

# Prayers for Advent

**Scripture Focus:** Zephaniah 3:14–18 (Jerusalem Restored)

## Opening Prayer

**Leader:** Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

**All:** In the name of the Father . . .

**Leader:** This passage is read at Mass on the Wednesday before Christmas. In this passage, we, God's People, the Church, are Jerusalem. The prophet Zephaniah prepares us to greet Jesus, the King of Israel, when he comes to us as at Christmas. We can prepare to welcome Jesus with joy and gladness!

**Reader:** A reading from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah.

*Reader then reads the Scripture passage above from Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics.*

**Leader:** As we ask Jesus for what we need, let us prayer together: "We rejoice and are glad!"

**All:** We rejoice and are glad!

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, with thankful hearts we ask for your peace during this Advent season.

**All:** We rejoice and are glad!

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, we ask to have a gentle attitude toward everyone as we prepare for your coming at Christmas.

**All:** We rejoice and are glad!

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, we pray for our needs, and for the needs of those we know and love, especially for . . . [Invite the middle schoolers to name people or situations they wish to pray for.]

**All:** We rejoice and are glad!

## Closing Prayer

**Leader:** Today we realized that Jesus is Emmanuel, God-with-us, all the time, and we are preparing to celebrate his coming among us. Because the Lord is in our midst, as the prophet Zephaniah told us, let us pray for the needs of all God's people, especially those who feel lonely and forgotten. Let us pray together:

**All:** Lord Jesus,

As we prepare to celebrate your coming to the world at Christmas, we pray for the needs of all people.

Give peace to the world. Give food to the hungry. Give shelter to those who are homeless. Help mothers, fathers, and newborn children. Help all children everywhere, especially those most in need.

Help us to find ways to help others.

We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus, who came to us as a little child.

Amen.



# Ritual Guide

## Opening Prayer

### Preparation

Choose a reader (or two readers, and have the second begin at verse 16) to read the passage from the Book of Zephaniah.

*Optional:* Choose an appropriate Advent song to begin and end the prayer. (Suggestion: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”)

### Gather

Gather the group in the Bible corner. Distribute the prayer handouts. Briefly rehearse the prayer response, pointing out that this response echoes the theme of the reading.

### Pray

If you are using an Advent wreath, you may light the appropriate candle(s) on the wreath at this time. Begin with the Sign of the Cross as indicated. Introduce the reading with the words given, or in your own words. At the close of this prayer, collect the prayer handouts and set them aside, as they will be needed for the closing prayer.

(An activity for Advent can be found in chapter 10 of the *Breakthrough! Leader Guide*.)

## Closing Prayer

### Preparation

This prayer is based on the activity offered for Advent. However, if you did not offer this activity, you can adapt the introduction to summarize the main point of the day’s lesson.

### Gather

Gather the group in the Bible corner. Explain that in the closing prayer, we will remember, as the prophet Zephaniah told us, that the Lord is in our midst always. He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, and so we can ask him for what we need. Explain that at “All,” we will read the prayer together.

### Pray

Lead the group in prayer.

*Optional:* End with the song you chose for the opening prayer, or another Advent song.

