



ADVENT 2025 ANTICIPATION

Keeping the Season of Advent with Pope Leo XIV

A Four-Week Small Group
Reflection Guide for
the Archdiocese of Seattle



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of Seattle

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Advent 2025

WHAT: Four 60-90 minute small group sessions of prayer and reflection, focused on Scripture and readings from Pope Leo XIV.

WHEN: The four weeks of Advent, 2025

WHY: This Scripture-based reflection is intended to help us prepare both individually and as communities for the great feast of Christmas.

As Partners in the Gospel continues, this shared experience of prayer and reflection can be one way for people to come together across parish boundaries and build relationships with others in the parish family.

WHO: The simple format will require a facilitator, and 4-8 participants for each group. Given the focus on sharing and listening, larger groups could be challenging. It would also be possible to open and close prayer in a large group and then break into smaller groups for the sharing.

HOW: The sessions can be held in the parish, in homes, in offices, or in an online meeting.

FORMAT FOR EACH SESSION / FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

OPENING PRAYER (about 10 minutes)

- Sign of the Cross
- The designated Scripture passage is read aloud slowly by one of the participants. A few moments of silence follow.
- The passage from Pope Leo is read.
- An extended time of silent prayer follows – 3-5 minutes.

FIRST ROUND OF SHARING (about 20 minutes)

- The facilitator introduces the reflection question for the first round of sharing. Then, for 2-3 minutes, each person in the group shares *once* in response to the prompt. After each person shares, there is a moment for quiet reflection before the next person shares. *You are encouraged to listen in silence, with no back-and-forth or dialogue at this point.*
- After each person has shared, the facilitator invites all to reflect in silence for about 1 minute.

WHAT WE HEARD (about 5 minutes)

- The facilitator now invites each person to name one thing that struck them in the first round of listening. It could be something they heard or something that occurred to them as they listened. Each person shares once, briefly.

SECOND ROUND OF SHARING (about 20 minutes)

- The facilitator shares the *second* question for reflection. (In some cases, there are two options—choose just **one**.) Again, for 2-3 minutes, each person in the group shares *once* in response to the prompt. After each person shares, there is a moment for quiet reflection.

WHAT WE HEARD (about 15 minutes)

- After the second round of sharing has concluded, the facilitator invites a conversation about what was heard in this gathering. What challenged you? What will stay with you? For you, where did you sense the Holy Spirit moving in our listening and sharing?

CONCLUDING PRAYER (about 10 minutes)

- The facilitator opens up for prayer and offers petitions, then invites EACH person to lift up ONE intention for which they would like the group's prayers.
- The intercessions are closed with the Lord's Prayer.
- If desired, close by sharing a gesture of peace.

WEEK I – SILENCE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6: 6-8

From the Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples: “when you pray,
go to your inner room, close the door,
and pray to your Father in secret.
And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
In praying, do not babble like the pagans,
who think that they will be heard because of their many words.
Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

READING FROM POPE LEO XIV

From a homily of Pope Leo XIV.

Our relationship with God comes first. Although it is true that we must live out our faith through concrete actions, faithfully carrying out our duties according to our state of life and vocation, it is essential that we do so only after meditating on the Word of God and listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to our hearts. To this end, we should set aside moments of silence, moments of prayer, times in which, quieting noise and distractions, we recollect ourselves before God in simplicity of heart. This is a dimension of the Christian life that we particularly need to recover today, both as a value for individuals and communities, and as a prophetic sign for our times. We must make room for silence, for listening to the Father who speaks and “sees in secret” (Mt 6:6).

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250720-omelia-albano.html>

SILENCE

ROUND ONE SHARING

- How much silence is there in my life? How much silence is there in my prayer?
- Do I “make room for silence, for listening to the Father”? If not, what gets in the way?

ROUND TWO SHARING

- How is silence “a prophetic sign for our times”?
- How do you, how do we, discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us? What are ways we can truly listen to the Spirit as a community?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To Christ, whose coming is certain, whose day draws near, we pray in hope.

For this local Church, and for our parish family, that we may stay close to God, meditating on his Word and listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, during these holy days of Advent, that we may find ways to bring holy silence into our lives. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Advent?

After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom,
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Sign of the Cross

SIGN OF THE CROSS

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40: 1-5

From the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God.
Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service has ended,
that her guilt is expiated,
That she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins.

A voice proclaims:
In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be lifted up,
every mountain and hill made low;
The rugged land shall be a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

READING FROM POPE LEO XIV

From a homily of Pope Leo XIV.

“Comfort, O comfort my people” (*Is* 40:1). This is the appeal voiced by the prophet Isaiah, which continues to resound today, calling us to share God’s consolation with so many brothers and sisters who are experiencing situations of frailty, sadness and pain. For those who are weeping, in despair, in sickness and in mourning, the prophetic announcement of the Lord’s desire to put an end to suffering and turn it into joy resounds loud and clear.... In times of darkness, even when all outward appearances suggest otherwise, God does not abandon us. Rather, it is precisely in these moments that we are invited more than ever to place our hope in the closeness of the Savior who never forsakes us.

...Where there is evil, we must seek the comfort and consolation that can overcome it. In the Church, this means never being alone. Resting your head on a comforting shoulder, finding someone who cries with you and gives you strength is a medicine that we cannot do without, because it is a sign of love. Where pain is deep, the hope that comes from communion must be even stronger. And this hope does not disappoint.

SILENCE

ROUND ONE SHARING

- Have I felt the closeness of God in a time of suffering in my life? How did I know that God was there?
- Who are the people who have been sources of comfort for me in hard times? How did they do it? Words—actions—or both?

ROUND TWO SHARING

- How does our parish offer comfort? What are ways we could be challenged to offer comfort and consolation in our community?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To Christ, whose coming is certain, whose day is close at hand, we pray in hope.

For the Church, that we may be a place of comfort and compassion for all who suffer.
We pray to the Lord.

In thanksgiving for those who have offered us comfort when we needed it most.
We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray at the end of this Advent season?

After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Sign of the Cross

SIGN OF THE CROSS

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1: 39-49

From the Gospel of Luke.

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

READING FROM POPE LEO XIV

From a homily of Pope Leo XIV.

Saint Luke recorded in this passage a decisive moment in Mary's vocation. Every human story, even that of the Mother of God, is brief on this earth and comes to an end. Yet nothing is lost. When a life ends, its uniqueness shines even more clearly. The Magnificat, which the Gospel places on the lips of the young Mary, now radiates the light of all her days. One single day — the day she met her cousin Elizabeth — contains the seed of every other day, of every other season. And words are not enough; a song is needed, one that continues to be sung in the Church "from generation to generation" (Lk 1:50), at the close of every day. The surprising fruitfulness of barren Elizabeth confirmed Mary in her trust; it anticipated the fruitfulness of her "yes," which extends to the fruitfulness of the Church and of all humanity whenever God's renewing Word is welcomed. That day, two women met in faith, then stayed together for three months to support each other, not just in practical matters but in a new way of reading history.

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250815-omelia-castelgandolfo.html>

SILENCE

ROUND ONE SHARING

- That one day in Mary's life "contained the seed of every other day." Is there a day or a season in my life that is like that? What made it so significant?

ROUND TWO SHARING

- Christmas is one of the days that shape and color who we are as Christians. Why do we need Christmas *this* year? How can this feast resonate with what is going on in our parish—in our world?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: Rejoicing in Christ, the one whose coming is certain, whose day draws near, let us pray.

For the Church, that the joy of the Incarnation may overflow in us throughout the year.
We pray to the Lord.

For all who are burdened with grief or loneliness during these festive days, that God may touch their hearts and bring them joy. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Advent?

After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, we pray:

Lord's Prayer

Sign of the Cross

SIGN OF THE CROSS

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 2: 2-5

From the prophet Isaiah.

In days to come,
The mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.
All nations shall stream toward it.
Many peoples shall come and say:
"Come, let us go up to the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
That he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."
For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and set terms for many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
One nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.
House of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the LORD!

READING FROM POPE LEO XIV

From a homily of Pope Leo XIV.

Where there is the Spirit, there is movement, a journey to be made. We are a people on the move. This does not set us apart but unites us to humanity like the yeast in a mass of dough, which causes it to rise. The year of the Lord's grace, reflected in the current Jubilee, has this fermentation within it. In a divided and troubled world, the Holy Spirit teaches us to walk together in unity. The earth will rest, justice will prevail, the poor will rejoice and peace will return, once we no longer act as predators but as pilgrims. No longer each of us for ourselves, but walking alongside one another. Not greedily exploiting this world, but cultivating it and protecting it.

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250607-veglia-pentecoste.html>

SILENCE

ROUND ONE SHARING

- Have I had an experience of being a pilgrim? What does it mean to walk as a pilgrim in this world?
- Have I ever witnessed a time of reconciliation, of “swords into plowshares,” in my family—in my community? What did that look like and how did it unfold?

ROUND TWO SHARING

- What does leaven do? How is our parish community called to be a leaven in our broader community? How does that happen—or how could it?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To Christ, whose coming is certain, whose day draws near, we pray in hope.

For our Church and our parish family, that we may be a sign of unity and a leaven of peace in the world. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, that during these holy days of Advent, that we may seek reconciliation in our relationships with one another and with God. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Advent?

After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:

With Christ, our savior and our brother, let us call upon God as Our Father.

Lord's Prayer

Sign of the Cross