

An Advent Examen

by [Laurie Marshanke](#)



Begin by taking in a deep breath, taking in God's love, the light of Christ, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Exhale all your worries, your challenges, and your fears. During this time of [Advent](#) let us reflect on what we can do to prepare for the Lord.

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you see the day as the newborn baby Jesus sees it. What joy have you found today? Where have you felt God's love? What have you done today to prepare the way for Jesus being born into this world for you?
2. Now think about your day as if looking at it through the eyes of a child; what do you see? Did something surprise you? Was it something someone said to you or something you are grateful for? What did you recognize as gifts (thinking about the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh brought to Jesus)? Thank God for the gifts he has given to you today.
3. Take a moment to reflect on the times today when God was especially present to you. Recognize your feelings in those moments. How did you prepare your heart for God's presence in the coming of Jesus? Where did you feel God's loving arms wrapped around you the way [Jesus felt Mary's arms](#)? How did you prepare yourself to experience God's love, forgiveness, and hope?
4. Now take a moment to think about the times when God seemed to be hidden. Where did you struggle to see the Messiah in your life—the way some failed to recognize the birth of the Messiah when Jesus was born? When may you have seen the need for love and didn't respond (maybe like the innkeeper), or the opportunity for forgiveness and you walked away? How was your heart prepared? Ask God to forgive you for anything that moved your heart away from God's love and recognizing the birth of Jesus in you. And ask God to help you to open your heart and become the person that God created you to be.
5. Finally, prepare for the [hope](#) of Jesus Christ in your life. Think about what you are hopeful for, what you are looking forward to during Advent and the Christmas season. Is your hope like that of a child on Christmas morning? What gifts will you share to be hope for someone else? Ask God to bless all in your life as you prepare the way of the Lord, and ask God to be with you today and every day.