



THE SEASON OF
ADVENT

USING THIS GUIDE

We designed this devotional as a way to help you think about Advent themes in the weeks leading up to Christmas. There is one reading for each week of Advent. Choose a specific time each week when you will do the devotion. For example, it could be with your family after dinner on Sunday nights or with your missional community during your weekly gatherings. Each devotion contains a passage of Scripture, a brief reflection on that passage, sample prayers, and a Christmas hymn/carol to sing together.

LOOK FOR LINKS TO SCRIPTURE AND VIDEOS - the text will be UNDERLINED-

Each week also coincides with one of the Christmas stories from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. As an additional way for children to interact with the story, you can find coloring pages for each week on our website: You may want to display these finished coloring pages in your home and continue talking with your kids about the stories you've read or send them to friends and family as a way to remember and celebrate the Advent season.

Most of all, we pray you encounter Jesus in a new way this Advent season and the hope, peace, joy, and love He brings.

Joy to the world; the Lord has come!

HOPE

God's people had been hoping for and expecting a king for a long time. The Lord had given them a promise through the prophet Isaiah long before Jesus was born: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah also foretold that the Messiah—the One who would save God's people—would be a relative of a man named Jesse, the father of King David (Isaiah 11).

Let's look at some passages from the New Testament that show how Jesus was the One the Lord promised to send.

BIBLE PROJECT - HOPE

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26–38 & Matthew 1:1–17

For families with kids, read "[Get Ready!](#)" from [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) pages 170–175.

DISCUSS

God is always faithful to His promises! He is completely trustworthy and will always do what He says He will do. No matter how dark our situation may be, we can have hope knowing our Heavenly Father is in control and will fulfill His promises. In our sin we are tempted not to believe God and to put our hope and trust in someone or something other than Him.

Where do we need hope in our lives?

What does it look like this week to believe God's promises and hope in Him?

PRAYER TO STEP INTO ADVENT

Merciful God,
always with us, always coming:
We confess we do not know
how to prepare for your Advent.
We have forgotten how to hope in miracles;
we have ignored the promise of your kingdom;
we get distracted by all the busyness of this
season. Forgive us, God.
Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds,
the intelligent courage of the Magi,
and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph,
that we may journey with them to Bethlehem
and find the good news of a child born for us.
Now, in the quiet of our hearts,
we ask you to make us ready for His coming.
Amen.

SONG: O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

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

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

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of Hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave.

Chorus
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.



PEACE

So far this Advent season, we have learned God is faithful, and because of Him there is always HOPE.

This week, our word is PEACE. Here is the dictionary definition of peace:

“freedom from disturbance, quiet and tranquility.”

The world is a tumultuous place; there is strife and struggle everywhere—between friends and enemies alike. We need someone to bring peace to our hearts, minds, lives, and world. One night long ago, some unsuspecting shepherds were the first to hear the great news of God bringing exactly what we need.

BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO - [PEACE](#)

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:8-21

For families w/ kids, [“The Light of the Whole World” from The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) pages 184-191.

DISCUSS

Where in your life do you struggle? What part of your life needs peace?

Is there tension, anger, or bitterness between you and anyone?

How should Jesus' coming to bring peace change your situation?

How can you be someone who brings the peace of Christ to the places you go and the people you meet this week?

PRAYER

IN = Pray that God would provide an inner stillness and security in His love for us that withstands the chaos and turmoil raging both inside and out through a growing knowledge of God's work for us in Jesus.

OUT = Pray that the peace of Christ would break in to your city; that God would restore families; that God would bring peace to the children in your city who don't have families and would give them families; that God would bring reconciliation among different people groups.

UP = Pray that we would continually seek peace with God by confessing sin, repenting, and receiving Jesus anew.

SONG: SILENT NIGHT

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,
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.



JOY

What brings you the most joy in your life? What is it that brings a smile to your face whenever you think about it?

God sending His Son Jesus was and is incredible news of great joy. The King of the universe coming to earth was a big deal, and it brought joy to many people who saw what God was doing.

BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO - JOY

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:1-12

For families with kids, read "The King of All Kings" in The Jesus Storybook Bible pages 192-199.

DISCUSS

When the world was lost and without hope, God sent Jesus to find us and bring us joy! Everything He does is for His glory and our joy. The wise men rejoiced when the star led them to where Jesus was. Knowing who He was, they brought gifts to Him and worshipped Him.

How does Jesus give you joy?

What gift can you give Him this week as a way of worshipping Him?

PRAYER

IN = Pray that your church family would become an increasingly joyful community in the face of hardships, pain, doubt, and celebrations; that in the midst of life circumstances, we would have joy in the nearness of God made possible by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

OUT = Pray that we would allow our joy to be expressed in words and deeds of gratitude, celebration, and giving.

UP = Pray that gifts would always lead us to joy in the Giver rather than the gifts themselves and that our joy would be constantly turned to praise.

SONG: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;

With the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!



LOVE

God's children had been disobedient. They had gone against what He wanted for them, and so they were lost and lonely. As we saw the first week, though, there is always hope because God is always faithful. Not only is God faithful, He also loves. He is so loving that He actually *is* love (1 John 4:8). God's people had disobeyed and had run away from Him, but in love, God sent His Son to rescue them.

BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO - [LOVE](#)

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18–25 & Luke 2:1–7

For families with kids, read "[He's Here!](#)" from [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) pages 176–183.

DISCUSS

What do you do for those you love? How do you respond when they are unloving toward you?

Consider these well-known words of Jesus from the Gospel of John:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16–17).

Jesus came to save that which had been lost! That is great news!

How can we live this week to celebrate and honor what God has done for us in Jesus?

PRAYER

IN = Pray that we would be emptied of self-love by receiving God's passionate love for us in Christ, and that this love would banish feelings of unworthiness, shame, self-hatred, and performance-oriented actions to earn love.

OUT= Pray that we would love one another in our missional communities because God first loved us and showed us what love means and that we would love our neighbors.

UP= Pray that we would love God with our entire being: intellect, emotion, bodies, time, relationships, and talents.

SONG: O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

Chorus:

*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, all glory in the highest;

Chorus

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace Thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly?

Chorus



CHRISTMAS DAY

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The King has Come! He's here! Isn't it wonderful news? Our hearts were just like the world—dark, joyless, and hopeless—but Jesus has broken through and brought HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE to the world and to us! This is a day to celebrate! Let's read from the Gospel of John as we rejoice over Jesus' arrival.

BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO - [LUKES GOSPEL](#)

SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-17

For families with children, read "[Heaven Breaks Through](#)" in [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) pages 200–207.

DISCUSS

The King has indeed come! Jesus came to rescue and redeem His people for God's glory and for our joy! He is the light of the world, giving HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE to those who believe in Him.

How has He given you those things? What are the gifts that God has given you through Jesus?

How can you be someone who God uses to bring those gifts to others?

PRAYER

Father, Your Son is an incredible gift of hope, peace, joy, and love. We do not deserve any of it, but you give freely. Thank you for your mercy and the glorious gift of your grace. May we live in a way that celebrates your goodness and testifies of your love.

SONG: 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 nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

He rules 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.

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 sounding joy.

