

The Advent Wreath



A traditional Advent wreath will have four taper candles (three blue and one may be pink) set in a wreath of evergreen branches. A bright blue ribbon may be tied to each candle. Frames to hold the candles could be purchased at a religious book store or on online for as little as \$4.00 and as much as \$50.00.

One candle is lit the first Sunday of Advent, two on the second, three on the third and all four on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. If the candles have not burned all the way down, a white candle may be placed in a candle holder and set in the center of the wreath for the season of Christmas (December 25 – January 5).

A variety of other options are possible. Here are a few suggestions.

You could make a holder for the candles using Styrofoam circles, sold in hobby and discount stores. Cut holes in the circles to hold the candles and arrange the greens, securing them with pins. **Caution:** Styrofoam is flammable, so don't let the candles burn all the way down, and as you would with any Advent wreath, never leave it unattended.

You may also use Oasis, which is green florist foam, which you can get from your florist or order online. If you keep watering the Oasis throughout Advent, your greens will stay fresher. It is a good idea to keep a plate under your Oasis wreath so the water does not get on the table. If you use the Oasis, you can simply press the candles into the foam, but do not wiggle them around as the holes will get too big.

If the family wants to leave the candles burning during supper, the tapers will quickly burn down. An attractive, if slightly more expensive, option is to use pillar candles instead of tapers.

Another option is to use a large round tray. (A pizza pan will do.) Place candles in candle holders, arrange them in the pan, and add greens. Place the arrangement where it will remain and then pour in water, which will keep the greens fresh longer.

If you don't have sufficient candle holders, consider using small juice glasses (or glass baby-food jars) and securing the candles in the containers with clay or Play Doh. Or just pour baking soda into the jars around the candle, or secure the candles with marbles or small stones. The glasses can then be placed on the pizza pan or large round tray and greens arranged around them. Water can also be added.

Where candles burning brightly are a safety hazard, consider using votive candles (or even the tea light candles) in votive glasses, small glasses, or glass baby-food jars. These can then be arranged in a circle. Greens could be added and all could also be placed on a tray that holds water.