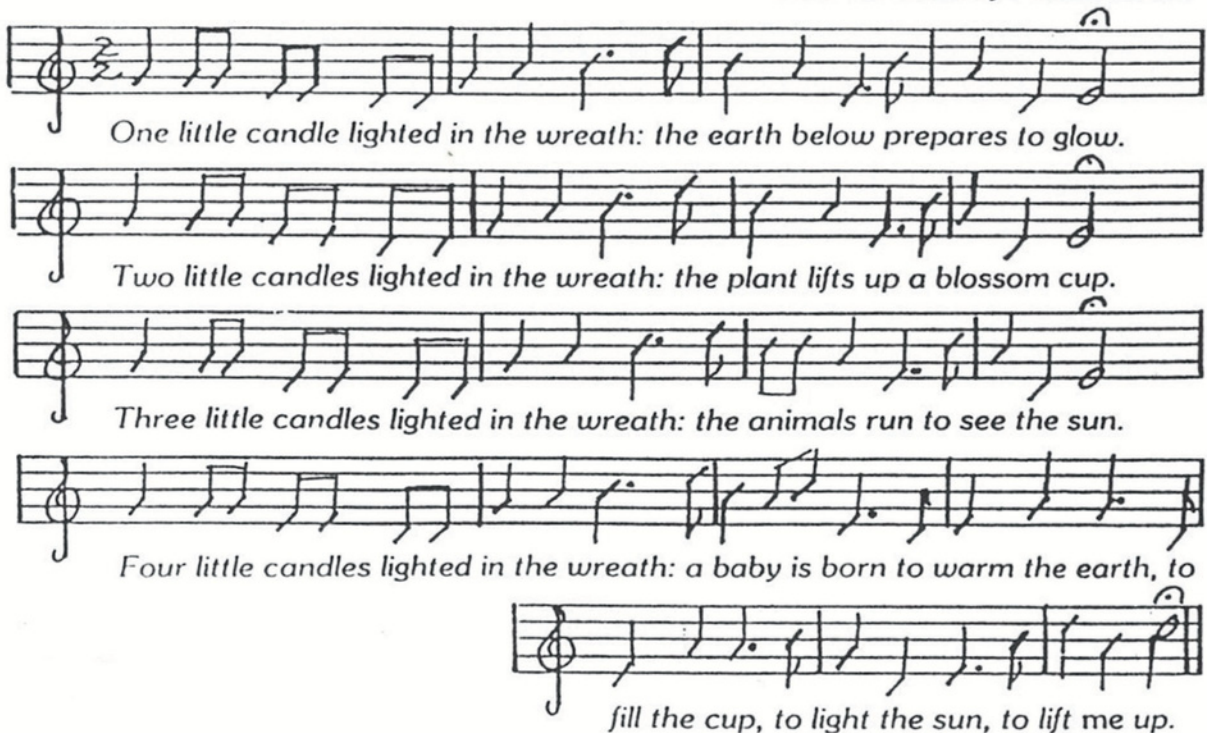
German folksong



Quiet! quiet! make not any noise! Listen, listen, to the Holy Voice! Wonder  
is now coming near, Jesus-Child is coming here. Quiet! quiet! make not any noise

### *Advent Candles*

Words & Music by Merwin Lew.



One little candle lighted in the wreath: the earth below prepares to glow.

Two little candles lighted in the wreath: the plant lifts up a blossom cup.

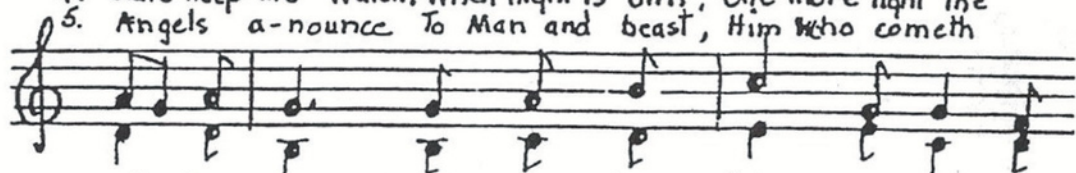
Three little candles lighted in the wreath: the animals run to see the sun.

Four little candles lighted in the wreath: a baby is born to warm the earth, to  
fill the cup, to light the sun, to lift me up.

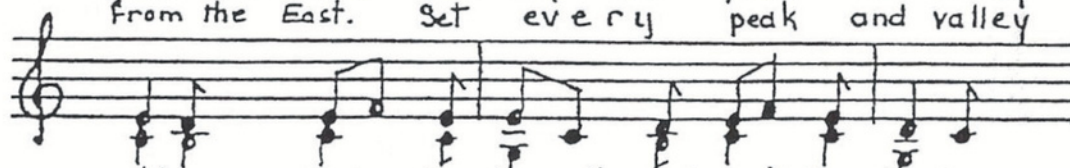
# People Look East



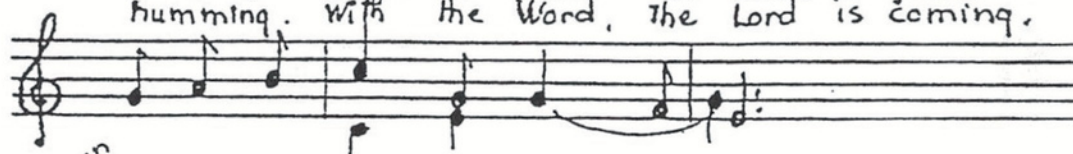
1. People, look East, The time is near, Of the crowning
2. Furrows, be glad, Though earth is bare, One more seed is
3. Birds, though ye long have ceased to build, Guard the nest that
4. Stars keep the watch, When night is dim, One more light the
5. Angels a-nounce To Man and beast, Him who cometh



of the year. Make your house fair as you are  
planted there, Give up your strength the seed to  
must be filled, Even so: the hope when wings are  
bowl shall brim. Shining be- yond the frosty  
from the East. Set every peak and valley



able Trim the hearth and set the table  
nourish, That in course the flower may flourish.  
frozen, As for fledging time has chosen.  
weather, Bright as sun and moon together.  
humming. With the Word, The Lord is coming.



*Refrain*  
1. People, look East and sing to-day

2. " " " " " "
3. " " " " " "
4. " " " " " "



1. love the Guest is on the way.
2. " " Rose " " " "
3. " " Bird " " " "
4. " " Star " " " "
5. " " Lord. " " " "