



Searching

Light your candle and ponder the wise men or astrologers.

- ✦ What were they longing for in life, that the star drew them away from home, family, friends ...?
- ✦ What kept them going on that long hazardous journey, drawn, as though by a magnet, to find the new-born King.
- ✦ Marvel at their courage, determination and persistence, and how God was using them in revealing the light of Christ.
- ✦ Think of your own longings in life – the hopes, needs, deep desires that keep you going...

Notice your longing to recognise Christ's light.

Finding

What must have been going through their minds when the star stopped, not over a palace but over a humble dwelling. Could the king they had been searching for possibly live in such a place?

Perhaps these words echo their feelings...

*Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible
 Love indestructible in frailty appears
 Lord of Infinity, stooping so tenderly
 Lifts our humanity up to his throne
 Oh what a mystery, meekness and majesty
 Bow down and worship,
 for this is your God
 (Graham Kendrick)*

Reflecting

- ✦ What are the wise men showing you about yourself?
- ✦ Is God calling you to do something new or something more?
- ✦ Do you have the courage to venture out, trusting God to lead you?
- ✦ God doesn't promise that it will all be easy, but that God will be with you.

**Lead me God, towards your light.
 Give me your grace,
 that like the wise men,
 I will know your leading,
 courageously follow your way,
 and recognise you in the surprising
 places you reveal to me.
 Amen
 Our Father ...**

Using this Candle Prayer Card

In a quiet place, where you feel comfortable, place your night-light on a heat resistant surface. Fold this paper lengthwise and then fold into three, placing it around the candle with the three prayer sections facing you, as shown in the diagram on the right.

Light the candle.
 In the stillness and the silence, let the flame focus your thoughts and attention.
 Let your heart and mind become still.
 Rest in God's presence.

Use each of the sections in turn to give focus to your prayer.



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Preparing

- ✦ As you light your candle, think about Jesus in the wilderness for 40 long days and nights, alone and tempted.
- ✦ For him, a time of letting go — of having nothing— of discovering who he is and what God wants him to do.
- ✦ Reflect on a wilderness time in your life, when you have been alone and empty ...

Journeying

Talk to Jesus about your times and his in the wilderness.

Bring to him your dreams and fears, ask him to breathe life into all that is good and to help you let go of all that stifles and starves you.

Ask him to show you how he can take the smallest seed of hope and grow it like a tree, with spreading branches for the sheltering of new life.

Ask for his help for your needs, whether it is for forgiveness, healing, blessing.

Seeking Blessing

During these days of Lent give thanks for all God's gifts

— for daily bread, for companions, for a sense of being loved and held.

**God of compassion and love,
I ask for your mercy and blessing during these days of Lent,
that your Spirit will urge and enable me to be more gracious,
blessing me to live in a spirit of liberty,
mercy and wholeness. Amen**

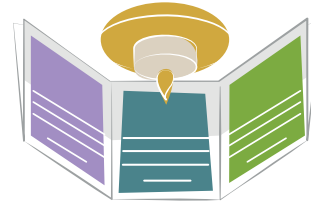
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Preparing

As you light your candle, remember the pain, and deep sadness of Jesus' crucifixion; his body placed in the tomb with the stone sealing it.

Now the stone has moved, the tomb is empty!

Jesus is Alive!

Become aware of joy and hope that this brings you.

Remembering

Take some time to remember...

- ✦ The Resurrection stories...
- ✦ Mary at the Tomb 'Mary'—'Raboni' (John 20.16)
- ✦ The Disciples in the Upper Room 'My peace I give you' (John 20.19)
- ✦ The Disciples on the Emmaus Road 'Didn't our hearts burn' (Luke 24.32)

When you have known similar moments...?

Do you notice Jesus' joy as he reveals himself alive?

Praying

Risen Jesus

help me to receive your resurrection joy; to see the life in your eyes, the delight on your face.

As you invite me to share in your life, your presence, your peace, your companionship, enable me to share your life, your presence and your peace with those I am with today.

Amen

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Preparing

As you light your candle hear the risen Jesus saying:

'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' ... he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20.21-22).

Give yourself time to come to greater stillness, letting Christ's peace come to you, letting the breath of the Holy Spirit come to you.

Pray **'thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'**.

Remembering

...the things that energise or motivate you, that enliven your faith and the way you live it out.

Give thanks for them.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

...the people you know who need Jesus' peace.

Name them in prayer.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

...Jesus sent his disciples out – to be his hands and feet in the world.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you and give you the opportunities to be a bringer of Jesus' love and peace to those you have prayed for.

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Preparing

As you light your candle, ask God to help you appreciate all that creation gives to your life and all that other people's efforts and sacrifice have given to your life.

- ✦ Think of a food that you really appreciate.
- ✦ Think of a person whose sacrifice has been important to you.

Recognise these as God's generous gift to you.

Remembering

Harvest reminds us of the 'dying' of plants and animals to give us food for life.

The days of All Souls, All Saints and Remembrance remind us of the loss of loved ones and those who gave their lives for the sake of others.

Take time to notice your gratitude for the food that gives you life.

Let yourself express your thanks to God.

Take time to name specific people or groups of people you remember with thanks. Let yourself express your thanks to God for their love, generosity and sacrifice.

Let yourself sense God with you, God enjoying seeing you thankful.

Praying

Loving God,

You are the creator and giver of all good things

Thank you for all the ways you sustain my life

Thank you for the love and sacrifice of others

Particularly ...

Give me grace to live gratefully and generously.

Amen.

Our Father...

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Advent Preparation

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Reflect on one of these scriptures that show God preparing the world for the Christ. Notice any longings that arise in your heart.

- ✦ 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...' (Isaiah 9:2)
- ✦ 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse; ... a branch will bear fruit. ... the wolf will live with the lamb, ... (Isaiah 11. 1, 6)
- ✦ 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight... ... the rough ways made smooth.' (Luke 3.4, 5)
- ✦ 'Do not be afraid, Mary; ... You will conceive and give bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.' (Luke 1:30-32).

Advent Praying

- ✦ Hold your longings prayerfully.
- ✦ Recognise the hopes they hold.
- ✦ Recognise it is God who gave them to you, and who is fulfilling them.
- ✦ Pray for patience, pray for faithfulness

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Our Father...

Christmas – Celebrating Jesus' Arrival

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

Reflect on the joy and wonder of the arrival of the Christ Child, vulnerable in a hostile world.

Give thanks to God for the gift of his Son and what he means to you.

Pray for peace in the world. Pray for all who are vulnerable, homeless ...

Pray for the completion of God's work in transforming creation.

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