

The background of the entire page is a deep red color. In the foreground, four lit candles are arranged in a row on a dark wooden surface. A pine branch is visible in the lower right foreground. The candles are lit, with bright yellow and orange flames. The overall mood is warm and festive.

Christmas

at

The **COMPASS**

ADVENT
READING
PLAN
2021

AN INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT

We live in a culture of instant access and instant gratification. From communication and devices to food and service, we expect things to be fast. We don't like to wait in line, in traffic, on the phone for customer service, or at the table of our favorite restaurants. Waiting is countercultural. But waiting is exactly what God prescribes for us in many ways throughout the Bible. In Genesis, it is the Sabbath. In Exodus, it is the Passover. In the history books, Israel waits for a Messiah. In Psalms, they wait on God in worship. In the Prophets, Israel waits on deliverance. In the Epistles, the church waits for the glorious return of King Jesus. In Revelation, God's people wait for rest. And in the waiting, God shows up.

Advent means "arrival" and it marks the weeks prior to Christmas for the Christian church throughout the world and throughout history. Advent is a season of waiting and focusing on the first coming of Jesus our Savior. It is a reminder that we are still waiting now for His second arrival, the glorious return of Jesus, our King. During Advent, the church lights a unique candle each weekend to celebrate a different part of Jesus' story and a different virtue to practice in our waiting: hope, peace, love, and joy. On Christmas Eve, as the church around the world gathers, the Christ candle is lit. It reminds us that in Jesus, the light of the world, we have abundant and eternal life.

This Advent, we invite you to join with The Compass Church in waiting with hope, peace, love, and joy as we remember the first coming of Jesus, our Savior, and look forward with great anticipation to His glorious return. It is our hope that Jesus will meet you as you read and reflect on your own or with family or friends. We hope that this guide sparks great conversation, draws us together in unity, inspires greater faithfulness, creates sustaining contentment, and helps us encounter Jesus as we journey through Advent together.

Prayerfully,

Your Naperville Campus Ministry Team

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE...

If reading the Bible is difficult for you, you are not alone. Most people feel intimidated by the Bible and struggle to read it because the Bible is no ordinary book. We cannot read it and interpret it the way we do ordinary books. This is because the Bible is filled with the very words of God, and it is God's instrument through which He speaks to you and me. Reading and understanding the Bible requires spiritual lenses or ears that are tuned to the Holy Spirit. When we have the right lenses and we are tuned to the Holy Spirit, we will not only better understand what the Bible is saying, we will also hear from God. This Bible PROMPT is a tool that will help you develop the right lenses and tune in to the Holy Spirit. To use it most effectively, you'll need a Bible, a notebook and pen, and about 15-20 minutes of quiet space.

The Bible PROMPT:

PRAY: Begin each Bible time with prayer asking God to open your eyes, ears, mind and heart to His Word. The Holy Spirit of God speaks to us through the Bible when we open ourselves up by reading and prayer.

READ: Follow along each day with the assigned reading in this Advent Plan. Sometimes it is helpful to read a passage more than once, especially as you begin the observation step.

OBSERVE: As you read each day, look for STARS. You'll want to use a journal for this step and write down your STARS. Take about 5 or more minutes for this observation time.

Something familiar (a name, location, object, or quote)

Themes (big Bible themes like love, faith, redemption)

Attributes of God (like love, power, grace, justice, truth)

Repetition (words or phrases that are repeated)

Something surprising (things that stand out or surprise you)

ADVENT READING PLAN 2021

MEDITATE on the MESSAGE: The Bible is a “living” book. That means, when we read it, God speaks fresh in the moment! God’s message for you can often be found as you think about your observations. As you reflect on your STARS, what stands out? What is God showing you? Capture the meaning in a single sentence or two. The meaning can take 2-3 minutes to reflect on and be many things:

A truth about God (Jesus and the Holy Spirit too)

A truth about You (both good things and hard things)

A truth about others (the lost, broken, poor, church...)

A command to follow (love your enemies...)

A promise to claim (God will never leave you...)

A verse to memorize (“A generous person will prosper.”)

PRAY: Take a minute or two to thank God for what He has shared with you and ask Him to help you remember it and apply it to your life. After you ask, you might also take a minute to just listen for the answer. God most often speaks when we are quiet and still.

TAKE-AWAY: Now that you’ve heard from God, what will you do with what you’ve heard? To walk away from time with God in his Word and not make an adjustment to your life is like looking in the mirror and walking away without wiping the food off your face! God’s Word is meant to change us. In fact, God wants to use his Word to transform us into the likeness of Jesus. When you reflect, consider what you can remember, do, or say to look more like Jesus. Write it down and take it with you throughout the day!