



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Presbyterians *Read*

Instructions

Weekly Readings: *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent* is made up of four chapters: one chapter for each week of Advent. Readers have the flexibility of choosing to read a few pages a day or a whole chapter at a time.

Group Study: We recommend that you form discussion groups that meet once per week during Advent to discuss *Light of the World*. The four-part Presbyterian study guide, which is available for free download, is designed to work for discussion group meetings online or in person. For each week of Advent, the guide contains prayers, an overview of the theme, biblical reflection prompts and a weekly spiritual practice. The weekly study material is designed to be used after participants have read the chapter assigned for the week.

Whether you choose to reflect on these devotions alone or in a group, please feel free to adapt the material in this resource to suit your needs and context. There are a lot of questions in this guide; you do not need to use all of them. Choose the ones that you think would be most interesting for your group to discuss.

The Presbyterian's Read study guide provides all the material you'll need to lead a meaningful Advent study on *Light of the World*. If you are looking for additional material or videos to accompany the study, Abingdon Press, the publishers of *Light of the Word*, have a leader's guide and DVD available for purchase.

Leaders: It is helpful to assign a leader. Whether it is the same person or different leaders each week, they will be responsible for reading through this study guide ahead of time and for facilitating the discussion during the meeting. Leadership requires flexibility as well as preparation. While many people will have read each chapter carefully, others may not have prepared as thoroughly. This study guide aims to provide entry points into the discussion for all different levels of engagement.

Participants: You will get the most out of this Advent book study if you read the chapter for the week ahead of your group gathering. But, even if you have not kept up with the readings, be sure to still attend the discussion group gathering. You will be welcome, and the questions are structured so that you will still be able to contribute.

Engaging with Each Other: In Matthew 18:20, it is recorded that Jesus says: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” When we gather in small groups for a study like this, our aim is to celebrate Jesus’ presence among us, grow in our discipleship and encourage one another in our shared journey of faith. As we gather, we engage with each other in loving and respectful ways. Our goal is not to find the “right answers” but to grow closer to Jesus and to each other.

Weekly Spiritual Practices: Each week, you will be given a spiritual practice to try that aligns with the theme of the week. Many of the weekly spiritual practices have been adapted from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun’s *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* (InterVarsity Press, 2015). We encourage you to engage in the exercises provided trusting that, even if you do them imperfectly, God is sure to meet you there.

Timing: If you follow the study during the four weeks of Advent, your last session will land very close to Christmas. You may want to consider starting the study the week before Advent or holding your last session in the New Year to re-group and discuss how this study shaped your Advent.



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