

from Living the Good News

The seven “O Antiphons” originated in the daily monastic prayer of the eighth and ninth centuries. They are short, scripture-based prayers invoking various titles used for Christ. They express the deep longing for the Messiah’s coming that is a characteristic of Advent. The ninth century hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” is based on one of the antiphons.

Typically, they are used from December 17 to 23. During Advent, we are encouraged to make the connections between these ancient prayers and our contemporary life.

O Wisdom, you came out of the mouth of the Most High, and reach to the earth’s farthest bounds, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: come and teach us the way of prudence.

O Adonai, and leader of the house of Israel, you appeared in the bush to Moses in a flame of fire, and gave him the law on Sinai: come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

O Root of Jesse, you stand for an ensign of the people; before you, the rulers will shut their mouths, and for you the nations will seek: come and deliver us, and do not tarry.

O Key of David, and Scepter of the house of Israel, you open and no one can close, and you close and no one can open; come and bring the prisoners out of the prison, those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death

O Day spring, Brightness of the light everlasting, and Sun of Righteousness: come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

O Ruler of nations, and their desire, the Cornerstone, uniting both in one: come and save humankind, whom you formed of clay.

O Emmanuel, our Sovereign and lawgiver, the desire of all nations and their salvation: come and save us, O Christ our God.

Living the Good News is a lectionary-based curriculum published by [Morehouse Education Resources](#), a division of Church Publishing. This article is one of the free teacher resources for use during Advent.