

# THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR YEAR

THE CYCLE OF LIGHT

## DATE/S OBSERVED

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

## IDEAS FOR OBSERVING

### ADVENT

A SEASON OF WAITING

The beginning of the church year. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day.

Each of the four Sundays of Advent has a watchword for the day:

- First Sunday – Wait
- Second Sunday – Prepare
- Third Sunday – Rejoice
- Fourth Sunday – Love

Waiting for the coming of Christmas AND for the second coming of Christ.

A time of thoughtful reflection and repentance.

- Follow a schedule of daily Advent readings.
- Light the candles on an Advent wreath.
- Participate in a service project individually or as a family.
- Perform daily acts of love or kindness.
- Create a “family activities” Advent calendar.
- Engage in an Advent Scripture challenge.
- Celebrate Advent by providing a “family gift” to an organization of your choice.
- Hold a birthday celebration for Jesus on Christmas Eve.

### CHRISTMAS

A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

Celebrated on December 25th each year.

Its twelve days of feast span from Christmas Day through Epiphany on January 6th.

A celebration of the birth of the Word, the Light of the World, the Son of God.

- Purchase or make twelve ornaments, one for each day of Christmas.
- Invite someone who is alone to Christmas dinner.
- Celebrate with twelve days of Christmas gift giving.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or other ministry.
- Surprise an elderly neighbor with an inexpensive yet meaningful gift.

### EPIPHANY

A SEASON OF CELEBRATING THE GOOD NEWS OF THE COMING OF GOD THE SON

Begins on January 6th and runs through the Sunday immediately preceding Ash Wednesday.

A season for seeing more of Christ’s glory by focusing on His life and mission. A time to both inhabit the Story and to tell the Story.

- Leave the porch light on or use electric candles in your windows.
- Read an entire Gospel one or more times from start to finish.
- Gather a few friends and serve together in a volunteer opportunity.
- Choose friends, coworkers, and family to pray for during Epiphany.

	DATE/S OBSERVED	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	IDEAS FOR OBSERVING
<p><b>LENT</b></p> <p>A SEASON OF DARKNESS</p>	<p>A forty-day season beginning on Ash Wednesday.</p>	<p>Lent is a time to reckon with the reality of darkness and death. It is both a sojourn and a journey. The sojourn causes us to look inward and acknowledge our human and spiritual vulnerabilities. The journey bids us look outward and weigh the costs of discipleship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe a fast.</li> <li>• Read the Crucifixion account in each Gospel.</li> <li>• Read the same Crucifixion account in multiple versions of the Bible.</li> <li>• Choose a thoughtful book to read during the season.</li> <li>• Create space in your life to hear the voice of God.</li> <li>• Practice charity.</li> <li>• Refrain from having flowers in your home.</li> <li>• Incorporate a visual or tangible symbol into your observance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Paschal Triduum</b></p>	<p>Begins the Thursday prior to Easter Sunday.</p> <p>Comprised of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.</p>	<p>A time to consider our healing in His dying.</p> <p>During this season make provision for spiritual engagement with God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a no-fire fast during the Triduum.</li> <li>• Spend time alone reading, meditating, and praying.</li> <li>• Engage in a Journey to the Cross.</li> <li>• Meditate on the Seven Last Words of Christ.</li> <li>• Bake Resurrection Rolls or Easter Cookies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EASTER</b></p> <p>A SEASON OF JOY</p>	<p>Both a day and a season lasting fifty days.</p>	<p>The celebration of Christ's resurrection.</p>	<p>Easter Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a predawn walk.</li> <li>• Greet others with, "Christ is risen!"</li> <li>• Go crazy with flowers in your home.</li> <li>• Light a white candle during your Easter meal.</li> <li>• Read an account of the Resurrection.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ORDINARY TIME</b></p>	<p>At the conclusion of the Easter season, Ordinary Time begins on Pentecost Sunday and continues through Reign of Christ Sunday (the Sunday before Advent).</p> <p>Ordinary Time is a lengthy six month season.</p>	<p>A time for healthy rhythms of discipleship: worship &amp; witness, rest &amp; labor.</p>	<p>Pentecost Sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear red to church on Pentecost.</li> <li>• Through the eight days of Pentecost, light a red candle at your household meal each day.</li> </ul> <p>Ordinary Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light a green candle during mealtime.</li> <li>• Study the Holy Spirit and/or the Trinity.</li> <li>• Proclaim the Good News.</li> <li>• Breathe a simple breath prayer each time you perform some routine activity.</li> </ul>