

Door of Hope Northeast

Advent & Christmas Resources

The fourth Sunday before Christmas marks the beginning of Advent, a season of anticipation for the first coming of Christ at Christmas and the second coming of Christ at his eventual return. It also marks the beginning of the traditional Western church calendar. Every year Advent is an opportunity to lean into intentional reflection as individuals, families, and as a church community. Reading together as a household is a great way to create space for conversation and inspiration for prayer. Here's a short list of books worth considering:

[Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas](#) – This is a beautiful daily reader from a variety of theologians, writers, and poets meant to bring you to the great themes of Christmas and the meaning and significance of the first coming of Christ.

[God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas](#) by Dietrich Bonhoeffer - Daily advent readings from Bonhoeffer compiled by Jana Riess.

[Emmanuel: An Invitation to Prepare Him Room at Christmas and Always](#) by Ruth Chou Simons – A beautifully written and illustrated 25-day Advent devotional.

[Advent: The Season of Hope](#) by Tish Harrison Warren – A great re-introduction to the Advent's place in the church calendar whether you're new to celebrating or experienced.

[Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ](#) by Tim Keller – Keller's book is a beautiful, insightful, relatively short theological examination of Christmas.

[The Circle of Seasons: Meeting God in the Church Year](#) by K.C. Ireton – Ireton's book isn't about Advent exclusively, but about the entire traditional church calendar. It does have great chapters on Advent and Christmas with helpful practical suggestions for celebrating.

[Door of Hope Advent Reading Plan](#) – Pip Craighead at Door of Hope Southeast illustrated this wonderful single page advent calendar with daily scripture readings to spark discussions for families.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

[Sounding Joy](#) by Ellie Holcomb (ages 2-6)

[Silent Night](#) by Lara Hawthorne (ages 3-6)

[Listen to the Silent Night](#) by Dandi Daley Mackall, illustrated by Lou Fancher & Steve Johnson (ages 3-7)

[Jesus Came for Me: The True Story of Christmas](#) by Jared Kennedy, illustrated by Trish Mahoney (ages 3-7)

[Mary's First Christmas](#) by Walter Wangerin, Jr., illustrated by Timothy Ladwig (ages 4-7)

[Nativity](#) by Cynthia Rylant (ages 4-8)

[The Christmas Promise](#) by Alison Mitchell, illustrated by Catalina Echeverri (ages 4-8)

[A Jesus Christmas: Explore God's Amazing Plan for Christmas](#) by Barbara Reaach (ages 4-11)

[The God of Amazing Gifts: Family Devotions For Advent](#) by Lizzie Laferton (ages 7-14)

CANDLES AND LITANIES

Another meaningful tradition could be to make use of Advent candles. In her book *The Circle of Seasons*, K.C. Ireton offers the following suggestion to begin the fourth Sunday before Christmas: "In our home, we begin our evening meal by lighting a candle and saying a short litany. During Advent, we sing the first verse of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" when we light the candle." Beginning with the one candle for the first week of Advent and adding the second, third, and fourth each Sunday over the season will help build a sense of anticipation. Light the fifth candle on Christmas Day. Ireton suggests the following litany for this candle: Candlelighter: "Jesus Christ is the Light of the world." Everyone else: "The Light no darkness can overcome!"