

Text: Isaiah 2:1-5

The southern kingdom of Judah had long been in rebellion and under threat of war. Into this turmoil, the prophet Isaiah foretold a future when all nations would stream into Jerusalem, eager to learn the teachings of the one true God. In that day, God's rule will be recognized over all the earth. He will bring light to darkness, justice among nations, and His reign will be marked by lasting peace. Just as Isaiah foretold the coming of God's light, justice, and peace in the midst of Judah's rebellion and darkness, so we, too, can eagerly look to Jesus, our light in the darkness, to bring his justice and peace to our world.

<u>Practice:</u> Go on a nighttime walk with your family and take a flashlight. Notice how the light pushes back the darkness and remember that Jesus is the light come into our dark world. Because Jesus, the Light, is present in our world, we can hold onto hope that He will one day make all things right and fill the earth with His justice and peace. Then pray this prayer:

God of Jacob,

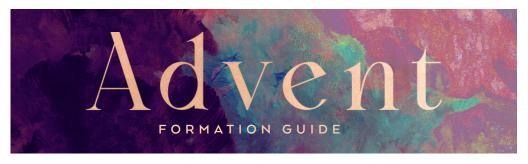
We yearn for hearts that seek your ways above all else.

May we make room to notice the light and life you bring into our world.

May we be people who usher in your light, justice, and peace wherever we go.

Help us trust you even in the darkness.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!



Text: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah 11 describes a king like no other, bringing justice, righteousness, and God's peace to the world. But this unprecedented kingdom doesn't come from the king's own power, intellect, or diplomatic skill. This king is a ruler like no other because of the presence of God's Spirit. Isaiah 11:2-3 says, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord— and he will delight in the fear of the Lord." In Advent, we rejoice in this king that we follow, not pursuing his own power, but the glory of the Lord, and we long for his coming and the full establishment of his kingdom.

<u>Practice:</u> This week, remind yourself that we follow a king, Jesus, on whom the Spirit rests, by wrapping yourself in a heavy blanket or coat. As you experience the warmth, comfort, and weightiness you are surrounded by, reflect on the peace and justice he promises and where this hope is needed for the world today. Then, pray this prayer:

Jesus, Root of Jesse,

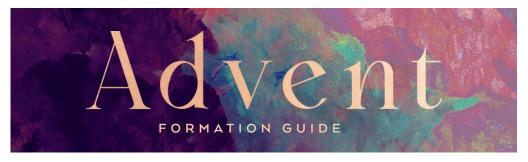
We long for the peace, justice, and hope that you promise.

May we listen for the gentle voice of your Spirit.

May we be people who seek your peace, justice, and hope for the world around us.

Help us to take heart in the waiting.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!



Text: Isaiah 35:1-10

The people of Judah, fearful and despairing under constant Assyrian oppression, hear Isaiah's prophecy, calling them to place their hope in God's promise of deliverance, restoration, and blessing. The coming of God in His glory will transform desolate, dry places into lush oases, overflowing with life, for He is the God of life and salvation. He will lead His redeemed home to Jerusalem, ensuring no one goes astray and every danger is overcome. The lame will walk, the blind will see, and all will be restored. His people will sing with joy along the way, as a wasteland becomes a thriving, life-filled place through God's presence. Guided by Him, God's redeemed will walk confidently and safely into Zion, crowned with joy and peace, never to experience sorrow and suffering again.

<u>Practice:</u> Just as the people of Judah felt weary and hopeless, we too can, in winter, look out at leafless trees, empty flower stems, bitter winds, and early sunsets, and find it easy to doubt that spring will ever come. Remember God's promise to bring renewal by purchasing some flowers and placing them on your table. Each time you see them, remember His promise to restore all things and trust that spring, though not yet visible, is on its way. Then, say this prayer:

# God of Isaiah,

In the middle of hardship and darkness, you are with us.

Turn our eyes away from our own efforts to deal with our difficulties and Instead place them on Your faithfulness, love, and power.

May we hope in you as we await the redemption and restoration of all things,

For you alone are our hope.

Teach us to delight in your presence and eagerly expect your deliverance. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!



Text: Isaiah 7:10-16

As we enter the final week of Advent, the wait is almost over. Christmas is almost here! And yet, our world still longs for the presence of the Lord. We long for reassurance, peace, and presence. We long for all things to be made new. The people of Judah in Isaiah's day longed for the same thing and he promised a sign: the coming of Immanuel, God with Us. In Jesus, the fulfillment of this sign, we are reminded that we do not walk through the world alone. The darkness we sometimes feel surrounded by is not all there is. God sees us. He loves us. He is with us. And one day, he will make all things new.

<u>Practice:</u> This week, anticipate the end of Advent and the coming of Christmas with a meal. It could be elaborate or simple, but save Jesus a space at your table to remind yourself that he is Immanuel, God with us. Before you eat, light a candle and pray through this liturgy:

### Immanuel.

As we gather together and light this candle, We remember that you are the light of the world. God with us.

We wait in the already but not yet, already assured of your victory but still longing for your perfect kingdom.

Be with us now as we celebrate and anticipate.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!