

Advent

Advent is a Christian festival that happens in the four weeks before Christmas every year. This is the time you might also have an Advent calendar.

What Does It Mean?

The word 'advent' means an important person or thing arriving. At Advent, Christians look forward to the time when Jesus was born and when the Three Kings visited Jesus.



At Advent, Christians look forward to Christmas and Epiphany. Christmas is when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. Epiphany is the celebration of the Wise Men's visit to Jesus, on January 6th.

How Do Christians Celebrate Advent?

The time leading up to Christmas, for Christians, is spent doing nice things with their families. They also go to church and pray. Hymns and Christmas carols are sung in church at this time and Advent crowns are made. An Advent crown has four candles on it to represent the four Sundays before Christmas and one is lit each week. Most crowns have an extra, white candle in the middle which is for Jesus and is lit on Christmas day. Many Christians have Advent calendars and some have Advent candles where a little bit of candle is burned down each day.

Did You Know?

In some churches, red or white candles are used, but in Catholic churches purple and pink are used.

Pink is the colour used for the third Sunday in Advent.

Advent calendars started in Germany in the late 1800s.

In England and Wales, Christmas Carols were banned between 1647 and 1660 because people thought Christmas should be a serious time.



Advent Questions

1. What does the word 'Advent' mean?

2. Advent counts down to the celebration of Jesus' birth and what else?

3. How might people who are not Christians count down to Christmas?

4. On what day of the week does Advent start?

5. Name something that Christians do during Advent.

6. When are the four corner candles lit on an Advent crown?

7. When is the middle "Jesus candle" lit on an Advent crown?

8. How does an Advent candle work?

9. In which country did Advent calendars begin?

10. In England and Wales between 1647 and 1660 Christmas was a serious time. What is it like today?

Advent Answers

1. What does the word 'Advent' mean?
Advent means the arrival of an important person or thing.
2. Advent counts down to the celebration of Jesus' birth and what other thing?
Advent counts down to the celebration of Jesus' birth and the arrival of the Wise Men.
3. How might people who are not Christians count down to Christmas?
People who are not Christians can use an Advent calendar to countdown to Christmas.
4. On what day of the week does Advent start?
Advent always starts on a Sunday.
5. Name something that Christians do during Advent.
Things Christians do during Advent are: (any one or more from)
 - Pray
 - Go to church
 - Spend time with family
 - Sing hymns or carols
 - Make an Advent crown or wreath
 - Light Advent crown candles
 - Light Advent candles
 - Use Advent calendars
6. When are the four corner candles lit on an Advent crown?
The four corner candles are lit on an Advent crown on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.
7. When is the middle "Jesus" candle lit on an Advent crown?
The middle "Jesus" candle is lit on Christmas Day.
8. How does an Advent candle work?
An Advent candle has numbers down the side and a small bit of the candle is burned each day until the candle is burned fully down by Christmas Day.
9. In which country did Advent calendars begin?
Advent calendars began in Germany.
10. In England and Wales between 1647 and 1660 Christmas was a serious time. What is it like today?
Today, Christmas is now a happy and joyful celebration time.

Advent

Advent is a Christian festival that happens in the four weeks leading up to Christmas every year.

What Does It Mean?

The word 'advent' means the arrival of an important person or thing. In this case, Jesus is the important person, whose birth is celebrated by Christians, at Christmas. It also includes, during Christmastime, Epiphany; the celebration of when the Wise Men (the Magi) met Jesus, which is on January 6th, at the end of the 12 days of Christmas.



Just as many people count down to Christmas using an 'Advent' calendar, Christians celebrate the coming of Christmas from the fourth Sunday before Christmas Eve too.

How Do Christians Celebrate Advent?

The time leading up to Christmas for Christians is spent with family and in prayer. Hymns and Christmas carols are sung at this time and Advent crowns are made and lit. An Advent crown has four candles on it to represent the four Sundays before Christmas and one is lit each week. Most crowns have an extra, white candle in the middle to represent Christ. Many Christians and non-Christians have Advent calendars and some have Advent candles with numbers up the side, with a small part of the candle burned down each day.

Advent Facts:

In some churches, red or white candles are used, but in Catholic churches purple and pink are the most common colours.

Pink (or rose) is the colour for the third Sunday in Advent which is also given the name 'Gaudete' (say: gow-day-tay).

Advent calendars originated in Germany in the late 1800s.

In England and Wales, Christmas Carols were banned between 1647 and 1660 because people thought Christmas should be a serious time.

In the early 1800s the church also banned some carols that were too happy-sounding so people sang them in other places such as pubs. This is still done today, in some pubs around the UK.

Advent Questions

1. What does the word 'Advent' mean?

2. When is Epiphany?

3. How many 'days of Christmas' are there?

4. When is 'Gaudete'?

5. Name two things that Christians do during Advent.

6. How many candles are there in an Advent crown if there is a candle in the middle to represent Jesus?

7. How does an Advent candle work?

8. In which country did Advent calendars originate?

9. What is a synonym for the colour pink found in the text?

10. Today, Christmas is a time for joy and celebration; how was it different in England and Wales between 1647 and 1660?

Advent Answers

1. What does the word 'Advent' mean?
Advent means the arrival of an important person or thing.
2. When is Epiphany?
Epiphany is January 6th
3. How many 'days of Christmas' are there?
There are twelve days of Christmas.
4. When is 'Gaudete'?
Gaudete is the third Sunday in Advent.
5. Name two things that Christians do during Advent.
Things Christians do during Advent are: (any two from)
 - Pray
 - Go to church
 - Spend time with family
 - Sing hymns or carols
 - Make an Advent crown or wreath
 - Light Advent crown candles
 - Light Advent candles
 - Use Advent calendars
6. How many candles are there in an Advent crown if there is a candle in the middle to represent Jesus?
Including the Jesus candle, there are five candles in an Advent crown.
7. How does an Advent candle work?
An Advent candle has numbers down the side and a small bit of the candle is burned each day until the candle is burned fully down by Christmas Day.
8. In which country did Advent calendars originate?
Advent calendars originated in Germany.
9. What is a synonym for the colour pink found in the text?
Another synonym for pink would be 'rose'.
10. Today, Christmas is a time for joy and celebration; how was it different in England and Wales between 1647 and 1660?
Between 1647 and 1660, Christmas was a serious and solemn time.

Advent

Advent is an annual Christian festival occurring in the four weeks prior to Christmas.

What Does It Mean?

The definition of the word 'advent' is 'the arrival of an important person or thing'. In this particular case, the important person is Jesus, whose birth is celebrated by Christians, on Christmas Day. However, it is not just this day that Advent anticipates; it encompasses the whole of Christmastime up until the celebration of when the Wise Men (the Magi) met Jesus at Epiphany, which falls on January 6th.



Just as many people count down to Christmas using an 'Advent' calendar, Christians celebrate the coming of Christmas from the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Eve too.

How Do Christians Celebrate Advent?

The celebration of the coming of Christmas, for Christians, is spent with family and in prayer. Hymns and Christmas carols are sung at this time and Advent wreaths are made. An Advent crown has four candles on it to represent the four Sundays before Christmas and one is lit each week. Most Christians believe that each of the four candles represents people who were looking forward to Jesus' birth. Beliefs differ, but most include his mother, Mary, represented by the fourth candle. Many Advent crowns have an extra, white candle in the middle to represent Christ. Many people – both Christians and non-Christians - have Advent calendars and some have Advent candles with numbers up the side, with a small part of the candle burned down each day.

Advent Facts:

In some churches, red or white candles are used, but in Catholic churches purple and pink are the most common colours.

Rose is the colour associated with the third Sunday in Advent which is also known as 'Gaudete' (pronounced: gow-day-tay).

Advent calendars originated in Germany in the late 1800s.

During Oliver Cromwell's time as Lord Protector, Christmas Carols were banned between 1647 and 1660 as it was thought Christmas should be a solemn time. In the early 19th century, the church also took a dim view of certain carols so people sang them elsewhere. The tradition still exists in some places around the UK, where they are sung in local pubs during Advent.

Advent Questions

1. What is celebrated at Epiphany and what date does it fall on?

2. What does the word 'encompass' mean?

3. What is another name for the Wise Men?

4. Does Advent always last the same number of days? Explain your answer.

5. Name three things that Christians do during Advent.

6. What does the candle in the middle of an Advent crown mean and what colour is it usually?

7. How does an Advent candle work?

8. In which century did Advent calendars begin in Germany?

9. 'What does the author say some people do in pubs in the UK during Advent?'

10. Compare the feeling of Christmas today with Christmas in Oliver Cromwell's time.

Advent Answers

1. 'What is celebrated at Epiphany and what date does it fall on?'
Epiphany falls on January 6th and Christians celebrate when the Wise Men visited to Jesus.
2. What does the word 'encompass' mean?
The word 'encompass' means surround/circle/includes.
3. What is another name for the Wise Men?
Another name for the Wise Men is 'the Magi'.
4. Does Advent always last the same number of days? Explain your answer.
Advent does not last the same number of days because it is counted from the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Christmas does not always fall on the same day of the week, so the number of days can change.
5. Name three things that Christians do during Advent.
Things Christians do during Advent are: (any three from)
 - Pray
 - Go to church
 - Spend time with family
 - Sing hymns or carols
 - Make an Advent crown or wreath
 - Light Advent crown candles
 - Light Advent candles
 - Use Advent calendars
6. What does the candle in the middle of an Advent crown mean and what colour is it usually?
The candle in the middle of an Advent crown is usually white and represents Jesus (Christ).
7. How does an Advent candle work?
An Advent candle has numbers down the side and a small bit of the candle is burned each day until the candle is burned fully down by Christmas Day.
8. In which century did Advent calendars originate in Germany?
Advent calendars originated in Germany in the 19th century.
9. 'What does the author say some people do in pubs in the UK during Advent?'
Some people sing Christmas carols in local pubs during Advent.
10. Compare the feeling of Christmas today with Christmas in Oliver Cromwell's time.
In Oliver Cromwell's time, Christmas was thought to be a serious and solemn time, whereas now it is seen as a happy and joyful time.