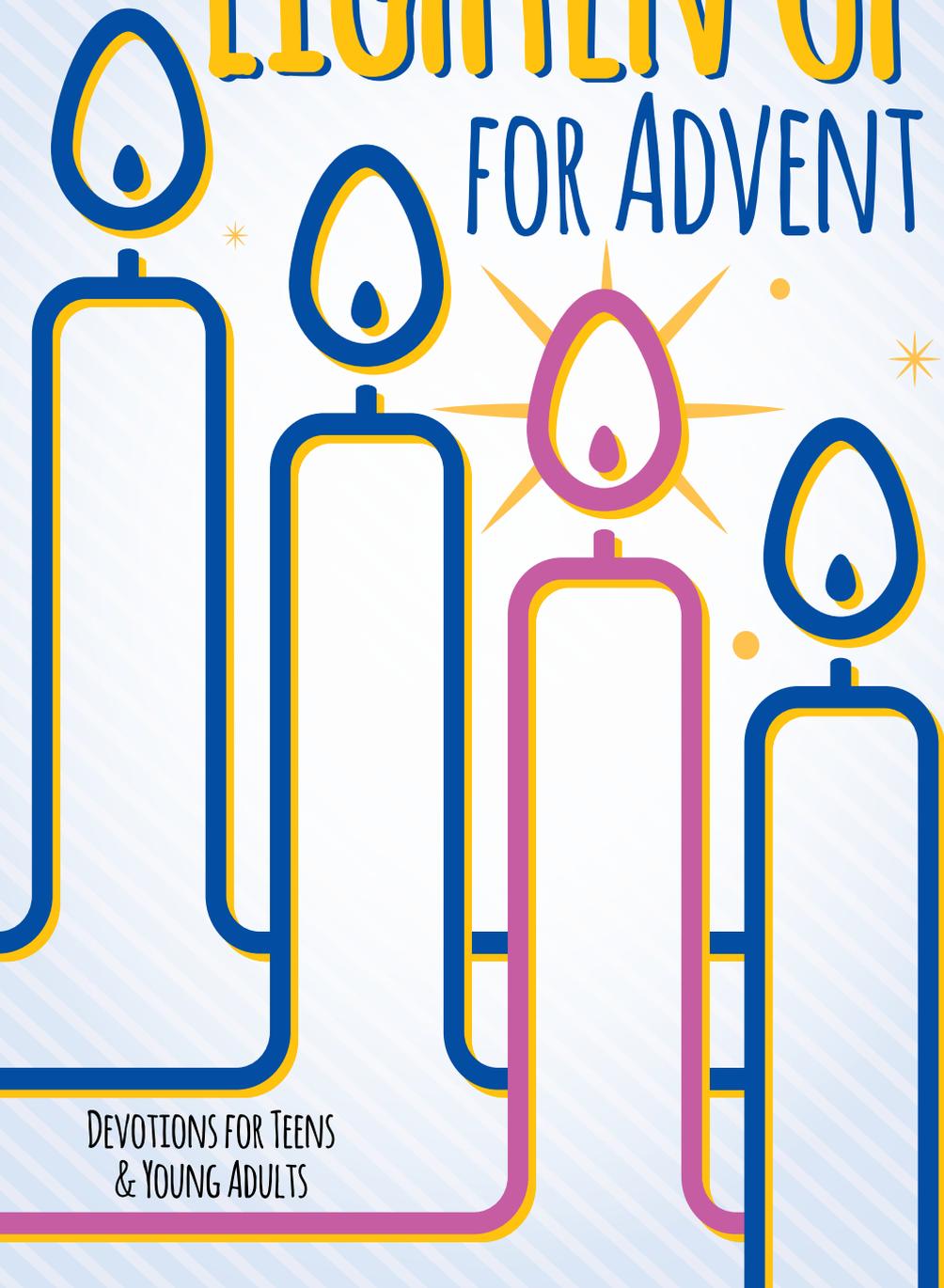


LIGHTEN UP FOR ADVENT



DEVOTIONS FOR TEENS
& YOUNG ADULTS





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FOR ADVENT

THE PROPER PAPERWORK

This being a season of WAITING, it stands to reason that you should be asked to sign in ... to submit the appropriate paperwork. That seems like a “waiting” sort of thing to do. Of course, it probably doesn’t sound like a lot of *fun*. But just imagine how the ancients felt. God’s Old Testament children had to wait thousands of years for the fulfillment of God’s promises ... for the coming of the Messiah. That doesn’t sound like a lot of fun either. You’re waiting less than four weeks for Christmas morn to dawn. You’re being let off easy.

So get over it. Fill out the paperwork. Commit yourself to taking the time to complete this Advent daily devotional. Pray for God’s guidance ...

...and while you’re at it, go ahead and set up your Advent manger scene. Don’t have one? Construct one. A little paper creche should be easy enough to construct. Mary, Joseph, manger, Baby, shepherds, sheep, angels, wise men ... what else?

The Proper Paperwork
for
Lighten Up for Advent

I hereby commit myself to Lightening Up my thoughts, my actions and my life during this Advent season. Lord, guide me as I prepare to receive you.

Name (printed): _____.

Name (signed): _____.

Date: _____.

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN ...



It's that time again, I see ...

... you know ...

... time to torch the wreath.

Okay ... that was uncalled for, I suppose. I'll admit it.

It's time to LIGHT the wreath.

Pardon my insolence. It's just ...

... well, it's just that I'm not sure I get the point. You know ... of all this ADVENT rigmarole.

It seems that the whole season of Advent is the epitome of that good ol' oxymoronic statement, "Hurry up ... and wait."

Doesn't it?

Consider memories of Advents past. Are there any frustrations brewing in those memories—times of impatience over the waiting inherent in this season?

HURRY UP ... AND WAIT

Advent can be frustrating. I mean, even the NAME sums it up: ADVENT ... it means COMING. And if something is COMING ... well, doesn't that mean we're just sitting around and WAITING for it?

... unless ...

Well, I just realized that ADVENT ... "COMING" ... might mean more than just waiting for something to happen. It might mean becoming involved in something that is in the PROCESS of happening ... even here ... even now.

You know ... like a GROWING plant: Someday it will be grown ... but even now it's getting bigger ... stronger ... more beautiful.

And if Advent means COMING ... then Jesus isn't just GOING to come ... he's in the PROCESS of coming ... even here ... even now.

In fact, maybe ... just maybe ... this waiting is different—not "waiting room" waiting (you know how waiting rooms can be ... boring ... tedious ... mindless). That's PASSIVE waiting.

But Advent calls for ACTIVE waiting. This is waiting we can get INVOLVED in.

Why? Because God is on the move ... accomplishing his plan ... fulfilling his dream ...

... saving the world!

Jesus is in the process of coming!

Torch up the wreath!

It's time to hurry up and wait!

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

UM ... I THINK THE WREATH IS TALKING ...

Shhhh do you hear it? Listen really close ... I think I'm beginning to hear something. Unless I'm mistaken, the Advent wreath's trying to tell us something.

That's its job, you know.

You didn't think it was just so much table decoration, did you?

It's got a job ... a real job ... a TOUGH job.

The kind of job teachers often have ... or police officers ... or stewardesses, when one of them reads the safety instructions while another one points to the exits, demonstrates how to buckle and adjust the seat belts, indicates the exit lights on the aisle, shows how to inflate the life vest and teaches how to affix a little yellow margarine tub not only to your face but to the face of an infant or young child in case the cabin should suddenly and inexplicably depressurize ...

... whew!

The Advent wreath's job is to tell us something ... even though we may not want to hear it ... even though we may not be listening.

So, shhhhhh! Listen ... and watch ... and think.

The Advent wreath's trying to tell us something.



THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

PSSST ... LISTEN UP!

Spend some time listening today. Just listening. Put yourself in different situations—say, in a classroom before class starts ... in your kitchen as dinner is being prepared ... in a mall or store as people are shopping.

Today, during a time you would normally pray (before bed ... before a meal), just listen instead.

What do you hear? Is the world telling you something?
The season? Your own body, mind or spirit?

Is God communicating with you in some hard-to-explain way?

Hint: Bible reading is another good way of listening for the voice of God.

FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK



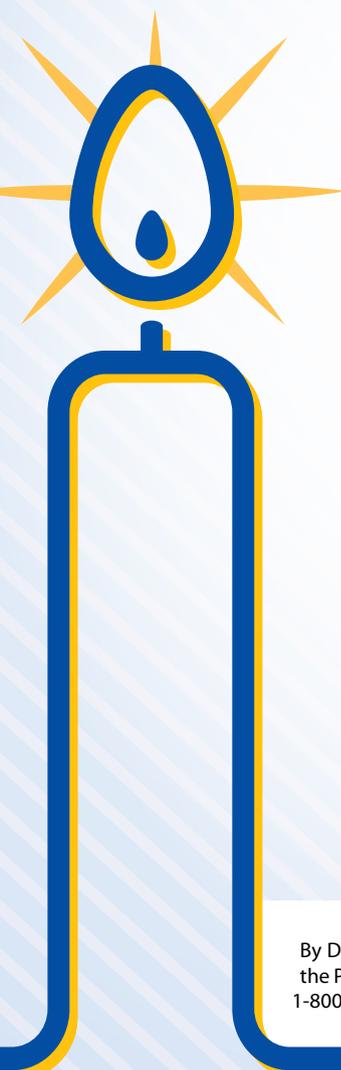
SEEING THE SOUNDS OF THE SEASON?

What are the sounds of this season? Really. What sounds do you hear around your house, in school, in the mall, at the Christmas tree lot during this time of year? How about in church?

Now that you've thought of them, draw them below ...

... I know, I know ... you HEAR sounds ... you SEE pictures. Even so, try to draw the sounds of the season—like beating angels' wings ... and happy Christmas carols ... and the bleating of some sheep ... and the clink of glass against glass. Draw the sounds of the season:

What are the sounds telling you? Are the messages good? Bad? Neutral?



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This fun, informative booklet of Advent reflection and encouragement is based around the four Advent candles and the messages each one shares. As the candles are lit each week, our rooms, our hearts and our thoughts become brighter and lighter in eager anticipation of the Savior.

Each of the 28 devotions gives maturing young Christians food for thought, a light-hearted laugh or two, and ways to fully prepare their hearts to meet and greet their Lord. Lighten Up for Advent will delight and enlighten young adults to welcome the coming Light!