

2024 *Advent*

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

LIFE  KIDS



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Advent: What is it?

It's that time of year, you know? The season of hope and joy, where sounds of laughter and songs fill the air. We gather around family meals, cherishing those special moments. It's a season of anticipation and expectation, but let's not forget, it can also bring some tension along the way.

This season brings so much promise, but there's still a sense of emptiness lingering around us, right? Even though Christ has come, the world is far from perfect. Family gatherings can be bittersweet, filled with both hope and pain. And let's not forget Christmas morning, where we experience both excitement and disappointment.

That's what Advent is all about - a time of preparation and expectation for the coming of Jesus. We rejoice in the fact that He came near, but at the same time, we long for His return. During Advent, we worship, we look forward with anticipation, and we wait.

Because guess what? The King is coming. Jesus Christ has come and He will come again. That's the hope that binds the Church, the hope He bought with His own blood. It's the eager expectation and desire of His people. We find our joy in His coming, for He is our treasure, our greatest good.

Advent, which comes from a Latin word meaning "coming" or "arrival," is all about the coming of Christ. It's a time to celebrate the first advent of Jesus and eagerly anticipate His second coming. During this season, we remember, rejoice, watch, and wait. It's a time to reflect on God's promises and eagerly await their fulfillment with patience, prayer, and preparedness.

Advent is a chance to pause and reflect on the birth of Jesus. But for families, this time of year can get pretty hectic with all the activities and obligations. Before your calendar gets overloaded, take a few minutes to think about what you want this season to be for your family. Then, come up with a plan so that you can truly remember and celebrate, without getting overwhelmed by other things.

The Advent Wreath and Candles

The wreath has been used in Christian worship since the time of the Renaissance. It's a powerful symbol that represents eternal life because of its circular shape. The first candle in the wreath symbolizes hope, like the anticipation of the Messiah's coming. The second candle represents peace, just like the peaceful little town of Bethlehem where the Prince of Peace was born. The third candle signifies the joy of the shepherds, and the fourth candle symbolizes love, just like the angelic announcement. Finally, the fifth candle, right in the center, represents the precious Christ Child.

During the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day, we light one candle each week, and on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, we light the white candle. As each week passes, the light gets brighter, symbolizing the arrival of the Light of the World.

To create a Christmas table wreath, arrange four purple candles in holders or a styrofoam base. Decorate the base of the candles with twigs of evergreen, holly, or cones. In the center, place a taller white candle as the Christ candle. Purple represents royalty, repentance, and preparation, while white symbolizes purity and light. Find a special spot in your home, like the mantel in the living room or the dining room table, where the wreath can serve as a central gathering place for your family.

You can take turns with your family members to light the candles and lead the Advent activity. If you know other families who are looking for meaningful and unique ways to celebrate this Christmas season, feel free to share this resource with them. We hope this guide helps you prepare for the joyous celebration of Christ's coming.

WEEK 7



HOPE

Week 1: Hope

The First Sunday of Advent

Introduction:

God guided the prophets to predict the arrival of the Messiah. People throughout generations eagerly awaited the fulfillment of this promise, hoping to witness it in their lifetime. And just like them, we too live in anticipation, knowing that Christ will return, maybe even in our lifetime.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

The Lighting of the Prophecy Candle

Parent Says: Wow, look at the candle! The prophets have been talking about this moment. Guess what? Christ is coming! This candle is a reminder that Jesus is our hope!

Activity:

Hey everyone, grab a blank piece of paper and let's get creative! Write or draw something you're really hopeful for this Christmas season, just like the prophets were hopeful for the coming of Christ. Maybe it's your favorite tradition or something special you're looking forward to.

Prayer:

Hi God! You are good and faithful. Thanks for always keeping your promises. As we get ready for Christmas, let's prepare with excitement for your arrival. Amen.

Week 1: Hope

MONDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

Can you believe it? You'd think the birth of a king would happen in a fancy palace or a top-notch hospital, right? But nope, not in this case. Mary and Joseph couldn't even find a room at the inn. The only spot they could find on the night baby Jesus was born was a humble stable, like a barn or something. Crazy, huh?

Luke 2:6-7

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger" (See lyrics in back of this book.)

Activity:

Hey there! Just wanted to remind you about our conversation from yesterday. Christmas traditions are definitely fun, but let's not forget that the true purpose of Christmas is to celebrate the incredible gift of Jesus, who came to give us forgiveness and eternal life. Take 30 seconds to think about your favorite Christmas tradition. Now, have each person share what their favorite tradition is and why. Take time as a family to plan when you'll participate in that tradition together this Christmas season.

Prayer:

And hey, while we're at it, let's take a moment to thank the Lord for all the blessings He has given us. "Thank you, God, for the comfort of home and for preparing a place for us in Heaven. Amen."

Week 1: Hope

TUESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

Peace is such a rare thing these days, you know? Just look at the news, all filled with stories of wars and conflicts happening all over the world. It makes you wonder, will there ever be an end to all this? But you know what's interesting? A long time ago, the prophets talked about this person, the Messiah. They said he would bring peace, like, the ultimate kind of peace. Can you imagine that? A world where everything is just peaceful and calm? Let me tell you, it sounds pretty amazing.

Isaiah 11:6-7

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the board, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger"

Activity:

Hey there! Let's have a discussion on how we can become peacemakers. Here are a few ideas: sharing toys, lending a hand at home, and helping friends resolve conflicts.

Parents, this week, let's pay attention to our children's peacemaking efforts and acknowledge their actions when they respond to this prompt.

Prayer:

And now, let's say a prayer. "Dear Lord, as children of the Prince of Peace, we all commit ourselves to being peacemakers. Amen."

Week 1: Hope

WEDNESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

In this modern age of cars and planes, traveling during the final days of a woman's pregnancy may not seem so challenging, right? But let's go back in time to ancient days when any journey was a big task. Just picture this: the primary means of transportation was either walking or riding a trusty donkey. Only the privileged few could afford a horse-drawn cart. Now, imagine Mary and Joseph embarking on a remarkable seventy-five-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. This expedition would likely take three days or even longer. And here's the icing on the cake: according to tradition, Mary herself hopped on a donkey for the ride to Bethlehem. Can you even imagine what this adventure must have been like?

Luke 2:1-5

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger"

Activity:

Time to put your virtual hiking boots on! Go online, find Bethlehem and Nazareth on a map of Israel. Now, take a stroll down memory lane and recall a time when you or your family embarked on a long walk or hike. How did it feel? And most importantly, how do you think Mary and Joseph felt after their epic three-day journey? Share your thoughts!

Prayer:

Hey, Lord! As we celebrate Christmas, help us remember to lend a hand to those in need. Let's be helpers at home, school, and even while playing with our friends. Amen.

Week 1: Hope

THURSDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

According to the prophecy, it was said that the Son of God would come from the line of Abraham. Abraham, who was not only the father of the Israelites but also a shepherd, had an unwavering faith in God. Due to his incredible faith and obedience, God made a promise to bless the world through one of Abraham's descendants. Check out the following prophecy from God:

Genesis 17:4-6

"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you."

Genesis 22:18

"... and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger"

Activity:

Get a blank piece of paper and let the whole family unleash their artistic skills by drawing your family tree. It's like creating a masterpiece that includes not only your biological relatives but also those special people you consider family, even if they're not connected by blood. Remember, just like every artwork is unique, every family is too!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please guide us to be more like Abraham - faithful and obedient, willing to follow Your commands. Help us to respond to every challenge with a resounding "yes" and unwavering trust in You. Amen.

Week 1: Hope

FRIDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

So, there's this prophecy, right? It said that the Messiah would come from the line of King David and his whole deal would be bringing peace. Now, David was the youngest of ten siblings and was born in Bethlehem like a thousand years before Jesus. Can you believe that? As a young guy, David was just a shepherd, you know? Like most shepherds back then, he probably had a bunch of sheep in his flock. Check out the prophecy below:

Jeremiah 23:5

"'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'"

Isaiah 9:7

"... of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger"

Activity:

Did you know that God has a knack for choosing unexpected heroes? Just look at David and Jesus - talk about humble beginnings turned into amazing journeys!

Let's have a chat! How do you think God can put your skills to use this week? Looking back, how do you think God has used you in the past - even when it seemed like your life wasn't going as planned?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we just wanted to say thank you for always keeping your promises and providing us with the necessities of life. We can always count on you to keep your word! Amen.

Week 1: Hope

SATURDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

His visit to earth was humble... very humble! His first bed? A trough for feeding animals. If you looked in on that first Christmas, you wouldn't think the baby was royalty. Yeah, this King's arrival was a bit different.

Jeremiah 23:5

"She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room available for them."

(Carol) "Away in a Manger"

Activity:

Could you do me a favor? Can you look up the word "humble" in the dictionary? Let's have a chat about what it means and why being humble is so important. We could also talk about the lessons we can learn from Jesus' humble beginnings. By the way, do you happen to know anyone in your life who's really good at practicing humility?

Prayer:

Lord, get us ready for the day when you'll come back to us, not as a little baby in a manger, but as a king leading Your kingdom. Help us remember that you set the best example of humility - you could have come to rule, but instead, you came to serve. We love You. Amen.

WEEK 2



PEACE

Week 2: Peace

The Second Sunday of Advent

Introduction: Relight the 1st Candle.

Light has always been such a valuable tool for finding our way in the dark, you know? Like how ships use a light on shore to safely navigate into a harbor, or how miners rely on a light to find their way through a cave. And hey, we even turn on our porch lights so folks can easily find their way to our home. But can you imagine the excitement the Wise Men felt when they saw that new star appear in the eastern sky? They had heard about this king who was supposed to come out of Israel and bring peace to everyone. And guess what? That brilliant star actually guided them right to the very place where Jesus was born. Pretty amazing, right?

Matthew 2:1-2, 9

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'... After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was."

The Lighting of the Bethlehem Candle

Parent Says: We've lit the candle and now it's burning bright! It's a reminder that the Wise Men couldn't find Jesus by themselves, just like we can't discover God on our own. But you know what? God gave them a light to follow, and guess what? He still gives us a light today. The Light of the World is coming, my friend. So let's open our hearts and welcome the Prince of Peace.

Activity:

Why not take your family outside and gaze at the stars? See if you can spot the brightest one up there! It's a perfect opportunity to talk about how people have used stars for guidance during their travels.

Prayer:

Dear God, just when you knew the time was right, You sent us the Prince of Peace. Thank you for meeting our every need and doing it at just the right time. We trust in You! Amen.

Week 2: Peace

MONDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

Just imagine getting invited to a Royal Wedding! How would you even begin to prepare for such an extraordinary trip? What would you pack?

Back in ancient times, no one would dare set off on a long journey without making careful and thorough preparations. It's like those Wise Men who traveled to see the Child of God. We also need to prepare our hearts for His glorious arrival, you know? Let's make sure our hearts are open, full of joy, and eagerly anticipating His coming!

Matthew 2:1-2

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'"

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (See lyrics in back of this book.)

Activity:

Let's have a discussion! How would you prepare for an important trip? And you know what? God looks deep into our hearts. So, how would you prepare your heart to meet Jesus?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, as we deck the halls and get ready to celebrate Christmas, let's also get our hearts ready for your coming. Nothing is as important as preparing to meet you, our King! Amen.

Week 2: Peace

TUESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

Not everyone was thrilled about the news of Christ's arrival. Herod, the ruler of Judea, got really suspicious of those around him. He felt threatened by the idea of a messiah, a king, being born as the King of the Jews. And you know what? Even today, some folks still feel a bit intimidated by His coming. But here's the thing: accepting Christ as our king means accepting that He's in charge, the ruler of everything.

Matthew 2:3-8, 12

"When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.' Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'... And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Activity:

Hey, how about playing "Simon Says"? Take turns being Simon. Now let's chat. What happens when we don't follow or listen carefully to instructions? Was it tough to do what Simon said? Do you ever find it challenging to do what others tell you in real life, like chores, homework, or sports? Let's hear your thoughts!

Prayer:

Hi God! Guide us in the way you want us to live. Help us follow you, just like the Wise Men followed the star. Amen.

Week 2: Peace

WEDNESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

During this incredible journey, a bunch of camels transported some really valuable things to a new king. The Wise Men had it all figured out, bringing gifts that were fit for royalty. Gold was like the go-to treasure for kings. Then there was frankincense, which they'd burn during religious ceremonies as a way to worship. And myrrh? Well, that was some fancy perfume they used for embalming. All of these presents were way beyond what an average person could get, but let's not forget, Jesus wasn't your ordinary baby.

Matthew 2:11

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Activity:

Let's have some fun as a family! Complete the Mad Lib below. Be prepared to laugh!

I'm So Excited for Christmas:

I am so excited for Christmas this year! I've been doing a lot of (verb_____)ing to prepare! We picked out the perfect tree. It's (adjective_____), and (adjective_____) and smells like (scent______). It's my job to (verb_____) the tree every day.

I've been hoping for a (noun_____) under the Christmas tree this year. I really don't want to get a (adjective_____) (noun_____) this year!

I hope everyone has a (adjective_____) Christmas!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we pray that our lives are like a gift to you. Help us to have willing hearts, ready to give our all to Your kingdom! You deserve our very best. I pray that my life honors You. Amen.

Week 2: Peace

THURSDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

They had traveled a long way and were so excited about finding the Son of God! And finally, the day had come. The star that had led them all the way was now shining right above the place where Jesus was. Do you know what's interesting? We often see the Wise Men as part of the nativity scenes that we set up in our houses each year, but according to the Bible, by the time they got there, Jesus and his family were actually in a house. But regardless of where they were, the Wise Men were just overjoyed at the chance to see the Son of God. They couldn't help but bow down and worship Him.

Matthew 2:9-11

"After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Activity:

Let's discuss: What are some other ways we can worship? What are some things that keep us from worshipping God? Sometimes, we can get so distracted by games, friends, or sports that we can forget to worship God for all He's done for us. Let's put our heads together and get creative - what are you willing to give up to God until Sunday as an act of worship? You know, like toys, candy, dessert, screen time, or anything else that comes to mind. Let's chat!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we wait and are excited about your arrival! As we wait, will you change our hearts to be more like You? Just like the Wise Men of old, we want to humbly kneel before you in worship and praise. Fill our hearts with so much joy and gratitude. Amen.

Week 2: Peace

FRIDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

During the time of Jesus, when people took long trips, it was the camels' friends - the servants - who had the noble duty of tending to their belongings, from saddles to saddle bags and bridles. Though a humble position with little glory, these caretakers knew the art of servanthood like no other. And guess what? Jesus, the master of all, understood and taught us what it really means to serve others.

Philippians 2:6-11

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Activity:

Let's choose an activity to do together as a family, but this time, let's do it for someone else. Here are a couple of examples:

How about making cookies or another baked good for our neighbor? It's a sweet way to spread some joy!

Another idea is to put together a care package for someone who is homeless. We can deliver it to a shelter or directly to someone in an area where people who battle homelessness live. It's a small gesture that can make a big difference.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we want to have a heart like Jesus, the heart of a servant. Would You help us to love others with the same love that you gave us? Amen.

Week 2: Peace

SATURDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

John Baptist would totally fit in with the all-natural health-food people of our day. I mean, check out his diet - wild honey and locusts. Yum! And let's not forget about his wardrobe. While everyone else was rocking their regular clothes, he was out there in camel hair. Talk about fashion-forward, right? But beyond all that, his main gig was preaching a message of repentance, getting everyone ready for the coming of the Messiah. Pretty cool, huh?

Mark 1:1-8

"The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, a voice of one calling in the wilderness,' Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins... John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

(Carol) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Activity:

Hey, as a family, let's put together a list of people we can invite to join us at church or watch our Christmas services online this month. Once we make our list, let's come up with a creative way to invite them. Maybe create a Christmas card or send them an email with a link to our church's website where they can stream one of the Christmas services. Let's put our heads together and come up with a plan!

Prayer:

Hey God, we need your help to spread your love to others. Give us the courage to invite our friends and neighbors to church so they can learn about You. Amen.

WEEK 3



JOY

Week 3: Joy

The Third Sunday of Advent

Introduction: Relight the 1st and 2nd Candles.

The angels showed up to the shepherds to share some amazing news - news that would bring great joy! Joy is the word that probably defines the Christmas season for most people. When you think about Christmas, it's hard to do it without feelings of joy bubbling up in your heart. So, without wasting any time, the shepherds set off to spread that joy. And here's the thing, the more we share His joy, the more joy we get to experience ourselves. Pretty cool, huh?

Luke 2:10, 15-18

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people..." the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word... and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

The Lighting of the Shepherd's Candle

Parent Says: Look at the glowing light from The Shepherd's Candle. When the angel appeared to the shepherds and told them the news about Jesus, there was joy in the land and in their hearts! Come on, let's rejoice and be glad because Christ Jesus has arrived!

Activity:

How about making paper chains as a family activity for our Christmas tree? You can write different verses about joy on the chains.

Here are a few to get you started: Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:4, Psalm 16:11, 1 Thessalonians 2:20, and Psalm 66:1. It's a fun and meaningful way to decorate our tree together!

Prayer:

Dear God, our hearts are filled with joy because of the good news and hope of Christmas. Just like the shepherds, help us spread the word about Jesus' arrival. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

MONDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

You know, sheep are not exactly known for their smarts or their sharp eyesight. They can only see a few feet ahead of them, poor things. And if left alone, they can easily get lost. That's why they need a shepherd, someone to lead them back to safety. You know, the good news of the gospel is that Christ came into this world to save us, just like a shepherd does for his sheep.

Isaiah 53:6

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all."

(Carol) "Joy to the World" (See lyrics in back of this book.)

Activity:

How about playing a fun game called "Pin the Cotton Ball on the Sheep" with the whole family? All you need is a blank piece of paper to draw a sheep and some cotton balls to act as the wool. It's a great way to have some laughs and enjoy quality time together!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, will you forgive us when our hearts wander from You like sheep? We are so thankful that You are a kind and gentle shepherd. Help us spread the good news to those around us. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

TUESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

The shepherd's job was all about protecting the flock from wild animals. And when night fell, the shepherd would gather his sheep and keep a close and watchful eye on them. Living and working with sheep out in the pasture created a special bond between the shepherd and his flock. You know, when you really think about it, it makes sense that Jesus came to be a shepherd for His people. He cares for us, protects us, and has a special bond with His children.

John 10:11, 14-15

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep."

(Carol) "Joy to the World"

Activity:

Hey, let's play a fun game as a family called "Follow the Shepherd"! It's like "Follow the Leader" but with a twist. We'll use the same rules as "Follow the Leader." Pretend to be an animal - walk like the animal, make noises like the animal - and everyone who follows has to play along. Take turns and choose a different animal each time.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we want to follow you like sheep follow their shepherd. We trust and believe that You love us and we depend on You like sheep depend on a shepherd. Guide us today and we will follow. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

WEDNESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

John the Baptist said that Jesus was like the "Lamb of God." In the Bible, a lamb was given as a substitute for someone's sin. This happened every year in Israel on a day called Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). But Jesus, the Son of God, came to remove the sin of the world once and for all, so there wouldn't be a need for any more sacrifices. Amazing, right?

John 1:29

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'"

(Carol) "Joy to the World"

Activity:

Hey, let's all work together as a family and complete the word search on the following page!

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to this earth to take away the sins of the world. I am so thankful that we do not have to make sacrifices for our sins anymore. Because you came to earth, died on the cross, and rose again, we can be forgiven of our sins. Thank you for loving us so much. Help us to love others and tell them about You, the Lamb of God. Amen.

Advent Word Search

Find the words listed below.

F L H H S W W W A I T J L Q M R R
G C C P H B D U C D J C Q N J K D
X H F F R Z D J H E B A R W J O Y
R U X P G O X P R E P A R E A W N
P R H U I T B S I W O W Y B D O P
G C T H F Z S K S V S W T I V W H
Q H R N T Z P Y T F S H A R E W T
D P J Q A J R F M D B D V T N L J
E K F S P L A D A D X J O H T I P
W Y V T X T Y Q S O A E Z D G Q F
U M U F H T I M E U T P T A T W Z
T S F A M I L Y Q Q K K Z Y F B W
C A E N C E L E B R A T I O N R A
P A S D Q U F U G S G L O A H G W
U P L S D P N O C C B O X O R R V
J W T W Q P N T L B F V S O M B O
V J E S U S A V J W U E U M M W P

ADVENT BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION CHRISTMAS CHURCH FAMILY
GIFT JESUS JOY LOVE PRAY PREPARE SHARE TIME WAIT

Week 3: Joy

THURSDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

When something miraculous happens to you, it's hard to keep it a secret, right? Have you ever experienced something incredible - something that you just couldn't explain? What was it? Those shepherds who were visited by the angels on that hillside thousands of years ago would probably say that it was the most incredible moment of their lives. They were so excited that they couldn't help but go back home, praising God for what they had witnessed. The good news of Jesus Christ isn't meant to be kept to ourselves but to be shared with everyone around us.

Luke 2:20

"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

(Carol) "Joy to the World"

Activity:

Hey, let's have some fun with a game of "Telephone" using Christmas or Advent phrases with your family! You know how it goes, right? You whisper a word or phrase in someone's ear, and they pass it on. The last person in the group shares what they heard. It can get pretty hilarious when the words get mixed up along the way!

Now, let's dive into a discussion. It can be a real challenge to ensure that the message of Christ's love truly resonates with others. How do you think we can make sure this message really hits home for everyone?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we are so grateful for the incredible witness of the shepherds. We can't help but celebrate you for sending us your Son, Jesus. This Christmas season, please give us the courage and the words to share with others what we have seen and heard. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

FRIDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

In the Old Testament, there were these folks called "prophets." They were basically people whom God inspired to share some really important messages. One of these prophets was Isaiah, and he talked about this Messiah who would come and save God's people. You know who Isaiah was talking about? Jesus! Isaiah said that this Messiah would gather His sheep close to His heart. Jesus wants us to be close to Him too. He came to bring hope, peace, joy, and love to the whole world. And if we stick close to Him, we can do the same! So today, let's go out there and spread the good news that Jesus is the Lord of all.

Isaiah 40:9-11

"You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!' See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."

(Carol) "Joy to the World"

Activity:

Let's do something fun! Can anyone tell me what a megaphone is and how we use it? How about we make our own megaphones using paper, tape, crayons, or markers? We can decorate them with cool colors and images of the Christmas season. Once you've made your megaphone, use it to read the Bible verse above. It'll be awesome!

Prayer:

Dear God, we really want to be like Isaiah. We want to have the courage to spread the good news of the Messiah, Jesus! We want our lives to be like a megaphone, shouting to everyone around us that Jesus is Lord! So, please teach us to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

SATURDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

Hey, have you heard any great news lately? It could be from the past week or month. If so, what was it? When you first found out, how did it make you feel? Good news has this amazing way of getting everyone excited, right? Let me share a story with you about some shepherds. They were hanging out on a hillside when angels came to them and told them that the Messiah had arrived. Can you imagine how amazed they were? I bet they couldn't wait to tell everyone they knew about this incredible news. It's like they wanted to "spread the Word" about his coming.

Luke 2:17-18

"After seeing Him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

Romans 10:14

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

(Carol) "Joy to the World"

Activity:

Hey, have you ever been in a play or musical back in school? Remember all the rehearsing we had to do before the big show? It's amazing how practice helps us tell a story, right?

Here's an idea: why not take turns with your family and practice how you would tell the Christmas story to your neighbors who have never heard it before? Try summarizing the story in your own words and give everyone a chance to share. It'll be a fun way to spread some holiday cheer!

Prayer:

Lord, we celebrate that you came to earth at Christmas so many years ago! We want to be used to share the story of Christmas with those who have not heard. Encourage our spirit to share the good news with great joy! Amen.

WEEK 4



LOVE

Week 4: Love

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Candles.

Everyone loves hearing good news, right? I mean, who doesn't like getting news that lifts their spirits and gives them hope? It's like we were made to celebrate good news! Just think about how the angel, Gabriel, brought Mary some seriously good news. He told her that a savior was on the way, and get this - His name would be Jesus! And you know what? He was gonna save people from their sins. How amazing is that?

Luke 1:26-33

"God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High... his kingdom will never end."

The Lighting of the Angel's Candle

Parent Says: The Angel's Candle is lit, and wow, isn't it beautiful? Just like its light spreads around the room and so we can see, the good news of Jesus should be spread around the world so people can see that He is God's Son! He came to save us from our sins, and it's something worth celebrating. It's like the angelic hosts are shouting from the rooftops, "Hey, everyone, Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" (See lyrics in back of this book.)

Activity:

How can we show God's love to others? Besides simply telling people He loves them, what are some other ways we can show it? Like helping others in times of need, listening to your friend's stories, or obeying your parents, for example. Let's discuss!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we want to be like the angels and bring good news to those we meet. Help us to share the love of Christmas with others all year long. Amen.

Week 4: Love

MONDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

Isn't it exciting to be the first to hear something important, especially when it's good news? The shepherds were actually among the first to hear about an event that would change the course of history. At first, they were scared when an angel showed up. But you know what? Good news has this incredible power to turn fear into pure joy!

Luke 2:8-11

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

Hey everyone, let's share the best news we've heard this week as a family! It could be anything, like getting a good grade at school, hearing positive news about our world, or even having a delicious meal. And don't forget to mention any potentially good news that you're hoping to hear soon.

Now, let's discuss what makes news "good." Why do you think the news about Mary's pregnancy was considered such good news? And how do you think good news can help us overcome fear?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, just wanted to say thanks for coming to earth to save us. We're really grateful that you chose to do that. Remind us of your love for us as we go to school or work this week. When we remember your love, let us remember to love others as You love us. Amen.

Week 4: Love

TUESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

When you think about Christmas, I would bet that one of the first things that comes to mind is music. Christmas is a season of music. We get to sing all those fun Christmas songs, both old and new. And let me tell you about the first Christmas - It was so special and filled with music. When Jesus was born, the skies were filled with this incredible heavenly choir, singing a carol of peace. Can you imagine? The announcement of Jesus' birth was so amazing that a big choir of angels came together to share the news and kick off the celebration. It was truly something else!

Luke 2:13-14

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'"

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

Ask your family what their favorite Christmas carol or song is. Then have them explain why they love it and then why not sing it together? After each song, talk about its main message and what the author wanted everyone who sings it to understand.

Now, let's discuss the angels' song in Luke 2:13-14. What was the main message they were singing? What did they want the shepherds to know? Why is this song still important to us today?

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, please help us be messengers of peace, just like these angels. We're grateful that you came to live with us and made it possible for us to be at peace with God and everyone else. Amen.

Week 4: Love

WEDNESDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

We don't know much about Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, but let me tell you, God chose and prepared him with the same care as He did for Mary. Now, in a similar situation, most guys would've gone straight to the Rabbi - a Jewish religious leader, like a pastor - and poor Mary would've been in big trouble. But not Joseph... He spent nights losing sleep, trying to figure out how to break off the wedding plans without hurting Mary. And then, out of nowhere, an angel shows up! Can you believe it? Let's find out what happened...

Matthew 1:18-21

"This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

Hey, as a family, let's talk about our favorite Christmas movie and why we love it. Also, what's that one moment in the movie that really stands out for you?

Speaking of Christmas stories, remember when the angel appeared to Joseph? How do you think you would have reacted in that situation? Let's discuss!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we are grateful for the example of Joseph in our lives. As we seek to care for others, let us be inspired by Joseph's compassion toward Mary. The Bible tells us that You are compassionate, so we want to have compassion for others just like You! Amen.

Week 4: Love

THURSDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

Love is a word that we use a lot. Kids and adults alike use it to talk about how much they enjoy or prefer something. Like, "I love baseball" or "I love ice cream" or "I love being with my friends." But love is more than just liking something.

In First Corinthians 13, it describes love as being selfless and never-ending. And in John 3:16, it tells us that God loved us SO MUCH that He sent Baby Jesus to be born in a manger, knowing that one day He would die for each one of us. Now that's a different kind of love, way more powerful than just liking a sport or a food. You know, you might like those things today and change your mind in a few years. But God's love for us, it's there every day, now and forever.

John 3:16

"God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

Hey, let's do a fun activity as a family and learn what love truly means. Grab some red construction paper (or color white paper with a red marker) and let's make heart-shaped ornaments together. Cut out the hearts and write the words from John 3:16 on each ornament. Hang them on our Christmas tree and then let's say a prayer, thanking God for loving us so much that He sent Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we just wanted to take a moment to say thank you. Thank you for sending Jesus to earth because you love us so much. You know, there are so many things in this world that we sometimes mistake for love, but this Christmas, we want to understand what true love is all about. Sending Your Son, Jesus, was the ultimate sign of true love, and we are just so grateful for that. We pray that every day, not just today, we can really focus on your love and let it guide us in everything we do. Amen.

Week 4: Love

FRIDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

Have you ever heard good news that was too exciting to keep to yourself? If so, what was it? Mary received the good news - the best news - from the angel and she couldn't keep it to herself, so she went and told her cousin, Elizabeth. What was this news? It was that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah, Jesus! When Elizabeth heard what the angel had said, she replied, "Wow, blessed is she who believed what the Lord said would happen!" Mary was so joyful and couldn't help but sing to glorify God.

Luke 1:46-55

"And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.'"

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

Today, we're going to make another ornament for our tree. Yesterday, we made an ornament with the words from John 3:16 written on it. Let's get some construction paper, markers or crayons, and scissors! Draw a gift to remind you that Jesus is the best gift that has ever been given. It be a gift you received for a birthday, Christmas, or another special event. After you draw, color, and cut out your ornament. Show it to your family and tell them why you drew this gift. After everyone has shared, hang the ornaments on the tree and then pray the prayer below.

Prayer:

Dear God, would You help us see and understand the story of Your big rescue plan in the Bible? You chose to rescue us from sin by sending Jesus, the greatest gift. We believe that this plan is not only for us but for everyone. God, we want to believe that you deeply love and care for us. We love You! Amen.

Week 4: Love

SATURDAY

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

Have you ever had someone make you a promise? And did they actually keep it? Well, just imagine if someone made you thousands of promises and actually kept every single one of them! That's exactly what God does throughout the entire Bible! While God makes and keeps all His promises, there's one promise that stands out above all others, and that's God's promise of sending His own Son, Jesus, to earth. In order for God's promise to come true, Mary and Joseph had to take this long journey to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem. Once Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, it was like the whole world held its breath, waiting for God's greatest promise to be fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

Luke 2:1-6

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born."

(Carol) "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Activity:

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found no room or bed available. Their only option was a stable with a manger serving as a crib.

As a family, let's brainstorm all the different gifts that God has blessed us with this past year. Grab a piece of paper or open a note on your phone, and let's see how many we can come up with. It'll be fun to see who can think of the most!

Make sure to keep this list in a safe place, so whenever you need a reminder that God keeps His promises, you can take a look at it.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for reminding us that You keep Your promises. We are so thankful for all of the gifts You have given to us this year. We are especially thankful for the promise of Your Son, Jesus. He is the best promise that has ever been kept! Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE + DAY



EMMANUEL

EMMANUEL

December 24 + 25

Introduction: Relight the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Candles.

Hasn't it been so much fun lighting the candles each night during this Christmas season? With the candles being lit each week, we've watched the light grow and prepare us for His coming. And now, the Light is shining bright, the time for His arrival is here. Christ is born today!

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

(Carol) Pick your favorite carol and sing it as a family.

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Parent Says: Let's use this candle to symbolize our faith in Christ, our Savior, the Light of the World. May we feel His presence with us today as we light this final candle together. (Light the final candle)

Activity:

Let's throw a birthday party for Jesus! As a family, we can bake a cake, wear paper hats, light the candles, and sing happy birthday to Jesus. It'll be the most amazing party to celebrate the greatest event in history - the birth of Jesus!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I just wanted to take a moment to thank You for leaving Your throne in Heaven and coming to live among us. It's been such a special Christmas season where we've had the opportunity to learn more about You and Your plan for us. We can't express enough how grateful we are that You consider us worthy. Amen.



CAROLS

AWAY IN A MANGER

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby awakes.
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the night sky.
And stay by my side till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay.
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care.
And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing (x2)
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy (x2)
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found (x2)
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love (x2)
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

HARK THE HAROLD ANGELS SING

Hark the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

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