

Week One: Watchfulness

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we pray that as we begin this Advent journey together you would fill our hearts with the hope, joy, and anticipation of this special season. We pray that as we read, reflect, and pray we may be drawn ever closer to your precious Son, with hearts full of adoration. Bless our conversations, and may we take what we learn here into our daily lives this Advent season. AMEN*

Introductions: Take a few minutes for each person in the group to introduce themselves eg. Name, favourite food, hobby or sport, plans for Christmas.

Video One: Play Adore Video "Introduction." 7min 23sec (Note: on this video Fr John talks about a daily reflections book, we will not be using this this year as it was impossible to get it shipped from the US in time, however it is possible to use the programme without this - if people are interested it is possible to buy the book on Kindle).

Discussion Questions:

- Do you find it easy or difficult during Advent to focus on preparing your heart to welcome Jesus? What are some practices or traditions that you have found helpful? What are some of the challenges that make it difficult?
- While January 1 marks the new calendar year, Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year. What do you think is significant about starting the liturgical year with Advent?

Scripture Reading: Read Mark 13: 33-37

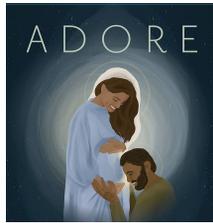
Video Two: Play Adore Video "Week One." 12min 07sec

Discussion Questions:

- Fr John shared this quote from St Augustine "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance, to seek Him the greatest adventure, to find Him the greatest human achievement." What in society today, or in your life personally, gets in the way of seeking God and engaging in that 'great adventure'?
- The Lord 'dwells in our midst.' What one thing do you want to do this week to help you reflect on Christ's indwelling in your life? (eg. go to Adoration, spend longer in daily prayer, reflect on scripture). We'll check in with each other next week to see how we went.

Closing Prayer: Begin with the sign of the Cross, individuals from the group share prayers of intercession, when finished one person or whole group reads:

Heavenly Father, in this season of longing, hope, and new beginnings, help us move toward a deeper adoration of the King of kings. Give us hearts that are ever watchful for your Son's arrival, always prepared to welcome him into every aspect of our lives, constantly aware of his nearness, and eager to grow into closer union with him. AMEN.



Week Two: Preparation

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, may our thoughts, words, and deeds throughout this meeting serve to draw our attention to the arrival of your Son in that humble stable long ago, in glory at his Second Coming, and in our lives each day. AMEN*

Introductions: Take a few minutes for each person to share how their week has been especially how they went in their resolution from last week. (What one thing do you want to do this week to help you reflect on Christ's indwelling in your life?)

Scripture Reading: Read: Psalm 51:1–17

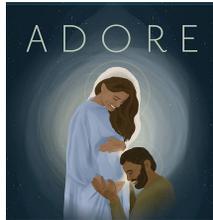
Video: Play Adore Video "Week 2." 9min 33sec

Discussion Questions:

- Do you have a regular prayer routine? If so what does it involve?
- What might you do in the busyness of December to make sure prayer has an important place in your life?
- When you "bump up against your own futility" (struggles, weaknesses and sins) how easy is it for you to go to God for help as Joseph did?
- Our society holds in high esteem 'self-reliance.' How do you find this puts a barrier between us and a deeper reliance on God?
- What one thing do you want to do this week to cultivate an attitude of reliance on God and repentance for sin? (eg. go to confession, begin praying a morning offering each day giving the day to God, reflect on Ps 51 during the week) We'll check in with each other next week.

Closing Prayer: Begin with the sign of the Cross, individuals from the group share prayers of intercession, when finished one person or whole group reads:

Heavenly Father, in this season of longing, hope, and new beginnings, let us move toward a deeper adoration of the King of kings. Give us hearts that are ever watchful for your Son's arrival, always prepared to welcome him into every aspect of our lives, constantly aware of his nearness, and eager to grow into closer union with him. AMEN



Week Three: Nearness

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, may our thoughts, words, and deeds throughout this meeting serve to draw our attention to the arrival of your Son in that humble stable long ago, in glory at his Second Coming, and in our lives each day. AMEN*

Introductions: This week's theme is nearness. Fr. John notes this week that in the third week of Advent we often "stand teetering between a fuller engagement of the real point and purpose of Advent or getting swept away in the often overwhelming material preparations" for Christmas. What was this week like for you? Did you reach a point of fuller engagement with "the real point and purpose of Advent"? Did you get swept up in busyness? Take a few minutes for each person to share how their week has been and especially how they went in their resolution from last week. (What one thing do you want to do this week to cultivate an attitude of reliance on God and repentance for sin?)

Scripture Reading: Read: James 4:8; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 145:18

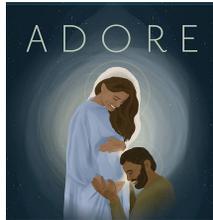
Video: Play Adore Video "Week 3." 6min 48sec

Discussion Questions:

- Our three scriptures this week all speak of God coming near. How would you characterise your relationship with God? Like a friend, teacher, spouse, monarch, dictator or something else? Does God feel near or far off?
- Gift giving at Christmas represents God's gift of Himself to us, particularly in the Holy Spirit - how have you experienced the Holy Spirit as 'gift' in your life?
- Fr John talks this week of "transforming the ordinary". In what way would you like to transform the ordinary in your own life this week? (pray for people as you wrap their presents, as you prepare food pray for those who have none, choose a day to fast and use your hunger as a reminder to pray for those who do not know Christ). We will check in with each other next week.

Closing Prayer: Begin with the sign of the Cross, individuals from the group share prayers of intercession, when finished one person or whole group reads:

Heavenly Father, in this season of longing, hope, and new beginnings, let us move toward a deeper adoration of the King of kings. Give us hearts that are ever watchful for your Son's arrival, always prepared to welcome him into every aspect of our lives, constantly aware of his nearness, and eager to grow into closer union with him. AMEN



Week Four: Emmanuel

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we are filled with joyful thanksgiving for the arrival of your Son. We praise you and thank you for not being distant or aloof. You are truly God with us, and we are overwhelmed with the joy of that great truth. Amen.*

Introductions: Take a few minutes for each person to share how their week has been and especially how they went in their resolution from last week. (In what way would you like to transform the ordinary in your own life this week?)

Scripture Reading: Read: Revelation 21:1–7

Video: Play Adore Video "Week 4." 8min 42sec

Discussion Questions:

- How do we "see with our heart" the Eucharistic presence of Christ in the Mass? Can you think of a time when you 'recognised' Christ in the Eucharist - when his presence particularly struck you?
- In his general audience 18 Dec 2002 JP II said "*The liturgy of Advent, filled with constant allusions to the joyful expectation of the Messiah, helps us to understand the fullness of the value and meaning of the mystery of Christmas. It is not just about commemorating the historical event, which occurred some 2,000 years ago in a little village of Judea. Instead, we must understand that our whole life should be an "advent", in vigilant expectation of Christ's final coming.*" How might we live in expectation of Christ's final coming?
- When God comes near he 'transforms' us? In what ways have you been transformed by Christ? In what ways would you like to be transformed by Christ?
- In these final days of Advent how will you make space to 'Adore the Lord?' (eg. attend Adoration, slow meditation on the Christmas narrative, place a nativity scene in a prominent place in your home and pray before it each day).

Closing Prayer: Begin with the sign of the Cross, individuals from the group share prayers of intercession, when finished one person leads the group in prayer:

Lord Jesus, we adore you.

In solemn silence as we contemplate the mystery of your Incarnation and birth

(pause 2min - you may then like to sing together the refrain "O come let us adore him")

We celebrate the healing and salvation you bring, we worship you

Thank you for the many ways you are present to us here and now.

May our entire lives be an "advent," full of vigilant expectation for your final coming. AMEN.