

# Advent Devotions for Family Worship



*“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among men with whom  
He is pleased.”*

*Luke 2:14*

**This year, Advent begins on Sunday, December 2, 2018  
and ends on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, 2018**

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# *Advent Beginner's Guide:*

## *What is Advent?*

Advent means "Coming." Christians have used this term to refer to that period before Christmas where we wait for the coming of Christmas Day. Sometimes Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is called His First Advent, while Jesus' second future coming is called the Second Advent. Advent serves as a way of preparing for Christmas. Too often, we get distracted from the true meaning of Christmas and Advent is a good way to refocus Christmas on Christ. Our hope is that you use this booklet in your family devotion times as a way to focus as a family on Christ during the Christmas season.

## *What is the Advent wreath?*

The advent wreath is a wreath that has three purple candles and one rose (pink) candle around the outside, as well as one white candle in the middle. If you do not have an advent wreath, you can purchase one at your local Christian bookstore or you can make your own by getting a wreath and placing the appropriate candles around the wreath and in the center.

### *When is Advent?*

This year Advent begins on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and ends on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

### *When Do I light the Candles?*

Candles are lit each day of Advent. Starting the first Sunday, light the first purple candle. Beginning the second Sunday, light the first candle and a second purple candle. Then, starting the third Sunday, light the two purple candles and the rose candle, and starting the fourth Sunday, light the first two purple candles, the rose candle, and the last purple candle. On Christmas Eve, light all the purple and rose candles, plus the white candle in the center. Each candle carries with it special significance, the first candle is "the light of Hope," the second "the light of Love," the third "the light of Joy," and the fourth the "the light of Peace." The white candle in the middle is called "the light of Christ."

### *What do the wreath and candles mean?*

The wreath symbolizes the endless nature of God's love for His people. The purple candles symbolize faithful expectation, and the rose candle symbolizes joy. The white candle symbolizes the purity of Christ.

### *How do I use this booklet?*

For each Day of Advent, this booklet provides a brief family devotion including discussion questions and prayer points. After you light the candles, take some time to read and discuss the passage for that day and close in a time of family prayer before you blow out the candles. In addition, you will find a Christmas hymn for each week that you can incorporate in your family devotion time. Whether you are an empty nester or the parents of preschoolers, every family can benefit from taking time out of their busy day to focus on the true meaning of Christmas.



# Week One: The Light of Hope

During this week, we will contemplate the expectation of the coming Messiah both in His first and second coming. The Messiah's birth was not an unplanned event but a long hoped for plan of God. Jesus came into this world as the long-expected Savior. Just as the Old Testament saints eagerly looked for His first coming, so too, we should look forward to His second.

Each day this week, light the first purple candle to symbolize the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Do this as part of your family devotion and read and discuss the verses for each day. In addition, we have included a Christmas Hymn for each week to help enrich your devotion time

 Hymn for Week One:   
**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #76**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*



## Sunday, December 2nd:



### Read Luke 1:67-80

Advent is the time of year where we look forward to the coming of Jesus. In this passage, we see Zachariah after the birth of his son John the Baptist. He was praising God because he knew that the birth of his son meant that the messiah was coming. For hundreds of years, the Jews had waited for the Messiah, and now all those prophecies would be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. The coming of Jesus meant the coming of a savior; it meant the fulfilling of a promise; it meant light in the darkness. In the same way, as we look ahead to Christmas we should have hope in a God who keeps his promises, and in a Christ who came to save.



How do you see God's faithfulness in your life? How does that faithfulness give you hope?



As you pray, thank God for his faithfulness and ask that his hope will fill you this Christmas season.

## Monday, December 3rd:



### Read Genesis 3:14-15

From the beginning, God had a plan to save His people and gave His people something to hope in. From the moment that man sinned, God announced His plan to send a Messiah who would come and erase the curse that had fallen on humankind. He created an expectancy of the coming Messiah who would crush Satan and the power of sin. Christmas is a season of hope, because we have a hope in Jesus who breaks the curse that we earn through our sin.



Jesus was meant to overcome the results of the curse brought by sin. How do you see that victory in your life?

For young kids: God is talking to a snake in today's passage. Who does that snake represent?



As you pray, thank God for His great plan of salvation that He had from the very beginning of human history.

## Tuesday, December 4th:



### Read I Chronicles 17:11-14

David asked God if he could build him a house and God instead promises to David that his family would be blessed. God promised that the blessing that was promised through Abraham would continue on through the line of David. This promised blessing would be a king whose kingdom would be established forever. This King would establish a new kingdom in which all of God's people dwell. As we think of the hope of Christmas, it is a hope in this forever King.



What does it mean for Jesus to be King in Your life? How should we treat Jesus if he is truly the King?



As you pray, thank God for sending Jesus as our King and rejoice that this Kingdom will never end.

## Wednesday, December 5th:



### Read Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Long before Jesus was born, His birth was prophesied in the Bible, and in these verses, we see an amazing prophecy of the coming child. The people of Israel had been promised a king, a great king who would make all things new. Their hope was based on the hope of a Messiah. Take time to contemplate each of the titles of Christ used in this passage. These verses speak of a child that will be born and show His people the way. He will be a great ruler and be God himself living among His people. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas, we are celebrating the coming of the one true King who will save His people.



When you think of the Hope of Christmas what does that mean? What are you hoping for this Christmas?



As you pray, ask God to help you make Jesus the true King of your life.

## Thursday, December 6th:



### Read Jeremiah 23:3-6

This good Shepherd is described here as the coming King who will save His people. This king of the line of David would save them, redeem them, and protect them. He was to be a mighty king and “The Lord our Righteousness.” These verses points to Jesus as being both our perfect Savior and our perfect Lord. At Christmas, we should rejoice that Jesus came and never committed any sin and now reigns as our righteous Lord.



What does it mean to you that Jesus is called “The Lord our Righteousness?”

For young kids? Can you think of a Bible story where Jesus was tempted to sin? Share it with your family.



As you pray, ask God to help you to live righteous lives just like Jesus lived.

## Friday, December 7th:



### Read Isaiah 11: 1-10

Jesus is the branch of the root of Jesse, and in these verses, Isaiah gives a beautiful vision of what Jesus' final kingdom will look like. It is a kingdom where calf and lion lie down together, where there is no more hurt or pain. The hope of Christmas is a hope for peace. One day, all will be as it should be as Jesus reigns as the King who will make all things new. As you think about the hope of Christmas, realize that we look forward to a day when all will be at rest in Christ's coming kingdom.



Reread verses 2-5. What do these verses teach us about Jesus' character? How then can we be like Jesus?

For little kids: How will Jesus' Kingdom be different from where you live today?



As you pray, thank Jesus for being our righteous King and for allowing us to be a part of this future kingdom.

## Saturday, December 8th:



### Read Revelation 22:12-17

The word Advent means “coming.” It speaks to a hope of a coming king. Just as Old Testament believers waited expectantly for the first coming of Jesus, so too should we wait expectantly for His second coming. Jesus will come again and establish permanently His glorious kingdom on the earth. Until that time, we are to be His witnesses working for Him here on earth. As we celebrate Christmas and the first coming of Jesus, we must continue to hope in His future promises.



Why is Jesus’ second coming so important? What do we have to look forward to when he comes again?



As you pray, praise Jesus for coming the first time and pray eagerly for His second coming.





**Week Two:**

# **The Light of Love**

During this week, we will contemplate the amazing love that was shown by God in sending His Son to be Savior of the world and the amazing love shown by Christ in coming and dying for us. Though many of the verses studied this week are not usually thought of as Christmas verses, they serve to show the great sacrifice that Jesus gave by becoming man and dying for us.

Each day this week, light two purple candles to symbolize the amazing love that is demonstrated by God becoming man and dying for us.

 Hymn for Week Two:   
**Good Christian Men Rejoice #96**

*Good Christian men, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say:  
Jesus Christ was born today.  
Man and beast before him bow,  
and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!*

*Good Christian men, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss:  
Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened heaven's door,  
and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born for this!*

*Good Christian men, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave:  
Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all  
to gain his everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save!  
Christ was born to save!*

## Sunday, December 9th:



**Read John 3:16-17**

Though we might not think of this as a Christmas passage, it shows the great love of God who sent His one and only Son. The Father's decision to send Jesus was done because God loves each and every one of us. Jesus is the ultimate light of the world and He guides us to knowledge of God if we will believe in Him. The true good news of Christmas is that God loved us enough to send His Son to die for us and by believing in Him, we will be saved.



Who do you know who needs to hear about God's love for them?

For young kids: God loves us so much that He sent His greatest gift, His only Son. What is the greatest gift you have ever received?



As you pray, thank God for loving you and pray that those who do not know of God's great love will come to know Him.

## Monday, December 10th:



### Read 2 Corinthians 8:9

It is amazing to think of what Christ gave up in becoming a man. Jesus was with God and was God. He enjoyed the riches of heaven and the power of the divine, and yet He was willing to become a man. He left Heaven for a lowly manger for us. This is an unimaginable act of love, and we cannot fully comprehend the true price Jesus paid in becoming man. Jesus made a great sacrifice by coming the first Christmas and God calls on us to have that same willingness to sacrifice for our fellow man.



The love Jesus shows us is a sacrificial love. How do you show sacrificial love towards others?

For young kids: Jesus gave up a lot to be born on Christmas. Why do you think Jesus gave up all those things?



As you pray, thank Jesus for the sacrificial love He showed in coming the first Christmas.

## Tuesday, December 11th:



**Read Luke 2:1-7**

When the Creator of all the universe was born, he could not find a room. The true King of Kings came down and was born in a stable. Jesus loved us enough that he was willing to leave the riches of heaven for a lowly manger and as we look at the story of the birth of Jesus we should see the amazing love He showed for us in coming in the way He did. Jesus came to be King but He loved His people and showed His love in the way He came.



How does Jesus show His love for us when He was born on Christmas?

For young kids: What do you think it was like in the stable when Jesus was born?



As you pray, thank Jesus for love He shows all of us by coming to be our Savior and Lord

## Wednesday, December 12th:



### Read Luke 2: 21-38

In these verses, we see the reactions of Simeon and Anna as they meet the newborn Jesus in the temple. Both were old and waiting to see the coming Messiah. As they met the baby Jesus, both recognized that He was the one who had come to save God's people. For Simeon, this meant that he could finally die peace having seen God's rescue of His people. For Ana, this knowledge produced joyful thanksgiving. As we encounter the truth that God loves us enough that He has sent us a savior, it should produce joy, peace and thanksgiving in our lives as well. If we have truly encountered the love of God, it will have a profound impact on our lives.



What are you thankful to God for this Christmas Season?



As you pray, thank God for sending Jesus and giving us true purpose and fulfillment.

## Thursday, December 13th:



### Read Isaiah 53:2-10

In this passage, Isaiah portrays how King Jesus was treated when He came to earth. He was a man who was mocked and beaten by men. Even before His birth, Jesus knew that He was coming to earth to die on the cross for our sin. Yet, why would the God of this universe endure such a lowly state? Christ did it because of the great love He has for us. In coming to this world, Jesus showed great love for humanity. Jesus knew when He came that He was coming to suffer and die for us, and yet He came anyway.



Jesus came to die for us, how does His death show His love?



As you pray, thank Jesus for the love He shows us by coming to earth to suffer for us that we might not perish.

## Friday, December 14th:



### Read Ephesians 2:1-7

In this passage, we see the great love of God for us in truly amazing form. We were all born in sin and dead because of our rebellion against God. Yet God loved us enough so that even when we still were fighting against Him, He came to save us. When Jesus came at Christmas, He came to save sinners not saints. God has demonstrated love beyond our ability to understand in sending His Son. Christ coming at Christmas is the greatest gift ever given because we are so far from deserving it.



These verses describe God as being “rich in mercy.” How do you see that Rich mercy in your own life?

For younger kids: How does God show His love for us?



As you pray, thank God for showing us great mercy even while we were His enemy.



## Saturday, December 15th:



**Read John 13:34-35**

Christmas is a time of year that reminds us that God loves us. God sent His son to die for us and that is the ultimate act of love.

This great love then should propel us to want to love others. Jesus calls on us to love others as He has loved us. As we think about the amazing gift of love we have been given at Christmas, we should look around to see to whom we can show the love of Jesus. It is through this love that we will show the world that we are truly followers of the Christ of Christmas.



How can you show the love of Jesus to others this Christmas season?



As you pray, thank God for the great love that He shows us and ask that He help you to love others.



# Week Three:

# The Light of Joy

During this week, we will contemplate the joy that comes to us because Jesus has come into this world. We will explore the way that Jesus' first coming was received with joy by those who experienced it and be reminded of the joy that we all have in Christ.

Each day this week as part of your family devotion, light the two purple candles and the rose candle to symbolize the joy that we experience in Christ our Savior.



## Hymn for Week Three:



### **Joy to the World! The Lord is Come #87**

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
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,  
Far as the curse is found,  
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,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

## Sunday, December 16th:



### Read Romans 15:8-13

Advent is the time of year where we show others the joy we have in Jesus. Here we see Paul looking back to the Old Testament to show that Jesus came so that we all might have Joy as we worship the Christ of Christmas. Jesus coming was meant to be an event that inspired worship and praise as people see what God has done. As we think of what Jesus has done and how God has kept his promises and saved his people, it should produce within us a sense of true joy and celebration. Christmas is a joyful time because we have something truly amazing to be joyful for, the coming of Jesus the long awaited messiah.



What are you rejoicing for this Christmas season?



As you pray, ask that God will give you true joy and peace this Christmas season.

## Monday, December 17th:

### Luke 1:26-38

In this passage, Mary is told of the amazing news that she will conceive and bear a child. This was not just good news for Mary but for the whole world. She was to give birth to the great king who would rule forever. He would be the God-man who came to guide His people. As we think of the joy we have at Christmas, we celebrate the coming of a child who would be our forever king. Like Mary, let us recognize ourselves as a servant of the King ready to do the will of the Father.



What can we learn from how Mary responds to the Angel's good news?

For young kids: The angel came to give Mary good news. What was the good news he gave her?



As you pray, thank God for sending His Forever King at Christmas and pray that like Mary you will have a servant's heart.

## Tuesday, December 18th:



### Read Luke 1:39-45

We see in this passage what happens when Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. As Mary nears Elizabeth, the un-born John the Baptist leapt for joy in his mother's womb because he knew that the un-born Messiah was near. The mere presence of Jesus, even before He came out of the womb, was the cause of great rejoicing. The infant John, who had never seen the outside world, knew of the greatness of the one who was in the womb of Mary. May we all likewise praise God, from the youngest among us to the oldest.



How do you show the joy you have in Christ this Christmas season?

For young kids: Why was the baby John the Baptist jumping for joy in his mom's belly?



As you pray, praise God for sending the Messiah and pray that we might all display great joy as we contemplate Jesus' coming to earth.

## Wednesday, December 19th:



**Read Luke 1:46-55**

In this passage, Mary magnifies God as she contemplates the miracle of her coming Son. She rejoices to see God's promise to His people fulfilled in her womb. She sees how God shows mercy to His people and refuses to abandon them. This produces in her this song of great joy. We too, as we see God's great mercy and unfailing love, should rejoice and magnify the name of God this Christmas season.



What has God done in your life that you can praise Him for today?

For young kids: In today's story, Mary sings a song to God. What is your favorite song to sing to God?



As you pray, thank God for what He has done in your life and praise Him for the mercy He showed in sending Jesus.



**Thursday, December 20th:**



**Read Matthew 1:18-25**

As we look in Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus, we see throughout it many reasons for which we celebrate Christmas. We see proclaimed the good news that a Savior was to be born and for this we rejoice. We see proclaimed the Good news that God is indeed with us and for this we rejoice. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we must realize that the reason the birth of Jesus is so important is because he came to be our savior to show us what God was really like. And so, as we think of the Christmas story we should rejoice this Advent season.



Jesus is called "God with us." What does that mean?

For young kids: Jesus was a special baby. What made him special?



As you pray, thank Jesus for loving us enough to come and be God with us.

## Friday, December 21st:



### Read Luke 2:8-14

In these verses, we see the great announcement to the shepherds of the Savior's birth. The angels proclaimed that Jesus coming that first Christmas was good news for all people. God cares for all people and makes a way for them to have peace with God. Like the angels, we should proclaim this good news with great joy so that others may hear and know. From the richest to the poorest, all need to hear the angel's message this Christmas.



Why should it be a joy to tell other people about Jesus?



As you pray, ask that God will give you boldness to proclaim the joy of Christ's coming.

## Saturday, December 22nd:



### Read Luke 2: 15-20

As a result of the good news that they had heard, the shepherds went right away, found Jesus, and rejoiced. When we hear the good news of Christmas, we should have the same urgency to find this coming Messiah. When we discover that Jesus has come for us, we too, like the shepherds, should go away rejoicing. Joy is the natural outflow of interacting with the true Messiah. As you think about the joy of Christmas, know that it is the joy of encountering our Lord and Savior.



What should our response be to having met Jesus as our Lord and Savior?

For young kids: Why do you think the shepherds wanted to tell others about meeting the Baby Jesus?



As you pray, thank God for the joy that comes from knowing Jesus, and pray for opportunities to share that joy with others.



# **Week Four: The Light of Peace**

During this week, we will contemplate the peace that Jesus brought to this world. This is peace between God and man, and also, the peace that comes over the nations as Jesus reigns as the true King of kings. As you read this week, think about how the Jesus we celebrate this Christmas is the true Prince of Peace.

Each day this week, light the first two purple candles, the rose candle, and the final purple candle symbolizing Jesus as the peace that surpasses all understanding.

 Hymn for Week Four:   
**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing #88**

*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!”*

*Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

*Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Risen 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!”*

## Sunday, December 23rd:



### Matthew 2:1-12

In these verses, we see the wise men eagerly searching for Jesus, and when they find Him, they worship at His feet. On the other hand, when Herod heard the news of Jesus, he became angry and sought to harm the child. Some men are joyful because of the message of Christmas and seek to worship like the wise men and others reject God like Herod. God has come to bring peace but some men will reject God and seek to make war. But in the end, the Bible says that every knee will bow to the true Prince of Peace. This Christmas we should seek to respond like the wise men and worship Jesus as King



Why do people reject Jesus as King?

For young kids: Why did the wise men want to find the newborn King?



As you pray, ask God that all will accept Jesus as the one true King.





# **Christmas Eve: The Light of Christ**

During this day, we will contemplate the amazing gift of Jesus Christ. We will marvel that God would send His great King to such a humble beginning and rejoice because our Savior has come to the world.

Today, light all five candles including the white candle in the middle, which symbolizes the great Jesus who is the Light of the World.



# Hymn for Christmas Eve:



## Angels, from the Realms of Glory #94

*Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship,  
Come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

*Shepherds in the fields abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with man is now residing,  
Yonder shines the Infant Light:  
Come and worship:  
Come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

*Sages, leave your contemplations;  
Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great Desire of nations,  
Ye have seen the infant's star:  
Come and worship,  
Come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

*Saints, before the altar bending,  
Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
In His Temple shall appear:  
Come and worship,  
Come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

## Monday, December 24th:



### Read John 1:1-14

These verses introduce Jesus as God Himself, the Creator of all things. Yet despite this, Jesus is concerned with the plight of His lowly creation. This almighty Creator is described as the “Light of Men.” He cares about humanity and seeks to show them the right way to live. God loved us enough to become one of us. As you think about the coming of Christ this Christmas, think about the amazing love shown in the ruler of the universe caring for His lowly creatures, and the joy we have because the Light has come. Think of the peace He offers between God and Man, and the hope we have that He is coming again one day.



Jesus is described as the “Light of Men.” How do you see Jesus guiding you in your life?

For young kids: What does a light do? How is Jesus like a light?



As you pray, ask Jesus to be the light in your life, guiding everything that you do.

