



Countdown to Christmas

An Advent Children's Sermon
to Accompany the Distribution
of the MLAK Puzzle Magnet

Boys and girls, I have a very special present to give each one of you to remember what the Advent season is all about. It is this Countdown to Christmas puzzle magnet. (*Hand out the magnets to the children.*) We are going to use it as a countdown to Christmas.

Let's start at the bottom left-hand corner. This is the first candle in what we call an Advent wreath. It is called the Hope Candle. We light it on the first Sunday in Advent to remind us that we have hope in Jesus and that the people long ago had hope in Jesus and waited patiently for him. God calls us to live in hope, confident that Jesus saves us and will take us to be with him in heaven someday.

The second candle in the upper left-hand corner is the Peace Candle. It reminds us that Jesus is our Prince of Peace. He came to unite us with God again through his sinless life, his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. He has won for us the forgiveness of sins so that we might have peace with God and with one another forever.

The third candle in the upper right-hand corner is the Joy Candle. It is pink to remind us that we are called to rejoice in the gift of Jesus. Jesus brings us joy because he comes to take away the sorrow of our sin and the sting of death. We no longer need to be sad because Jesus is on his way to give us new life in him. The old has gone and the new has come with his birth in Bethlehem.

The fourth candle is the Love Candle. It reminds us that God sent the Baby Jesus to us because he loves us. He loves us so much that he would not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all on the cross that we might live in love with God. He calls us too to love one another just as he has loved us. That means caring for people and forgiving them *unconditionally*, which is just a fancy way of saying we should love each other no matter what. That's how God loves us and he wants us to do the same with others.

In the middle you will find the Jesus piece of the puzzle magnet. He is in the middle of the puzzle to remind us that he is to be the center of our lives. The whole Advent season leads up to his birth. Everything fits together when Jesus is at the center of our lives. Never forget that the countdown to Christmas leads to Christ. He should always be #1 in our lives every day and season of the year.