

A Guide for Small Groups

Mandalas, Candles, and Prayer: A Simply Centered Advent

#ColorYourAdvent



Using Mandalas, Candles, and Prayer with a small group requires very little advanced preparation but still provides an enjoyable opportunity to spend time together in community. Here are some simple guidelines for the host and participants so that you can make contemplative coloring a meaningful part of your simply, centered Advent.

For the Host

- In advance, determine a time and location for your Advent Coloring Circle to gather (your home, church, coffee shop, library, or other appropriate venue). You may choose to meet weekly or less frequently during the season of Advent, depending on what schedule will keep things simple and bring the most joy.
- Invite folks you think will be interested, and decide whether you will order books for everyone or ask each person to purchase his or her own book individually.
- On the day of your gathering, simply clear space at a table, and place an Advent wreath at the center. You can put on a pot of coffee or offer snacks, but food is not necessary. In fact, not providing food can be a favor to some who find it all too easy to over-indulge during the holiday season.
- If you want to play quiet instrumental music while you color, set up a playlist or a stereo ahead of time.
- When people begin to arrive, simply relax and enjoy. Follow the agenda below that is based on the weekly candle-lighting liturgy included in each chapter. You can read the prayers and scriptures in unison or take turns doing the readings.
- Advent Coloring Circle Agenda (1 hour)
 - Gathering and greeting (15 minutes)
 - Prayer of invitation, candle-lighting, scripture, and song (5 minutes)
 - Silent coloring and prayer (20 minutes)
 - Questions for conversation and contemplation (15 minutes)
 - Closing prayer (5 minutes)

For the Participants

- In advance of your first gathering obtain a copy of *Mandalas, Candles, and Prayer* (either from your host or on your own), and gather whatever coloring supplies you desire (crayons, colored pencils, pens, and so on).
- Create a plan for daily contemplative coloring throughout the season of Advent as you are able. Practice contemplative coloring regularly when possible, but offer yourself grace when plans change. The goal of *Mandalas, Candles and Prayer* is to be a joyful addition to your Advent, not just another item on your to-do list.
- For your first gathering, gather your book and coloring supplies. Then just show up, relax, and enjoy.

Mandalas, Candles, and Prayer: A Simply Centered Advent, Garner, Sharon Seyfarth, Upper Room Books, 2017, pages 21-22 (used with permission).