



**MAKING THEIR ADVENT WREATH** is a family project at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schaffer, 107 East Genesee St., Auburn. Katherine, aged 6, adds greens to wreath, while Monica and Caroline watch the wreath near

completion. Mr. Schaffer will lead the family in prayer each Advent evening as a family preparation for Christmas. Mrs. Schaffer makes the wreath, symbol of the four weeks in Advent, from plastic snow and evergreens from a

tree in the Schaffer front yard. Candles are lighted one by one each additional week in Advent. On Christmas, one big "Christ Candle" replaces the four small ones to represent the new born Savior, "Light of the World."

## Advent Wreath Prepares For Christmas

By MARY LENNON SNYDER  
Most popular of Advent customs in Christian homes is the evergreen wreath with its four candles.

The wreath represents the cycle of thousands of years from Adam to Christ during which the world waited for the coming of a Savior. It also represents the cycle of years since then during which we await Christ's second coming in glory.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Our American Bishops recently stated, "The Christian parent must make his home holy."

Time-tested and relatively simple to carry out are the Christian customs, like the Advent Wreath, which teach doctrine in a very graphic way.

**MODERN HOMEMAKERS** are offered a variety of procedures for making the Advent Wreath. In many communities, florists will construct such a wreath on order and some have samples in stock from which one may choose.

The construction of an Advent Wreath in the home may be an exciting family project. Traditionally evergreens are associated with wreaths at the Christmas season, but this probably springs from the fact that evergreens were the most common growing thing in the northern climes whence so many of our Christmas customs have been derived.

During the photography session which accompanied the preparation of this article, I watched Mrs. Schaffer construct a very attractive wreath out of long strands of ivy which she had plucked from her garden. So, if evergreens are not available other forms of greenery may be used.

One of the florists with whom we talked recommended snipping off the lower branches of

evergreen trees in one's own yard, so that the greens are quite easily acquired.

I believe in Europe and in religious communities it is customary to suspend the wreath from the ceiling; however, in modern American homes the Advent Wreath is more likely to be found on the dining room table or on a table or stand in some room used by the entire family.

Several years ago we had a

handsome Advent wreath constructed on a wooden frame and suspended from the dining room chandelier. Several days before Christmas, however, we found the evergreens had dried out to the point that they had a disconcerting way of drifting down and settling in the coffee cream.

Since then we have arranged to have the wreath in a place where it could be kept damp.

If the wreath is to be hung

over a wire coat hanger bent into a circular shape, the greens are then fastened on with florist's wire or twine and four candles are placed equidistant on it.

More easily constructed and in my opinion more satisfactory are the wreaths which are set on a flat surface. The best way to make this type is to start with a shallow bowl or ring mold. Into this set a ring of styrofoam which may be purchased in various forms in any variety store. One circular piece which will fit the average sized ring mold may be purchased in many five and ten cent stores for ten cents.

To insure a firm foundation the styrofoam may be fixed to the ring mold by small pieces of modelling clay. Then the evergreens are set into the styrofoam base. Most makers of Advent Wreaths find that transparent tape is helpful in fixing the evergreen to the base.

At four equally spaced points around the ring, holes for the candles may be made in the styrofoam base which provides a firm support for the candle.

As much as possible, use fire proof materials and be sure to

keep candle flames a good distance away from lamp shades or any other inflammable materials.

Since the spirit of the liturgy of the season is one of joy and of penance, the Advent Wreath incorporates both feelings. The prayers which are said and the very spirit of anticipation which the wreath builds up as each of the four candles is successively lighted are epitomized in the traditional color of hope. The penitential aspect is suggested by the use of purple.

In our part of New York State purple candles are practically non-existent so we use white candles, although I believe in many parts of the world purple candles may be used. The advantage of the white is that blessed candles may be used. The purple of penance may be added by the use of a rosette of purple ribbon.

Certainly some purple, the liturgical color of the season should be used on the wreath.

Now let us assume that we have our wreath constructed and in place. On the first Sunday of Advent at the main meal of the day when the family is gathered together, one candle is lighted

and a prayer taken from the Collect of the Sunday recited.

IT IS TRADITIONAL to have the youngest member of the family light the first candle which is left burning during the meal. Then each evening during the supper hour the same candle is lighted again and the prayer recited.

On the second Sunday of Advent another child, lights the first candle and a second candle and recites the Collect of the second Sunday. During the second week two candles are lighted each evening. This procedure is followed for each of the four weeks of the season, lighting an additional candle each week.

Someone I know made an advent wreath and used vigil lights in place of the taper type of candle. She found that in this way she could burn the candles during the dinner hour and until the children's bedtime.

AT THE END of Advent, purple ribbons are replaced with silver or gold ones. Tiny bells or stars may be fixed to the wreath. And instead of the four candles, one new, big white one stands in the center. This "Christ Candle" represents Jesus, the new born King as "Light of the world."

Children especially love the beauty and simplicity of family religious practices. Each family can devise its own traditions, adapting the ways of our forefathers to modern circumstances.

In establishing these age-old customs once again, we forge once more a link with the centuries which have preserved the faith for us and enable us to give that inheritance unbroken down to the coming generations.

By a  
Priest  
of  
Rochester  
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### Prayers For Advent Wreath

The home ceremony for use of the Advent wreath is simple. It consists of the Collects for the Sundays of the season. On the first Sunday of Advent, the family gathers for the blessing of the wreath by the father, who begins:

Our help is in the Name of the Lord.  
All answer: Who made heaven and earth.

Father: Let us pray, O God, by whose word all things are sanctified, pour forth Thy blessing upon this wreath, and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from Thee abundant graces. Through Christ our Lord.  
All: Amen.

He sprinkles the wreath with holy water. Then the youngest child lights the first candle, and the prayer for the first week is said.

Father: Let us pray, Stir up Thy might, we beg Thee, O Lord, and come, so that we may escape through Thy protection and be saved by Thy help from the dangers that threaten us because of our sins. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever.  
All: Amen.

During the first week one candle is left burning during the

evening meal, at prayers or at bedtime.

Two candles are lighted on the second Sunday and allowed to burn as before. The prayer for the week is:

Father: Let us pray, O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Thy only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with pure souls. Through the same Christ our Lord.  
All: Amen.

Three candles are lighted on the third Sunday and during that week. The prayer is:

Father: Let us pray, We humbly beg Thee, O Lord, to listen to our prayers; and by the grace of Thy coming bring light into our darkened minds. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever.  
All: Amen.

All four candles are lighted on the fourth Sunday and allowed to burn as before. The prayer said the fourth week is:

Father: Let us pray, Stir up Thy might, we pray Thee, O Lord, and come; rescue us through Thy great strength so that salvation, which has been hindered by our sins, may be hastened by the grace of Thy gentle mercy. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever.  
All: Amen.



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