

BRIDGEWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

*God  
With  
Us*

• *Advent Guide 2015* •

## *Introduction*

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“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

**1 Peter 1:8-13**

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**Matthew 6:19-21**

Our King is coming. Jesus Christ has come and he is coming again. This is the hope that is celebrated during the Advent season. Advent, from the Latin word meaning “arrival” or “coming” is all about Jesus. It is a time for His Church around the world to remember his first coming as a humble child in Bethlehem as we also eagerly await his second coming in glory.

This is a season of watching and waiting. It is a season for celebrating the faithfulness of our God, who 2000 years ago made good on his promise to send a Savior. It is a time for reflection, for the renewing of our minds, for setting aside the busyness and consumerism that so often overwhelm us during this season so that our souls might be stirred up with affection for our great King.

## *History and Traditions*

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Advent officially begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and goes through Christmas Eve or Day. It originated as a period of fasting in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity (Christmas) in what is now France. While the pre-Christmas fast was observed as early as the fifth century, it was during the sixth century that the reading of particular prayers and Scripture passages began to be associated with Advent. While Advent comes at the end of the calendar year, it actually marks the beginning of the church year, and is thus an especially appropriate time for reflection, repentance and refreshment.

Advent has always been a time of remembrance, a time to look back and remember Christ’s first coming. It has also had a forward-looking dimension, as it is a time to prepare for Christ’s second coming at the end of history.

This season has been celebrated in a variety of ways by a variety of theological traditions through the centuries. One common tradition is the use of an Advent calendar during the month of December. Modern Advent calendars usually contain 24 “windows” that are opened in the days leading up to Christmas. Each window contains a poem, portion of Scripture, story, picture, or gift. As more windows are opened and Christmas day draws near, expectation increases. This is meant to remind us of a period of anxious yet hopeful waiting God’s people experienced in the time leading up to Christ’s first advent.

Candles are another popular Advent symbol. This symbol emphasizes the Scriptural teaching that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World (Matt. 4:16; John 1:4-9, 8:12). Traditionally, a new candle is lit each week in anticipation of Christmas Eve. The last candle, called the Christ Candle, is lit on Christmas Eve and represents Christ's first advent. The increasing light from the candles is meant to be a picture of the gospel, as we see this light penetrate the darkness.

The Advent season also often includes an emphasis on particular colors. Purple is the color first associated with Advent, as it is known as the color of repentance, and Advent was originally a time of repentance. More recently, some churches have begun to use blue, the color of hope. This is meant to remind us of the promise Christ made in his first coming that he would in fact come again, and it is a reminder that this season is not simply one of waiting for Christmas, but it is one where we are awaiting Christ's second coming.

As we enter into this season of Advent together as a faith family, it is a time for us to reflect on the reality of Christ's coming. We have the opportunity to rescue this season from commercialism and stress. The hidden treasure is allowing ourselves to assume a posture of expectant waiting as we prepare for Christmas, the celebration of our King.

## *Using this Guide*

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This guide contains four weeks of material, with brief devotional readings, reflections questions for you to complete individually or with a small group, daily Bible readings and resources for helping families discuss Advent together. The guide also includes a Christmas Eve experience for families. You will also find appendices with additional resources for your Advent preparation.

Traditionally there have been four "watchwords" associated with the four weeks of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each week's reading centers around one of those concepts. While the material is not especially extensive, we want to encourage you to delve into it deeply. Linger on the Scripture passages, pray through them, take time to journal your answers to the response questions, and ask God what he might be wanting to say to you through this time of reflection. Finally, there are additional Scripture Reading passage for Monday-Friday of each week to enrich your focus and devotion to Jesus during the Advent season

We know that there are always seemingly endless demands on our time, and that is never more true than during this season. However, we believe that God's gracious invitation during this Advent season is to slow down, and be fully present to Him and to others. God with us! We pray this might be a season where you are able to behold with fresh eyes the wonder of what God has done for us through the birth of His Son.

## *"God With Us, Us With Others"*

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This is the time of year when it seems like we blink and all of a sudden our schedule is filled with performances, parties, trips to see Christmas lights, and other holiday staples. Virtually everyone does this, whether they are followers of Jesus or not. Many of these Christmas-themed events can create an openness in those who don't yet know Christ that isn't present the rest of the year. This gives us the opportunity to help those far from God hear the story of Christ and experience God's love through His people.

In order to share God’s love with those around us, we must be present with them...to be living examples of God’s love in us and through us. We must create space in our calendar and maybe even space in our homes to welcome our neighbors and friends to celebrate the season with us.

During this time of Advent we want to be the church by sharing the love of Christ with those around us. We want to encourage you to think about what it would look like for you and those close to you (your immediate family, your small group, or a group of friends at Bridgeway) to demonstrate God’s life-transforming love in your neighborhoods and places of influence.

Take a look at Appendix A to get some practical ideas on how you can use one of our Advent Family devotionals to serve and share Jesus this Christmas. Just imagine our Body distributed throughout our community and region, connecting with those outside of God’s family, so that they can see God’s love in action and hear about the greatest treasure of all. Truly the Presence of Jesus demonstrated through us this Christmas.

## *Appendices*

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**Appendix A:** “God With Us, Us With Others” Tips

**Appendix B:** Additional Activities for Families during the Advent Season

**Appendix C:** Additional Scriptures for study and reflection

**Appendix D:** Recommended Resources

Acknowledgements:

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WEEK 1  
NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 4

# hope

*“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.”*

**Psalm 130:5-6**

*“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.”*

**John 14:1-4**

“We can never hope to capture the Christmas spirit and make it our own unless we understand that God is so much greater than we ever thought he was. We thought we knew all about God. The incarnation proved us wrong.”

**Dan Schaeffer**

“A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes...and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent.”

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

## *Are You Ready?*

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The countdown begins. 25...21...12...7...3...2...1...! There are so many things we wait for with excitement, counting weeks, days, hours and minutes till something special is here! The countdown reminds us that something is coming, and everyday builds hope for what that day will hold. Advent is about someone coming, about a special arrival. Just think of what it would sound like if we used that word: Flight 1120 from San Diego is now adventing. Or if we said, look, that car is adventing around the corner...

Everything we do at Christmastime hopefully becomes centered around an advent, the coming of baby Jesus. A time of hope, knowing that God stepped into our world and changed everything. But have you ever thought of this celebration as a celebration of another “coming”, a second advent? Another bookend to the hope we have? Have you ever thought of Second Christmas? Have you ever, would you ever, countdown with the same excitement and anticipation for the second coming of Jesus? Yes, it can be hard to countdown to a day that we don’t know exactly when it’s coming, but can you anticipate what it will be like?

We anticipate the pile of presents on Christmas morning. What a joyous time this can be for children and adults. We are given a pile of promises from Scripture telling us Jesus will return again. Not in a manger, not in Bethlehem, maybe

not even on a Silent Night. But he will come again. And when he comes again, everything you have done at Christmas – everything you do with him now – plays into that second coming. So we live between two advents – the first and second coming of Jesus. The second coming will complete what Jesus began with His first arrival.

## *Reflection*

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### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**

Paul proclaims that the Lord Jesus himself will come down (advent!) and everyone who is in Christ will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord Jesus in the air. We will be with the Lord forever! Talk about something better than any number of gifts we can receive here and now.

### **Read Zechariah 14:4-9**

On that day the Lord Jesus' feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem [same place where he was arrested]. It will be split in two from east to west. Then, the Lord our God will come. On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. Nothing like the Christmas we celebrate now. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem. The Lord will be king over the whole earth.

This second advent is an unknown, just like it wasn't expected the first time around. At the first advent very few were ready and very few understood. God inspires and draws the attention to a few people (shepherds, magi, Simeon, Anna, Elizabeth & Zechariah), people whose hearts were focused in a different way. They were preparing themselves for His coming.

I am getting excited about Christmas. It's our celebration of the wonderful reality that Jesus came down. He was born and gave us the amazing chance for a future past this life. I am even more excited about the second Christmas we will have, Jesus coming back again to this world. Do you think we'll celebrate it in heaven? How do you think the celebration will look and feel? Are you excited about the second advent?

## *Reflection Questions*

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What are your hopes for this Christmas season? Of your hopes, which one rises to the top of your desires?

How has the message of hope in the Gospel shaped how you celebrate the advent season? What do you believe God would like for you to do this Christmas season to help others celebrate Him?

## *Scripture Readings for the Week*

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**Monday:** Romans 15:4-13

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 40:1-11

**Wednesday:** Mark 13:33-37

**Thursday:** James 5:7-9


**Friday:** Revelation 7:9-17

## *Songs of the Season*

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*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*



WEEK 1

# FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Set aside 15-20 minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise to send a Savior. The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible. Optional material is a copy of the Jesus Storybook Bible.

## *Lighting of the Advent Candle*

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Have one member of the family light the first candle.

## *Scripture Reading*

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Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* **Isaiah 9:6**

*A little baby will be born. A Royal Son. His mommy will be a young girl who doesn't have a husband. His name will be Emmanuel, which means, “God has come to live with us.” He is one of King David's children's children's children. The Prince of Peace. Yes, someone is coming to rescue you! But he won't be who anyone expects. He will be a King! But, he won't live in a palace. And he won't have lots of money. He will be poor. And he will be a Servant. But this King will heal the whole world.*

**The Jesus Storybook Bible (Operation “No More Tears!”)**

## *Scripture Reading*

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**Have an adult read the commentary below.**

In the very beginning, God created a perfect world. In this perfect world God created, He made the sky and the land, the plants and all the animals. Then, God made Adam and Eve to care for His creation, to bear His image, and to be in relationship with Him. The world was full of peace and joy. Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect harmony with God.

**Ask:** What is the most perfect thing you can think of?

But, the perfect harmony that existed in the Garden, did not last long. Adam and Eve disobeyed the one instruction that God had given them and sin entered the world. As a consequence for their sin, the relationship between Adam and Eve and God was broken. God is perfect and Holy and He cannot be in the presence of sin. From that time, all humanity bears the consequence of their sin. But, God made Adam and Eve a promise before He sent them from the

Garden. He would send a Redeemer, a Savior, who would save them and us, from the punishment of sin. He would not allow His beloved creation to wander in darkness, but instead, would send Emmanuel, Jesus to live amongst us and take our punishment as His own.

**Ask:** What emotions do you think Adam and Eve felt when they realized what they had done? How do you feel when you are given a consequence for a bad choice?

After the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden, God's people tried to repair their relationship with God and often failed miserably. For thousands of years, God's people waited for their Redeemer to come and they began to have ideas of how God would rescue them. God would speak through His prophets over the years, giving clues to who the Savior would be and to remind His people that He would deliver them from sin. We see these prophecies throughout all of the Old Testament.

**Ask:** What are some ways Isaiah 9:6 describes the coming Savior?

God, through the Old Testament, revealed over 350 prophecies about Jesus, and He fulfilled every single one. Waiting was not always easy for God's people and they often cried out to God to deliver them, to save them, and to keep His promise to them. They often waited impatiently, with little faith that their Savior was coming. They doubted. They pleaded. They asked again and again. And then one day, their waiting was over and their Savior was born. Our HOPE had come.

## *Prayer*

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Ask one family member to pray and give thanks to God for his promise to send Jesus to rescue us from our sins.

## *Family Activity*

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As a family, discuss your favorite Christmas traditions. Make a list of favorite activities, such as going to look at Christmas lights, decorating the Christmas tree or decorating cookies that make the holiday season special. Using a calendar, make a schedule of activities you will do as a family and mark it on the calendar. Hang the calendar where your family can see it. Throughout the week build up the excitement and anticipation for each activity. Use those moments as a way to remind them about how the Israelites felt as they waited for their Savior.



WEEK 2  
DECEMBER 5 – 11

# peace

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”*

**Jesus (John 14:27)**

*“There’s a peace I’ve come to know, though my heart and flesh may fail. There’s an anchor for my soul, I can say, ‘it is well.’”*

**Chris Tomlin, I Will Rise**

*“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

**Paul (Romans 5:1)**

## *Not As The World Gives*

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The peace Jesus gives is different than the peace the world offers.

The peace we get from a reprieve from the busyness of life, or a vacation, or a promotion, or the completion of a big project, or an expertly thrown party is great, but it’s temporary. The pace of life always picks back up...you are home from your vacation before you know it, and things turn downhill at work. As quickly as the peace arrived, it’s packing up and leaving town.

There is a hunger in all of our hearts for lasting peace. It’s a hunger God has hard-wired into us. The trouble comes when many of us try to find or earn peace rather than receive it. Something inside us says lasting peace is just over the next mountain. But the promise of permanent peace proves to be an empty one. Peace the world offers—great as it may be—is always temporary and fragile. What the world gives, the world can take away. It seems during the Christmas season, especially, we find ourselves buried under the demands of the season, believing peace can only be found if those demands are met.

When Jesus gathered with his disciples towards the end of his life he offered a different perspective on peace. In describing the peace he offered his disciples he said, “Not as the world gives do I give to you.”

“Not as the world gives.”

There’s something different about the peace Jesus offers. The world doesn’t give it, so the world can’t take it away. Consider that for a moment, and then consider everything you’re doing to try to find peace. Jesus offers a peace the

world can't touch. He offers a peace you will never lose. It's a circumstance-transcending peace. It's a peace as readily available in the valley as it is on the mountaintop. It's otherworldly.

So take a moment and check your heart. Are you at peace? If not, why not? Is it possible you are believing peace can only be found once your to-do list is completed? If so, may you hear the words of Jesus reminding you of a peace that is different than the peace the world gives. Those words tell us peace isn't waiting at the end of your to-do list, but at the beginning. They tell us there is One who gives you an identity and tells you you're valuable before you even lift a finger.

He is the One who came from heaven to earth to be present with you. And this Christmas season, he wants to fill you with his Spirit of peace. If you will only receive that otherworldly peace it will be yours. And as Jesus is present with you, you will be able to be present with others as a messenger of His peace.

### *Reflection Questions*

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On a scale of 1-10, how peaceful would you say you are today? Why did you rate yourself the way you did? Spend some time in prayer asking Jesus to fill you with his otherworldly peace.

How can receiving the peace Jesus offers change your schedule this holiday season? How can it change the way you approach the stuff on your schedule?

### *Scripture Readings for the Week*

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**Monday:** Colossians 1

**Tuesday:** John 14

**Wednesday:** Ephesians 2

**Thursday:** Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:12-17

**Friday:** Luke 2

### *Songs of the Season*

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*Silent Night*

*While Shepherds Kept Their Watch by Night*



WEEK 2

## FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Set aside 10-20 minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise to send a Savior.

The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible. Optional additional materials are listed under the Family Activity.

### *Lighting of the Advent Candle*

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Have one member of the family light last week's candle and a second candle.

### *Scripture Reading*

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Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. **Luke 2:3-7***

And there, in the stable, amongst the chickens and the donkeys and the cows, in the quiet of the night, God gave the world his wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. His baby son. Mary and Joseph wrapped him up to keep him warm. They made a soft bed of straw and used the animals feeding rough as his cradle. And they gazed in wonder at God's Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus, "Emmanuel" which means, "God has come to live with us." Because of course, he had.

#### **Jesus Storybook Bible (He's Here!)**

*note: As time allows, read the entire story.*

### *Scripture Reading*

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**Have an adult read the commentary below.**

Last week we talked about God's promise to send a Redeemer. He promised to send a Savior to save His people.. There was never any doubt that God would keep His promise!

The waiting was finally over and God fulfilled the promise He had made in the Garden.

**Ask:** When is the last time you had to wait for something? On a scale of 1-10, how hard was it to wait?

**Print the lyrics to the song *O Holy Night* and play your favorite version.** As it is playing, spend time as a family reflecting on the night Jesus was born and why God sent His only Son. Refer to John 3:16

### *Reflection*

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We just heard a song about the night Jesus was born and how it was holy. Holy means to be set apart or sacred. These are two words that show how incredibly different this night was in the history of the world. As we anticipate Christmas, it is important to remember that without the birth of Christ, we would have nothing to celebrate. God broke into a

cold, starry night, to an unsuspecting group of people, in a stable full of animals. Let's think about what that night might have felt like...

**Read Luke 2:3-7 again.**

**Ask:** Have you ever been camping or slept outside? What were some of the sounds you remember?

Joseph and Mary had traveled a long way to be counted for the census. They were from Nazareth and had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted. Yet, when they arrived there was no comfy room in a hotel to lay their heads. The best they could find was with the animals. Even though they were set apart from those in the inn, Jesus' birth was just as God had planned. God had told His people that the Savior would be through King David's lineage and that He would be born in Bethlehem. On a cold, starry night, in a stable full of animals, the Son of God, the Savior, was born. We often think of where Jesus was born, but we don't usually think of what He left to be born to His creation. Jesus left the majesty of Heaven, ceaseless angelic praise, setting aside His rights to Divine Glory and joyfully submitting Himself to His Father's authority and commands. He willingly took off His impressive robes and put on the flesh of a helpless baby. He left the Glory of Heaven to be born amongst dirty, smelly animals because of His love for you and for me.

**Ask:** When you hear about the night that Jesus was born, does it sound like the birth of a King?

The people had other ideas of how they thought their Savior would come even though, God had been giving them hints. They were looking for a mighty, warrior King to come and rescue them from all their enemies. Yet, God had another plan, a better plan, to rescue them from themselves. God fulfilled His promise and Emmanuel, God with us, was born.

And changed the world forever.

## *Prayer*

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Say a prayer thanking God for having a better plan and for sending Jesus to save us from our sin.

## *Family Activity*

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### **DIY Wooden Nativity**

Wooden Peg People found at your local craft supply store or online

Round Wooden Ball (Optional for animals)

Acrylic Paints and assortment of paintbrushes

Black Permanent Marker.

Tonight you are going to create a one of a kind family Nativity set which includes Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, the three Wise Men, a Shepherd and an Angel. You can also use round wooden balls to create a sheep and a donkey, which is optional. Depending on the size of your family, you can either create one or have each child make their own. These can be very simple or as elaborate as you want them to be!

Have each person paint the base of each peg person. After it dries, add additional layers or paint accordingly. Use permanent markers to draw on faces. For the optional animals, paint the round ball white and draw on a sheep face. Paint another wooden ball grey and draw on the face.

As you are painting talk about each of the individuals and what they say and how they felt on the night Jesus was born.



WEEK 3  
DECEMBER 12 – 18

# joy

*“You’re the joy joy joy lighting my soul  
The joy joy joy making me whole  
Though I’m broken, I am running  
Into your arms of love”*

**Rend Collective, Joy**

*“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that  
will be for all the people.”*

**Luke 2:10**

*“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you,  
and that your joy may be full.”*

**John 15:5**

## *Joyful Memories*

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You’re right in the center of another year, another season of rejoicing. You know what to expect, you’ve grown up with a pile of memories, you know the songs, and you can recall the many pictures.

You remember some years more than others (whether good/bad) and the rest of your year goes on. I think it’s amazing to recognize thousands of Jesus’ birthday celebrations have been celebrated across the world, and hundreds of millions of people experience Christmas...reflecting on the deep and joyful pictures it gives.

St Francis of Assisi, moved by the joyful reality of Advent organized one of the first live nativities in 1223 A.D. Francis celebrated the nativity of the infant Jesus with great devotion. He set up a manger, hay, an ox, and a donkey to the place he appointed. The people were assembled, the forest resounded with their voices of psalms of praise, and they streamed together from various places with candles and torches as requested by Francis to light up the night. It was just as the first Christmas night, lit by a star. St. Francis stood before the manger, full of devotion and belief, bathed in tears and radiant with joy. The Holy Gospel was read aloud by Francis. Then, he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King. Unable to utter His name because of the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem.

But let us go to the original story, where we see how the eyewitnesses celebrated. Let’s see once again what they experienced:

- A baby (John the Baptist) leaps in the womb at the voice of the mum bearing Jesus,

- An elderly priest (Zechariah) becomes a prophet of redemption,
- A teenager (Mary) is filled with worship & joy – perfectly ready to obey God and embrace his plan ,
- Shepherds spread the word about what they were told about this child (and everyone’s amazed),
- Angel choirs rejoice - The angels said something to those shepherds that we can only now see in its truth: They said “We’re here to announce a great & joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide. A Savior has been born... And then the famous singing: “Peace to all men & women on earth...”
- Wealthy kings of the orient respond as giddy children, “For when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Matthew 2:11).

Look at how the event was celebrated in wonder by these true insiders. Think about the millions of people who encounter this Advent event. Do they after all celebrate the true reason and message of advent? How do your affections and focus stir today for the coming of Jesus?

Christmas should be alive for you. It is the true story for Christians of Jesus Christ being born in you. This a story worth celebrating every day because your hope is wonderfully complete. You can rejoice with greater excitement and passion... because he has changed you!

The continual the work of Christmas is to make that love and joy tangible. Howard Thurman describes:

*When the star in the sky is gone,  
 When the Kings and Princes are home,  
 When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
 The work of Christmas begins:  
 To find the lost  
 To heal the broken  
 To feed the hungry  
 To release the prisoner  
 To teach the nations  
 To bring Christ to all  
 To make music in the heart.  
 Amen*

## ***Reflection Questions***

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What has made Christmas most memorable & special to you? What flavors and special items come out this time of year that add to your celebrations?

What are some of your best memories from being with those you love? What is one way you can share the joy of Christmas to someone who needs to experience God’s love this week?

## *Scripture Readings for the Week*

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**Monday:** Psalm 21

**Tuesday:** John 15:1-11

**Wednesday:** Psalm 28

**Thursday:** Hebrews 12

**Friday:** Isaiah 12

## *Songs of the Season*

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*Joy to the World*

*Go! Tell it on the Mountain*

# FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Set aside 15-20 minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise to send a Savior.

The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible. For the activity, you can use a jar and strips of paper. Optional material is a copy of the *Jesus Storybook Bible*.

## *Lighting of the Advent Candle*

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Have one member of the family light the third candle, as well as, the first and second candle.

## *Scripture Reading*

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Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.'" And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

**Luke 2:8-14**

*Standing in front of them was a huge warrior of light, blazing in the darkness. "Don't be afraid of me!" the bright shining man said. "I haven't come to hurt you. I've come to bring you happy news for everyone everywhere. Today, in David's town, in Bethlehem, God's Son has been born! You can go and see him. He is sleeping in a manger."*

*Behind the angel they saw a strange glowing cloud—except it wasn't a cloud, it was angels... troops and troops of angels, armed with light! And they were singing a beautiful song: "Glory to God! To God be Fame and Honor and all our Hoorays!"*

***Jesus Storybook Bible (The Light of the World)***

## *Scripture Reading*

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**Have an adult read the commentary below.**

The overflowing feeling the angels expressed to the shepherds was pure JOY! Those inside joys can't help but come out with smiles, shouts, or even hoorays! Joy is meant to be shared and is never intended to be contained because we want others to experience joy, as well.

**Ask:** Can you remember a time when you were so full of joy that you wanted to shout about it? What are some things that bring you joy?

When God sent His son to earth, the angels could not contain their awe for God. They were simply amazed at the birth



of Jesus and they responded in praise and adoration. Their joy was so full that the only thing they could do was sing, “Glory to God! May He be Honored!” The angels filled the night sky and chose to declare the birth of the Savior to shepherds tending their flock. At that time, shepherds were not well thought of and people often mocked them, but they are who God chose to receive the first birth announcement of His Son.

**Ask:** What are some ways you have seen God act that make you want to sing for joy and share it with others?

God cares deeply for us and He created us to be joyful. Joy is how we think, an attitude or a mindset that we choose in all circumstances. We can have joy because we believe the truth of God’s Word and that He is for us and with us. Even on hard days, we can still have joy because of our relationship with Jesus. We can be joyful because Jesus died for our sins and offers us the gift of forgiveness! We are forgiven and can have a growing relationship with Jesus. That brings us great joy that we can choose to set our minds on each day. Our joy starts in the person of Jesus, knowing about him, living the way He did and choosing to follow Him always!

Seek Jesus. Love Jesus. Give all your days to Jesus. Show and tell Jesus. This is the journey to joy. YAY!

## *Prayer*

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Have a family member offer a prayer of joy for all God has done for your family.

## *Song*

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As a family, sing or listen to *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  
And heaven and nature sing  
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  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat the sound joy*

## *Family Activity*

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As a family, you will create a family JOY jar. Discuss with your kids that one way to be full of joy is to remember your blessings. Have each person write things they love or enjoy about other family members, ways they see God provide for them, and ways they see Him at work. Place them in the jar. These can be added to and read when you need to be reminded of God’s faithfulness and great blessings toward your family throughout the year.



WEEK 4  
DECEMBER 19 – 25

# love

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”

**Timothy Keller**

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son. Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.”

**The Message (John 1:14)**

“Though an infant now we view him,  
He shall fill his Father’s throne,  
Gather all the nations to him;  
Every knee shall then bow down”

**James Montgomery, *Angels from the Realms of Glory***

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins...When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

**Matthew 1:18-21, 24-25**

## *Loving Christmas*

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Christmas is really all about love.

Not the love of Christmas lights, or parties, or gifts, or eggnog, or ugly sweaters (as great as those things are!).

Christmas is about the One with the greatest capacity to love of any being in the universe putting the full force of His love into action. It’s the author of history writing himself into the story as the hero. It’s the maker of the stars moving into the neighborhood. It’s the One who loves most coming for the ones He loves most. It’s a love vast enough to cover

the entire world and personal enough to change your life.

And this love, the love of God we celebrate at Christmastime, is meant to do a few things for us.:

**It's meant to fill us.** God knows us to the bottom, but loves us to the moon and back. Take a moment to ponder that truth. The One who knows everything about you loves you the most. Isn't that what we all want, to be fully known and fully loved? The knowledge of this sort of love is meant to fill our hearts so we no longer need to scramble through life looking for love. Instead, as God has loved us, so we can love others.

**It's meant to transform us.** It is impossible to encounter great love and remain unchanged. As we look to the Christmas story and get a glimpse of God's radical love, His Spirit changes our hearts. He burns away the part of our hearts that wants to go our own way, and gives us the desire to walk the path of joyful obedience to His will. This love helps us to see our greatest delight is found walking in the shadow of our Father.

**It's meant to inspire us.** The world Jesus was born into was different than the world we inhabit today in a million ways. But it was the same in one crucial way: It was a broken world desperate for a touch of the Father's love. And when Jesus arrived, He changed lives in a way no one else has before or since. We might not be Jesus in the flesh, but we are His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). As His ambassadors, we're called to receive His love and represent His love. We're called to let the radical love we've experienced from Jesus overflow in radical acts of love and kindness for a world desperate for the Father's touch.

So as you celebrate this season, may you look to our Savior and see love. May you see His love for the world, and love for you. And may you be filled, transformed, and inspired by His love so that you might represent Him with joy.

## *Reflection Questions*

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Have you been filled, transformed, and inspired by God's love? Spend time reflecting on the love God reveals to us at Christmas, and ask him to let His love change your heart.

What is one tangible way you can demonstrate the love of Jesus to someone who needs a touch of the Father's love this Christmas season?

## *Scripture Readings for the Week*

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**Monday:** John 13:1-20, 31-35

**Tuesday:** Matthew 1:18-1:23

**Wednesday:** Romans 12

**Thursday:** Genesis 1-2

**Friday:** Psalm 25

## *Songs of the Season*

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*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*  
*Angels We Have Heard on High*



WEEK 4

## FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Set aside 10-20 minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise to send a Savior. The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible.

### *Lighting of the Advent Candle*

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**Have one member of the family light the candles from the first three weeks and a fourth candle.**

### *Scripture Reading*

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Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."* **Matthew 2:1-2**

*They found the baby King. The three men knelt before the little King. They took off their rich royal turbans and gleaming golden crowns. They bowed their noble heads to the ground and gave him their sparkling treasures. The journey that had begun so many centuries before had led three wise men here. To a little town. To a little house. To a little child. To the king God had promised David all those years before. But this child was a new kind of king. Though he was the Prince of Heaven, he had become poor. Though he was the Mighty God, he had become a helpless baby. This King hadn't come to be the boss. He had come to be a servant.*

#### **Jesus Storybook Bible (The King of All Kings)**

If time allows, read the entire story The King of All Kings.

*After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.* **Matthew 2:9-11**

### *Reflection*

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**Have an adult read the commentary below.**

First shepherds, then, the Wise Men from a far land! God continues to reveal that the Savior He was sending, His son, Jesus, was not what the Israelites were expecting! The warrior King they were looking for to rescue them from all their enemies came as a baby to a poor, teenage girl, in a stable full of stinky animals, whose first visitors were shepherds, the outcasts of society. On the same night that God unleashed His angel army to declare the birth of His son, He also put a bright star in the sky to do the same. The Wise Men, who spent their nights studying the stars from far away in the land to the east, knew this star was different, just like the Savior whose birth it was declaring. The Israelites, thought their Savior would come and rescue them, but God had bigger plans. His plan all along was to offer His presence and salvation to every tribe and nation. His appearance to the Shepherds and the lengths He went to draw the Magi to Jesus, reveal the heart of God and His amazing mercy and grace to all people.

**Ask:** When have you expected one thing, but got something totally different?

The Wise Men first went to the palace of Herod to find the new King they had traveled two years to reach. Where else would a new King be? Yet, they did not find Jesus in the palace, or in the stable where he was born so they kept following the star that had brought them so far. They found the toddler King, living with Mary and Joseph, in a small house outside of Bethlehem.

What did they do when they saw Jesus? They fell to their knees and in a sacred moment, they worshipped him. The wise men were not Jewish men, but they were led by a star, by God, to find the Messiah. God's desire is that all would know Him, His saving love and His unending grace and forgiveness. And just like the Wise Men, one day, every knee will bow and worship Him.

## ***Prayer***

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Have one family member say a prayer to praise God and pray for the nations to know Him and come to Him for salvation and forgiveness.

## ***Song***

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**As a family, sing or listen to *O Come All Ye Faithful*.**


*O come all ye faithful joyful and triumphant  
Oh come ye O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him born the King of angels;  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*Sing choirs of angels sing in exultation  
sing all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God in the highest:  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.  
Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

## ***Family Activity***

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Spend time this week looking at a map or globe. Have each child choose a country. Talk about what life looks like for children in that country or in that specific culture. As a family, take time to pray for the countries your children chose and that many would come to know Jesus for salvation.



CHRISTMAS EVE

## FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Set aside 10 minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise to send a Savior. The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible.

### *Lighting of the Advent Candle*

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Have one person light the candles from the first four weeks, remembering together what you've learned about God's faithfulness during Advent. **After reading Luke 2:1-20, have another person light the fifth candle—the Christ candle.**

### *Scripture Reading*

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Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

*When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”*

**LUKE 1:1-20**

## *Song*

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**As a family, sing or listen to *Silent Night* together.**

*Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child  
Holy infant, so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace*

*Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!*

*Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth. Jesus, Lord at thy birth.*

*Silent night, holy night  
Wondrous star lend thy light  
With the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!*

## *Prayer*

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Have one person pray, thanking God for His incredible faithfulness in sending Jesus to save His people from their sins.

## *“God With Us, Us With Others”*

The Advent season is like no other in terms of openness to hear the story of Jesus. We can sometimes depend on a church program or event what we can participate in as individuals and families as ambassadors of Jesus. If we are not careful, we can drift into “doing church” instead of being the church. This season, we can be the church in our neighborhoods and community. We have the privilege of helping those who are far from God find joy in Jesus this season. Let’s not miss this opportunity. It only takes a willingness to be used by God along with simple, intentional steps to open up our schedule for a moment through “God With Us, Us With Others”.

“God With Us, Us With Others” is God’s invitation to us to be on mission with Him by declaring the “good news of great joy for all the world.” We all have neighbors, extended family, coworkers, and friends who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They might know the facts of the Christmas story but not know the joy and freedom of a connecting with the One who came into our time and space to save us.

“God With Us, Us With Others” is designed to be a simple concept by making time in your home to relate with others, relax, share a meal, and connect. Even better, you are encouraged to come together with your small group, ministry team, or other Christ-followers to throw a party.

In Luke 5:27-32, Matthew, a tax collector, decided to follow Jesus. And upon making this exciting decision, the first thing he did, was to throw a big feast (or party) and invite all of his other friends who were also tax collectors over to his house. So, with that same heart, you can think of this as hosting our own “Matthew Party”. A get-together (or party) with the purpose of getting to know those around you, and in love, introducing them to Jesus. The invitation list can consist of both people that are still far from God and Christ-followers.

Then, whether as a individual, nuclear family, or partnering with others, use one of the Advent Guide devotions or family experiences as your outline for the evening along with food and conversation.

Here are some other tips as you plan your “God With Us, Us With Others” get-together:

- Put a time on your calendar now. What gets scheduled gets done and the sooner you put it on the calendar the sooner you will begin to make the invitations to others along with other planning other details.
- If there will be children at the gathering, read through the current week’s Family Experience and decide how to best use the ideas in this experience for a fun evening as you share the story of Jesus.
- Have good food.
- Another simple idea, is to have a Happy Birthday Jesus Party including a cake and candles, singing happy birthday, and read stories in Scripture that tell about the birth of Jesus.
- Combine other fun things you typically do during this Christmas season as you gather with others: movies, games, etc.
- A great next step from your Advent Invitation, is to invite friends and family to Bridgeway’s Christmas Eve services. Service times are 1:00pm, 2:30pm, 4:00pm and 5:30pm.



## *Additional Family Activities*

The hope and goal for believing parents in raising their children is to point them to the gospel of Jesus continually in hopes that God will save them. This can seem like an overwhelming task at times. Where do we start? What do we do? How do we point our children to Jesus in the everyday rhythm of life?

To help answer these questions, we ask parents to consider three areas of life as they think about family discipleship: time, moments and milestones.

**TIME** – Create intentional time in the rhythm of your family’s life to think about, talk about and live out the gospel.

**MOMENTS** – Capture and leverage moments in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations.

**MILESTONES** – Recognize and remember significant spiritual milestones of God’s work in the life of your family.

In an effort to help families focus on time, moments, and milestones during the Advent season, we have given additional activities in each of these areas.

Activities to help you create intentional time:

- Make a set of Christmas ornaments to remind you of the prophecies of Jesus’ birth and their fulfillments.
- Spend time imagining what the “glory of the Lord” shining down on the shepherds was like. Draw what you think it looked like. Or turn off the lights and recreate it with flashlights, candles, props, and loud singing.
- Make a Christmas card for someone who does not love and trust Jesus. Wish them a merry Christmas and tell them that Jesus came to save sinners!
- Consider a way your family can serve in the community during the Advent season. Here are a few ideas:
  - Adopting an angel and shopping for them together.
  - Visiting an elderly care center and singing carols for the residents.
  - Serving a meal at a homeless assistance shelter.
  - Taking dinner to someone you know who is lonely or in need.
- Create luminaries for your front yard, sidewalk or porch to remind your family of the star God put in the sky to tell the Magi of Jesus’ birth. Take paper lunch bags and draw or punch out a star on each bag. Fill the bottom of the bags with sand to keep them from blowing away. Place a battery-operated candle inside.
- Play hide-and-seek and talk about how Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Thank God for sending Jesus.

Ideas for capturing teachable **moments**:

- Give hints about Christmas gifts that your children will be receiving to build anticipation in their hearts. Remind them of the “hints” God gives us in Scripture of what Jesus’ birth and second coming will be like. There is no greater gift than loving and trusting Jesus!
- Have a kid-friendly nativity set for your children to play with. As they play, retell the Christmas narrative.
- As you’re out shopping, look for opportunities to remind your children that all material things are temporary and will ultimately never satisfy them. The only lasting hope is Jesus.
- When you see Christmas lights, talk about which lights and houses are your favorites and why. We are attracted to lights because we are made for the light. Talk with your children about how these lights remind us

of Jesus, the best and perfect Light of the World.

- If carolers come to your house, remind your children of the angels who appeared to the shepherds proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' birth.

Ways to recognize and remember **milestones**:

Milestones are significant moments in the life of a family. Not every family will have a milestone to remember this Advent season. If your family does, take time to recognize the work that God is doing in your family and worship Him.

- Celebrating a new family member – If another person joined your family this year, there is much to celebrate. Families grow through the birth or adoption of a child, marriage or taking in a person who needs love and support. Often, when a new person joins a family, they do not have many Christmas ornaments to add to the family tree. Make or purchase a special ornament for your new family member to recognize and remember God's goodness to bring you together.
- First Christmas without a family member – Celebrating can be hard when your family is grieving the loss of a loved one. Take time to help your child remember and talk about that special person if they need to. Help them to remember the good times and memories they have about that person. If your loved one was a believer, talk about the beautiful reality that they are now with Jesus. Hang an ornament or put out a special decoration that reminds your family of that person. Be honest with God about your sadness and ask Him to make your hearts joyful again.

## *Additional Scriptures for Study & Reflection*

Advent is about Christ and His two comings—the first in humiliation, the second in glory; the first in condescension, the second in exaltation; the first for forgiveness, the second for judgment. The passages below speak to the person and work of Jesus in His first coming and the promise of His second. May the Lord strengthen, encourage, awaken and restore us as we behold Him in His Word.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.  
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins. **Isaiah 11:1-5**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”  
(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. **Matthew 1:18-25**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:1-5; 14**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on

earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him. **Colossians 1:15–22**

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:1–11**

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. **Hebrews 1:1–4**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” **Revelation 21:1–5**

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. **Revelation 22:17**

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! **Revelation 22:20**