**4 Simple Advent Ideas for Children and their Families…**

Advent is the four weeks set aside for Christians to prepare our hearts and souls for the celebration of the birth of Jesus… the birth of the light that shatters the darkness.

Below are three ideas for helping children join us in this time of spiritual preparation.

#1) Make a simple Advent Bracelet for you and your child: Use 4 braided strands of purple (the liturgical color for Advent) yarn or embroidery twine and make bracelets for you and your child to tie on your wrists and wear for the entire four weeks of Advent. Each time you see it, you will be reminded that we are observing Advent. Then on Christmas morning, cut it off and replace it with a white bracelet to be worn in observance of the 12 days of Christmas.

#2) Use the Advent section of *Passing It on: How to Nurture Your Children’s Faith Season by Season,* by Kara Lassen Oliver. This book uses a simple symbol each week to help children look for God’s presence each day. I love the use of symbolic language to help families remember to reflect on God, not only during Advent, but all through the year. <http://bookstore.upperroom.org/Products/1497/passing-it-on.aspx>

#3) Leave One Space Empty: As your child anticipates Christmas and the birth of Christ, go ahead and fill your home with all the wonderful Christmas things you want. But leave one space empty… a table or a shelf… and tell your child that this is the space left open until Christmas arrives. Then on Christmas day, place a nativity scene or a simple white candle in that space. Without a lesson or lots of words, your child will be aware that Advent is here and when Christmas arrives, they will notice that Christ’s birth is what brings Christmas, and all of the love associated with it, to us.

#4) And of course, lighting an Advent Wreath will add to the anticipation of the coming of Christmas. The four weeks are: Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace. You light one new candle each week until all four are lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent. There are so many good resources available if you want to read scripture along with lighting each candle, but you can also simply light them and sit in the wonder of the light of love that shatters all darkness.

I pray you will have a blessed and holy Advent with the children in your life!