

Let's Make an Advent Wreath

This is a fun, quick activity that can be modified easily for the age, interest level, and needs of your kids.

Note: I had each of the 3 children in my pod make his/her own wreath. When we worship, we will alternate which child's wreath we use to light the candle. My kids love art and have long attention spans for it. If your child(ren) are wired a different way and you need the activity to take less time, you could make one wreath and combine handprints.

Time Needed:

- *It took one hour for my 3 kiddos (ages 10, 10, and 4) to make their wreaths with me.*

Materials needed:

- *One paper plate per child*
- *Green and red paper*

(If you don't have green or red paper, let the kids color or paint some white paper)

- *Pencils*
- *Scissors*
- *White glue or glue sticks*
- *One pillar candle per child*

Cost: Maximum of \$1.25 per child

Prep: Gather materials. *Protect table with paper bags. (If you don't have red or green paper, have the kids color white paper while you talk. If they want to paint the paper, do that a few hours ahead so it can dry).*

Start the activity:

- 1) **Lay out materials, and show kids the photo of the project.**

Ask: *Do you like candles? Have a discussion about what kids like about them; for example, they are warm, and bring light, and feel cozy. (I know you'll also make sure to emphasize that lighting a candle must always be done with an adult).*

Say: *Do you know what the word Advent means? (Allow responses)*

Say: *Advent means, "coming," and it's the season when we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem so long ago. There are lots of Advent traditions in cultures around the world. One that we'll talk about today is the Advent Wreath, a pretty way to display Advent candles. There are 4 candles in the Advent Wreath. Each week during worship with our church family over Zoom, each family will light one of the candles. Bonnie's lessons will teach us about the 4 candles. Today, we're going to make our wreath. One cool way that wreaths are symbols is that they are round – with no beginning and no end – like God's love for us!*

Advent wreaths are often made from evergreen branches – like fir, or pine. This is more symbolism, for the eternal life we have in Jesus, and God’s infinite love for us. But today, to make our wreaths special, we are going to make our evergreen branches out of your handprints!

- 2) **Give each child a plate.** Step one is to cut out the inner circle. Follow the line on the plate
 - a. **Modification #1:** If your kids can’t sit for that long, or struggle with fine motor skills, you can leave the plate whole.
 - b. **Modification #2:** It’s easiest for kids practicing their cutting skills to have an adult poke a hole in the plate and then cut straight lines out to the inner edge. Then kids have small sections to cut along the inner line. We used this with adult help for 4-year old Liam, Kalee did this technique by herself, and Maxine cut it her own way.



You’ll end up with a ring. (Allow breaks for silliness!)



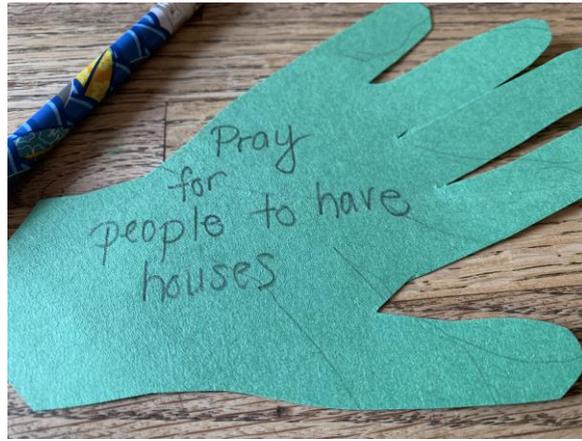
- 3) **Trace hands.** Using a pencil, have each child trace his/her hand several times onto the green paper – we used three tracings and cut two hands from each tracing. Kids younger than 6 will need help.
- 4) **Cut out handprints** – older kids can do this independently, while 6-and-under may need modification. For Liam, I cut out most of the outline and left the straight lines between the fingers for him to do, with help.



Some kiddos will need to do their own thing for a few minutes. Drawing robots here. That's okay!



- 5) **Say:** Let's add some of our hopes, prayers, and thanks to our handprints. What would you like to say? Older kids can write their own prayers, hopes, and thanks onto the hands, while younger kids can draw or dictate to you.



- 6) **Glue handprints onto plate ring.** Arrange handprints around the plate ring, then glue down using white glue or glue sticks. (If using glue sticks, you'll need a lot and hold them down hard to stick if the plate is glossy. Or go rogue and staple them – kids love to bang on a stapler!
- 7) **Decorate!! Let the kids shine! Our little guy used red hearts as the holly berries, Maxine went traditional with small red circles, and Kalee isn't done because she went with an over-the-top scheme of stars and hearts and things-yet-to-be-created.**

Get your candle, put it in the middle, and have your wreath ready for Sunday morning worship!

