

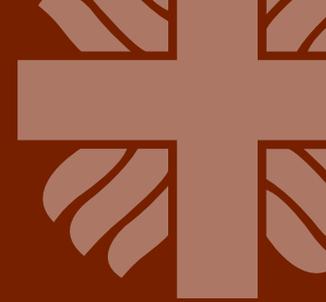


ADVENT 2022

**A RESOURCE FOR
PARISHES**

www.caritas.org.au/advent

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Introduction

This resource invites participants to journey through the four weeks of Advent, reflecting on the Gospel and sharing in the stories of our sisters and brothers around the world.

There are resources available for use in schools at: www.caritas.org.au/advent

About Caritas Australia

As the Catholic Church's international aid and development agency, Caritas Australia works hand in hand with the most marginalised and remote communities in Australia and overseas, to confront the challenges of poverty. Through locally-led programs we work with all people, with shared hope and compassion, towards a world where all can thrive and reach their full potential. Through partnerships with local organisations and Church networks, and as a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world, we are able to reach where the need is greatest and work together for a just future.

Resource Structure

Each week of Advent has been organised into the following components:

- Advent prayer and pause
- Advent wreath: lighting of candles and prayer
- Gospel reading
- Caritas Australia story
- Reflection questions
- Faith in action
- Closing prayer
- Suggested song

About Advent

Advent marks the beginning of the Church's new year and is a season of waiting and preparation. In fact, this season of Advent focuses on Christ's threefold coming—past, present and future.

- We await and prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas.
- We hope and give thanks for Christ's presence within us and in the Word and sacraments.
- We look to the future, waiting for Christ to come again.

In the coming four weeks we prepare with mounting expectation for the coming of Christ in a spirit of waiting, conversion and hope.



Caritas Australia gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, the Church Partnership Program and the Bougainville Youth Initiative in Papua New Guinea.

GLOBAL GIFTS



Share joy this **Christmas** with a **Global Gift** that  can change a life

Buy Global Gifts

A Global Gift is a donation to Caritas Australia made on behalf of another.

Whether you purchase your Global Gift for family, friends or colleagues, each gift reflects real items that will help the world's most vulnerable in their fight against poverty.

www.globalgifts.org.au

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ADVENT

Introduction



Welcome

Leader: Explain the structure for each session as outlined in the 'Introduction' (p.2). Introduce Caritas Australia as the International aid and development organisation of the Catholic Church in Australia. Explain that through sharing the stories of the people with whom Caritas Australia works, we can acknowledge that we are all part of one global family. For more information you could watch [Compassion in Action](#) (3 mins), or use our ['Introduction to Caritas Australia'](#) PowerPoint presentation.

What is Advent?

Introduce the season of Advent by watching this video ['Advent in two minutes'](#).

Advent Pause



At the beginning of each session (before lighting the Advent wreath candle) we will say the Advent prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus" and pause for a moment, to focus on the weekly theme (hope, peace, joy, love) and ready our hearts for openness and reflection.

"Let us make our own the traditional Advent prayer: 'Come, Lord Jesus!' (Rev 22:20). The book of Revelation ends with this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus". We can say that prayer at the beginning of each day and repeat it frequently, before our meetings, our studies and our work, before making decisions, in every more important or difficult moment in our lives: *Come, Lord Jesus!* It is a little prayer, yet one that comes from the heart. Let us say it in this Advent season. Let us repeat it: 'Come, Lord Jesus!'"

Pope Francis Advent Prayer, Saint Peter's Basilica, First Sunday of Advent, 2020

Advent Wreath



The word 'Advent' means 'coming'. Lighting the candles on the wreath symbolises the coming of light (Jesus) into the world. The first candle (violet) represents hope, the second (violet) peace, the third (rose) joy, and the fourth (violet) love. The central white candle is lit on Christmas Day and represents Christ. This Advent we will learn, act and pray for a more just and fair world – a world full of hope, peace, joy and love.

Making the Advent wreath a daily custom

The Advent wreath helps us keep our thoughts focused on the coming of Christ at Christmas, it should be integrated into our daily lives. If you don't have an Advent wreath you can make your own. (Instructions can be found at: www.caritas.org.au/advent Everyone gathers around the wreath and someone lights the candle(s). Leader prays [the Advent wreath prayer for the week](#).

Hope

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT



Prayer for lighting of first Advent candle

As we light this first candle on our Advent wreath may we be filled with your **everlasting hope**. Amen



Gospel reading

Leader: Ask the participants to sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor, hands in laps, shoulders relaxed. Explain that you (or someone in the group) will read the Gospel and they are asked to really listen to the words and think about what the Gospel is saying to them.

Matthew 24:37–44

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘As it was in Noah’s day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

‘So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.’

Advent pause:

“Come, Lord
Jesus”

Image: [Dyu - Ha, Unsplash](#)

The Jerusalem Bible

Hope



MRS LAN'S STORY

Mrs Lan (centre) teaching two of her children at their home in Vietnam.
Image: Phan Tan Lam

Mrs Lan* lives in Vietnam. She is the mother of three children. Two of her children, 8-year-old Quan* and 12-year-old Loah*, both live with a vision impairment.

Vietnam has made significant economic and social progress in recent decades. Unfortunately, poverty and inequality remain prominent in the country, particularly in rural areas where people with disabilities are more likely to experience discrimination and stigmatisation.

While everyone in Vietnam has the right to go to school, children living with a disability in rural areas are often left out and treated unfairly. And many schools often lack the special resources and training they need to teach students with disabilities. This means that school is not as positive an experience as it should be. And, as these children grow up and become adults, they are less likely to be employed than their peers without disabilities. Many end up in a cycle of intergenerational poverty and discrimination.

Mrs Lan often had to take her children to the capital city, Hanoi, for eye treatment. Travelling far from home was expensive for Mrs Lan and her husband and it took them away from the

farming work the family relied on. Mrs Lan worried about her children's future.

Mrs Lan joined a local program led by Caritas Australia's partner, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD). She learnt how to better support her children's education. Quan and Loah joined community-based classes with other children living with disabilities. Activities include reading and writing letters, colouring and practising mobility exercises. The students also have greater access to mobility aids for children with physical disabilities.

Mrs Lan volunteered to help run the classes and now leads a parents' group in her area. Her children are more confident and look forward to completing their schooling.

“Our life has changed a lot after joining the project. I believe that my kids will have a brighter and independent future from the hard work we do today...”

Mrs Lan

*Pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy of the participants.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT – HOPE



Guided Reflection



Leader: Open up the conversation by inviting participants to share what they feel the Gospel is saying to them. Alternatively, use the guided reflection questions below.

[Watch Mrs Lan's story here.](#)

Guided Reflection Questions:

- Where do you see hope in today's gospel?
- Where do you see hope in Mrs Lan's story?
- Mrs Lan volunteered with others in her community to help everyone feel supported and included. Who are the volunteers in your parish or wider community? How do they help?
- After gaining new knowledge and skills, Mrs Lan's concern about her children's future was transformed into hope. Think of a time when you were concerned about something. What helped you feel more hopeful?
- In his third encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile" (n55). When have you witnessed 'bold' hope?
- Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year. This Advent, how can we prepare as people of hope and faith for this new year?



Faith in Action

- Celebrate [International Volunteer Day](#) on 5 December by writing a thank you note to a volunteer in your parish or wider community.
- Look for ways to include people, especially in group conversations and during break times.
- Collect the spare change in your household or parish group and [donate it to Caritas Australia](#) – together we can help everyone feel supported!

Prayer

Hopeful God,

As we wait this Advent, we wait in wonder at what the world might be: a place of fairness and welcome, where everyone has what they need to live fully.

As we wait this Advent, we also pray: for all in our human family who, like Mrs Lan and her family, hope for a better life, rich with possibility.

Hopeful God, help us share your hope.

Amen



Music Suggestions

There is a Longing by Anne Quigley
A Voice Cries Out by Michael Joncas
Joyful in Hope by Michael Herry

Peace

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT



Prayer for lighting of second Advent candle

As we light this second candle on our Advent wreath may we be filled with your **deep peace**. Amen



Gospel reading

Leader: Ask the participants to sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor, hands in laps, shoulders relaxed. Explain that you (or someone in the group) will read the Gospel and they are asked to really listen to the words and think about what the Gospel is saying to them.

Matthew 3:1–12

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

The Jerusalem Bible

Advent pause:

**“Come, Lord
Jesus”**

Image: [Dyu - Ha, Unsplash](#)

Peace



TARSINI'S STORY

Tarsini (centre) leads a meeting with her saving and loans group at her home. Image: Laz Harfa

Tarsini is a rice farmer. She and her husband Jaenal live on the island of Java in Indonesia, about 150 kilometres away from the city of Jakarta.

Tarsini grew rice on a small plot but, like many farmers in her village, she struggled to make a living. The bad condition of local roads made it difficult to transport her goods to other places.

Jaenal works as a casual farm labourer, only earning an income when work is available. "It is hard to find a job. My husband does not have a fixed income," Tarsini says. "The expenses are high, while the income is small. We spend a lot to cultivate farm products but can only sell them at a low price," Tarsini says.

The couple had to borrow money to pay for their daily living expenses. Tarsini was forced to leave her home and work overseas for five years to help pay off the family's debts. When she returned, her future remained uncertain but she was determined to do something about it.

Tarsini heard about a saving and loans group in the village, supported by Caritas Australia and its local partner organisation Laz Harfa. She joined and began to learn about money management and small business skills. It was so

helpful that Tarsini decided to share what she had learnt with others in her community.

So far, the Caritas Australia-supported Economic and Community-based Health Development Project has established five new women's saving and loans groups, helping women in Tarsini's village and beyond to drive their own economic and social development.

"Women have become more independent now, their self-confidence has increased," Tarsini says. "The women here have the freedom to develop themselves, it depends on their choices."

Tarsini has repaid her loans and she and her husband are no longer uncertain about where their next meal will come from.

"Through the microfinance group we can increase our sense of dignity, improve our wellbeing and people can live in better ways... People are very enthusiastic now, more people are willing to work together."

Tarsini

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT— PEACE



Guided Reflection



Leader: Open up the conversation by inviting participants to share what they feel the Gospel is saying to them. Alternatively, use the guided reflection questions below.

[Watch Tarsini's story here.](#)

Guided Reflection Questions:

- Where do you see peace in today's gospel?
- Where do you see peace in Tarsini's story?
- By passing on the new knowledge and skills she's learnt, Tarsini has helped bring peace to her community. What knowledge or skills do you have that might offer some sense of peace to your friends or community?
- Tarsini's community share what they have with each other so that everyone has the chance to succeed. Think about a group in the community that you are involved in. It might be a parish group, youth group or a sporting club, for example. What strengths does your community group have? Does everyone in the group benefit equally from it?
- John the Baptist told people to make way and prepare for the peace of God in their lives. How can we get ready for more peace in our lives?
- John also talks about "repentance", which describes a change of mind and heart. What change of mind or heart could help you walk more in God's way of peace?



Faith in Action

- Is there something that keeps you from feeling at peace? Talk to a trusted family member, friend or parish leader about the things that are worrying you.
- Pray for people who are facing uncertainty due to lack of work this Advent.
- Share peace with others in our global community through [Caritas Australia's Global Gifts.](#)

Prayer

Peaceful God,

As we wait this Advent, we watch for your way of peace: a way of deep breath, where worried minds are settled and tired bodies find rest.

As we wait this Advent, we also pray: for all in our human family who, like Tarsini and her community, look for the peace that comes when daily needs are met.

Peaceful God, help us share your peace.

Amen

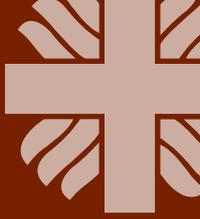


Music Suggestions

Your Peace Will Make Us One by Audrey Assad
Song at the Centre by Marty Haugen

Joy

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT



Prayer for lighting of third Advent candle

As we light this third candle on our Advent wreath may we be filled with your **overflowing joy**. Amen



Gospel reading

Leader: Ask the participants to sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor, hands in laps, shoulders relaxed. Explain that you (or someone in the group) will read the Gospel and they are asked to really listen to the words and think about what the Gospel is saying to them.

Matthew 11:2–11

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?’ Jesus answered, ‘Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.’

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.’

Advent pause:

“Come, Lord
Jesus”

Image: [Dyu - Ha, Unsplash](#)

The Jerusalem Bible

Joy



SITA'S STORY

Sita has transformed her life by learning new skills that have helped her to overcome the challenges she faced. She is now a role model for other single women in her community. Image: Dipendra Lamsal

Sita lives in Nepal. She is a mother of four children, aged from 10 to 24 years. Her youngest child goes to primary school while her eldest child studies at university.

After her husband passed away, she found it difficult to support her children's education. As a widow in a patriarchal society like Nepal, she was stigmatised and discriminated against by others in her community. And, she struggled to earn enough income through her work as a labourer.

Nepal is one of the least developed countries in South Asia, with food insecurity a constant concern throughout the country. According to the World Food Program, there are 4.6 million food-insecure people in Nepal.

Despite the challenges she faced, Sita was determined to forge a brighter future for her children.

She joined the Livelihoods and Resilience Program, supported by Caritas Australia and our partner, Caritas Nepal. Sita learnt farming and money skills and soon became a member of a cooperative made up of single women from the community. The group helped her borrow money to purchase cows and start her own business.

Caritas Nepal helped Sita and her fellow

cooperative members participate in animal husbandry and agricultural training to further improve their farming practices.

Sita learnt to use her cows' dung and urine as fertiliser in her vegetable farm to produce cauliflowers and spinach. Now, she no longer needs to purchase vegetables from the market as she can rely on her own home-grown produce.

Sita's livestock business is thriving now and, with a sustainable source of income, she can continue to pay for her children's education. She has become a respected member of her community and a role model for other single women.

"The program has helped to improve my relationship with other people in the community. I feel I am being part of the community now and the way they praise me for standing on my feet and taking care of my children makes me happy."

Sita

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT – JOY



Guided Reflection



Leader: Open up the conversation by inviting participants to share what they feel the Gospel is saying to them. Alternatively, use the guided reflection questions below.

[Watch Sita's story here.](#)

Guided Reflection Questions:

- Where do you see joy in today's gospel?
- Where do you see joy in Sita's story?
- Sita's story highlights the many factors that impact on food security (e.g. income, climate, education, gender, social status, etc.). What factors improve food security for individuals and communities who are vulnerable? What factors limit food security?
- In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis writes, "An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits. Many people know that our current progress and the mere amassing of things and pleasures are not enough to give meaning and joy to the human heart, yet they feel unable to give up what the market sets before them" (n209). Consumerism and an excess of "things" is a challenge some of us face. Consider the impact that consumerism has on our environment – the production, transportation and disposal of items that are used only a few times. What one "new habit" could you practise to reduce your contribution to the negative impacts consumerism has, particularly during this Advent season?



Faith in Action

- Sita has made it possible for her children to continue with their education and for her farm to grow the food she needs to live well. Share her story at your next family dinner, with a prayer of thanks (grace) for the food you share.
- What makes you feel joyful? How can you share this joy with others this Advent? Think of ways you could share something with your community (e.g. hampers, donations, etc.).

Prayer

Joyful God,

As we wait this Advent, we celebrate Jesus' good news: a message of life and healing that transforms even deep sadness into joy.

As we wait this Advent, we also pray: for all in our human family who, like Sita, have been unfairly treated because of their status or situation.

Joyful God, help us share your joy.

Amen



Music Suggestions

Oh for Joy by Folk Hymnal

The Magnificat by Todd Agnew

Love

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT



Prayer for lighting of fourth Advent candle

As we light this fourth candle on our Advent wreath may we be filled with your **restoring love**. Amen



Gospel reading

Leader: Ask the participants to sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor, hands in laps, shoulders relaxed. Explain that you (or someone in the group) will read the Gospel and they are asked to really listen to the words and think about what the Gospel is saying to them.

Matthew 1:18–24

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Jerusalem Bible

Advent pause:

“Come, Lord
Jesus”

Image: [Dyu - Ha, Unsplash](#)



PRONALI'S STORY

Pronali checks the health of a local mother and her baby. Image: Simon Argho Sku

Pronali lives with her husband and two children in a village in the northeast region of Bangladesh. Their community is made up of several different groups of people, including the Indigenous Garo people. Farming is the main job in the area.

According to the [World Bank](#), while Bangladesh “has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty, supported by sustained economic growth”, there are “about 22 million people still living below the poverty line”. Factors such as poor infrastructure, rapid urbanisation and vulnerability to climate change are among current challenges. This is the case in Pronali’s rural village where schooling, communication and health services are less developed compared to other parts of the country.

Pronali enjoys learning. After joining a local program aimed at strengthening skills in farming and health, her special interest in mother and child health care grew. Soon after, she was invited to attend a safe motherhood training course.

“I talked to my family and husband about it,” Pronali explains. “Considering the remote area and the suffering of pregnant mothers, delivery and child care, my family and husband agreed to my proposal and encouraged me to participate.”

Supported by Caritas Australia and its local partner Caritas Bangladesh, the program enabled Pronali to discover more about her own strengths and abilities. It also taught her how to deliver basic health care and education to others in her community.

Pronali now works as a midwife with the community clinic, providing important health care to pregnant women, new mothers and their babies. “Every day, pregnant women come to me for health checkup and frequently call me for home delivery,” she says.

Pronali loves her community and hopes to one day build a health care training and first aid centre in her village.

“The villagers and family members honour me much as an important person, as their family health service provider. I and my family feel very proud of it.”

Pronali

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT – LOVE



Guided Reflection

Leader: Open up the conversation by inviting participants to share what they feel the Gospel is saying to them. Alternatively you can use the guided reflection questions below.

Guided Reflection Questions:

- Where do you see love in today's gospel?
- Where do you see love in Pronali's story?
- Did you know that the word *caritas* is a Latin word that means love? Pronali uses her skills and interest in the health of mothers and babies to love and care for her community. How do you show love and care for people in your community?
- Pronali hopes that one day she can help establish a training and first aid centre in her village. What hopes do you have for yourself and your community?
- The angel's words to Joseph helped him imagine things in a new way and changed the direction of his life. Have you ever had a dream that helped you to think about something differently?
- In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "Love of neighbour is concrete and squanders none of the resources needed to bring about historical change that can benefit the poor and disadvantaged." (n165) What change would you like to see in the world? What concrete expressions of love could make it possible?



Faith in Action

- Let a family member or friend know you love them by preparing a meal for them or helping them with another household job.
- Share love with our human family by donating to [Caritas Australia's Global Gifts](#).
- Visit a relative or friend and spend time together as way of showing you care.

Prayer

Loving God,

As we wait this Advent, we know you are with us: ever-present friend whose love lights up even the darkest places.

As we wait this Advent, we also pray: for all in our human family who, like Pronali, feel the love that comes from caring for others.

Loving God, help us share your love.

Amen



Music Suggestions

The House That Love is Building by Sarah Hart