



ADVENT



ADVENT

INTRODUCTION

Advent means “coming” and is a season to remember and celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ. It is a time to reflect on the story of Jesus’ birth and His incarnation into the world. For Christians in particular, it is a time to remember that Jesus will come again to establish His eternal kingdom, where unending peace with God is promised to all who have placed their faith in Christ.

It begins with a period of waiting and longing in hope. Advent candles are lit to signify that the hope of the Church is built on the coming light of Jesus. This season ends on Christmas Day with the lighting of the Christ candle.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The goal of this book is for us to turn our hearts toward Christ during this season as a family. Take time each day to gather together and read the day’s scripture, discuss the questions, and pray together. Feel free to sing together as well. Use this resource however you would like, but we encourage you to make it a regular family rhythm as we look to Christmas.

EXPLANATION OF THE ADVENT WREATH

As you prepare your hearts for Christmas, consider how you can decorate your home to help your family focus on the birth of Jesus. Which decorations direct your family to Jesus and which decorations distract you from Him?

Many families choose to celebrate this season with an Advent wreath. You can make a wreath with your children out of real or plastic evergreen branches. Then place five candle holders in the center of the wreath. Traditionally, three of the candles are purple, one is pink, and one is white. During the first week of Advent, light one of the purple candles to celebrate the hope we have in Christ. The following week, light another one of the purple candles to remember the peace with God that Jesus made possible for us through the gift of His life. The third week, light the pink candle of joy to celebrate how happy we are that Jesus came into our lives. On the fourth week, before Christmas Day, light the final purple candle to remember God's incredible love for us. Light the white Christ candle on Christmas Day to remind your family that Christmas is all about Christ!

WEEK 1



HOPE

INTRODUCTION

Each week of Advent draws our attention to one aspect of our celebration, represented by the candles in the Advent wreath. During the first week, our hearts are drawn to **HOPE**. We enter into a period of waiting. Waiting for the celebration of Christmas Day as the Israelites waited for so long for the Messiah to come. Consider fasting from something during this season. The small sacrifice will tune your hearts to eager anticipation to celebrate the coming of our Lord. As we wait, we are reminded that we too are waiting for the second Advent, when Jesus will return and make all things new.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” **John 1:9**

WEEKLY FAMILY ACTIVITIES

DARK DINNER

Turn all the lights off for dinner. See how easy it is for the family to eat their meals. Then after 5 minutes, light a candle and place it in the middle of the table. Was it easier to eat in the dark or in the light? How is that candle like Jesus?

LIGHT POSTER

Make a list of all of the places and/or people that you can be a light to as a family. Leave the piece of paper out all week so you can each add to it throughout the week. Put the paper in a place where you can pull it out and be reminded of where you can be a light.

READ

Isaiah 7:14

DISCUSS

What do you think hope is? Why do we have hope?

What is a prophecy? How did this one come true?

Talk about how amazing it is that Isaiah prophesied the birth of Jesus the Messiah over 700 years before he was born!

PRAY

As we start this advent journey together, Lord fill us with anticipation. We long for you to make your home with us. Lord open our hearts to you this advent season. Amen.

DAY 2

MONDAY

READ

Isaiah 9:2

DISCUSS

What are you hoping for this advent season?

What does this verse mean when it refers to a “light”?

Have you ever been in a dark room and flipped on the light? How did it feel?

Why does Jesus being the light of the world bring us hope?

PRAY

Jesus you are our light. You help us to see who we are and who God is. Light up our home today. Help us to see each other the way you see us. Amen.

READ

Isaiah 9:6-7

DISCUSS

Do you have family nicknames for one another? What are they?

Make a list of all of the names of Jesus in these verses.

Which of these names means the most to you right now?

What do you think happens when we put our hope in Him?

PRAY

Jesus you are the King. You are in control even when things seem out of control. Rule over our family today. We submit to your reign. Amen.

DAY 4

WEDNESDAY

READ

Micah 5:2-4

DISCUSS

What does a shepherd do? How does he care for his sheep?

How is Jesus like a shepherd?

How does Jesus lead us and guide us?

PRAY

Jesus, you are our shepherd. You lead us and guide us in the path of life. You protect us from wandering. Guide our family today. We trust in your guidance. Amen.

READ

Matthew 1:1-17

DISCUSS

How far back can you name your ancestors?

Are there any names in this list that you recognize?
What do you know about them?

What does the lineage of Jesus say about God's promises? Can we put our trust in Jesus?

Is there anything we need to trust Jesus with today?

PRAY

Jesus, you are the son of Abraham, and the son of David. You carry the legacy of faithful men and women, fulfilling what they hoped for. We are thankful for the legacy you have given our family. Thank you Jesus for the faithful men and women who have invested in us. Amen.

DAY 6

FRIDAY

READ

Matthew 1:18-21

DISCUSS

Parents, tell your kids the story of their birth.

How do you think Mary and Joseph were feeling about the birth of Jesus?

Why do you think the angel told Joseph to “not be afraid”?

How can we put our hope in Jesus when we are afraid?

PRAY

Jesus, you are the only savior. Thank you for coming to live the life we could not live, die the death we should have died, rising, and reigning with the Father. We put our trust in you. Amen.

READ

Matthew 1:22-25

DISCUSS

Who do you want with you when you feel scared?
Happy? Nervous?

What does the name “Immanuel” mean?

How do you feel knowing that God is with us?

What were some things your family experienced this year that reminded you it was good to know that God was with you?

PRAY

Jesus, you are the fulfillment of God’s promise to make a home with us. You came as a little baby, with needs like us, fully dependent on your mother and father. As children look to their parents, so we look to you. Meet the needs of our family today. Fill our home with your Peace. Amen

WEEK 2



PEACE

INTRODUCTION

This week we will turn our hearts to **PEACE**. We rest in the angels' proclamation of "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14, NIV). We celebrate the peace and salvation Jesus brings through his death on the cross. As we continue to wait for Christ's return we anticipate the peace He will bring as He makes all things as they should be. May you focus your hearts and minds on Christ, and may "the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:26, NIV).

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" **Isaiah 9:6**

WEEKLY FAMILY ACTIVITY

PEACEFUL PLACES

As a family, make a list of places you think are peaceful. Some ideas might be sitting on a chair at the beach, taking a walk through the woods, or sitting under a blanket while reading a book. Talk about why these places feel peaceful. If you're able to, consider creating one of these peaceful places at your home or going to a nearby peaceful place from your list. What's the difference between a temporary peaceful place and the everlasting peace of God?

NAMES OF GOD POSTER

Draw a picture for each of the different names of God. What colors do you use for each name and why? What do you feel when you think of Jesus as the Prince of Peace?

READ

Matthew 2:1-6

DISCUSS

What does the word peace mean to you?

How do you think that Jesus brought peace into the world?

Go outside and find the brightest star you can find.

Imagine being one of the wise men, following a bright star to follow Jesus. What do you imagine they were thinking as they travelled?

PRAY

Jesus, you were born to be King. But you are the humble king, born in a stable not a palace. Giving your life as a ransom when other kings make demands to protect their own power. Thank you for your kind rule. Reign over our family today. We want to be a part of your kingdom and no other. Amen.

DAY 9

MONDAY

READ

Matthew 2:7-12

DISCUSS

Have you ever looked for something for a long time?
How did you feel when you found it?

Why did the Magi want to go and worship Jesus?

Why do you think we still bring people gifts at
Christmas time?

Pick a song and sing it together in worship of Jesus.

PRAY

Jesus you are the only one worthy of our worship.
We often adore other things or other people, and we
are sorry. Help our family to worship you only. We
want to value you above anything else. Amen.

READ

Matthew 2:13-18

DISCUSS

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they had to leave for Egypt?

Why was Herod so afraid of Jesus?

Why was it so important for Mary and Joseph to keep Jesus safe from harm?

PRAY

Jesus, you experienced real hardship, pain and suffering. You know what it feels like to be in pain. When you saw the havoc sin had caused, you didn't move away from the suffering and pain but towards it. Help our family to move toward those who are suffering. We want to follow your example. Amen.

DAY 11

WEDNESDAY

READ

Matthew 2:19-23

DISCUSS

What does it feel like when you've been gone from home for a while and finally come back?

How do you think Joseph and Mary felt to return to their homeland?

How did God continue to take care of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus?

How has God taken care of you this year?

PRAY

God, you go to great lengths to keep your promises. Jesus was born in Bethlehem because of a census, moved to Egypt because of persecution and grew up in Nazareth because of the concern of a protective father. Thank you for caring about the details. Teach our family to look for you in the details of our lives. We know you are working and we want to be aware and give you the credit. Lord please reveal yourself in the details of today. Amen.

READ

Luke 1:1-7

DISCUSS

Do you ever write things in a journal/diary? Why do you write them down?

Why did Luke write these things down (vs. 4)?

What was Zechariah & Elizabeth's relationship with God like?

Who is the oldest person you know? How are they like Zechariah & Elizabeth?

PRAY

Jesus, you are the Truth. We can know with certainty that you lived, taught, ate, slept, died and rose again. Thank you for always being true. Speak truth to our family today. Teach us who you are, and who we are in you. Amen.

DAY 13

FRIDAY

READ

Luke 1:8-17

DISCUSS

What chores do each of you have to do in your house?

What were Zechariah's duties?

What do you think Zechariah was feeling when the angel told him he would finally have a son?

PRAY

God, you turn the hearts of the parents back to their children. You want relationships to be whole and restored, and you go to great measures to bring this about. Fill our family with true love and affection for one another, and restore our relationships. Help us to be turned toward one another, and prepare our hearts for this day. Amen.

READ

Luke 1:18-20

DISCUSS

What was Zechariah's response to the angel?

What happened because of Zechariah's lack of faith?

Is there anything in the Christmas story that's hard for you to believe?

PRAY

God, you are able to do anything. There is nothing that is too hard for you. There is no obstacle too great for you to overcome. And because we know this is true we are filled with joy. Lord fill our family with joy today. Help us to see that you are greater than any challenge we face and because of that we are victorious. Amen.

WEEK 3



INTRODUCTION

As we enter this third week of Advent, we focus on **JOY**. Traditionally, joy is represented by a pink candle in the Advent wreath. As Mary joyfully sings to the Lord a song of praise (Luke 1:46-55), we are reminded of the joy of receiving our Messiah. As we look forward to the coming Messiah, we can look back and reflect on what God has done during this year. Consider sharing with one another what you have seen God do in your family. May the joyful remembrance guide you to rejoice in God your Savior.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” **Luke 2:10-11**

WEEKLY FAMILY ACTIVITY

TELEPHONE

Think about some fun “good news” from the past week. It can be as silly as you want (*Ex. Mom bought more candy, Grandma comes in town tomorrow, Jacob finally cleaned his room, etc*). Sit in a line. Have the first person whisper their “good news” to the person next to them, and then have the second person whisper what they think they heard into the ear of the next person. Continue down the line until the last person hears the news. Have the last person announce what the good news is that they think they heard! Keep playing until everyone has had a chance to start the line. When we hear good news, why do we like to share it? How can we share the good news of Jesus’ birth?

JOYFUL NEWS POSTER

Hang up a sheet of poster board in your house for the week and keep a pen or marker nearby. At the top, write “Joyful News”. Throughout the week, everyone in the family should write down any good news they’ve heard or experienced! At the end of each day, or at the end of the week, go through the list as a family and celebrate all of the good news!

READ

Luke 1:21-25

DISCUSS

How does God define joy?

How does that differ from the world's definition of joy?

How do you think Elizabeth experienced joy after she became pregnant?

PRAY

God you are the author of life. You can make new life in the most unlikely of circumstances. You can give an elderly woman a child, and you can bring new life into parts of us that we thought were long gone. God speak something new to life in our home. We want to experience you in a new way. Amen.

DAY 16

MONDAY

READ

Luke 1:26-38

DISCUSS

How did Mary respond as the angel gave her the news?

What do you think it would be like if you saw an angel?

How did Mary show trust in God's plan?

PRAY

Lord we are your servants. Each day you have prepared good work for us to do. As Mary said, "may it be to me as you have said." Give us peace as we do the work you have given us today. Help us to fulfill today's tasks as a holy assignment. Amen.

READ

Luke 1:39-45

DISCUSS

Do you have family that lives far away? Have you ever gone to visit them?

In this passage, how did Elizabeth share her joy with Mary?

What was Elizabeth excited about?

PRAY

Lord, you are the maker of life. You knit us together in our mother's womb. We praise you for we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Thank you that you came as a little baby, the maker of life, knit together in the womb of his mother. Remind us of this miracle today. Amen.

DAY 18

WEDNESDAY

READ

Luke 1:46-56

DISCUSS

What kind of songs do you sing when you are happy?

What are some key words from this passage that reveal Mary's joy?

What are some words or symbols that we use everyday to reveal our joy or excitement? (*ex. smiling, laughing*)

PRAY

God, your kingdom turns our notions of power and position on it's head. You bring down the powerful and lift up the humble. You fill the hungry with good things. And you entered the world in a position of humility and dependence. Remind us today that we are to be humble like you. Thank you for remembering us and keeping your promises. Amen.

READ

Luke 1:57-66

DISCUSS

Are any of you named after one of your relatives?

What do you think it was like for Zechariah to finally be able to speak again?

When he began to speak, what did he use his voice to do?

PRAY

God, everything happens just as you promise. You are concerned with even the details of our lives. Help us to see you at work in the details today. Give us awareness of the small and big ways you are at work in our lives. Amen.

DAY 20

FRIDAY

READ

Luke 1:67-80

DISCUSS

Why do you think Zechariah sang a song? How do we see his faith in his song?

What is one way to be joyful when life gets hard?

How can we share joy with others?

PRAY

God you are faithful to your covenant. Though we often waver, and wonder, you remember all your promises. Thank you for sending us a savior. Amen.

READ

Luke 2:1-5

DISCUSS

Tell about a time you travelled to a different city.

Look up directions on your favorite map app from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

How long do you think it took them to make that journey on foot?

PRAY

God you are Love. In your faithful and steadfast love you weren't content to leave us in our sin. Thank you that you had a plan. Thank you that you took on the form of a servant, and that you were born as a little baby. Thank you that you gave your life as an act of love for your people. We Love you lord. Amen.

WEEK 4



LOVE

INTRODUCTION

The final week of Advent encourages us to focus on **LOVE**. All throughout the birth narrative, we see examples of God's love being shown by those who follow Him. Joseph showed love toward Mary. Elizabeth & Mary showed mutual love and support for one another and give us a glimpse of what Christian community can look like. As we draw closer to Christmas, may we remember Christ's love poured out for us, and may we show Christ's love to others.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." **1 John 4:10**

NOTE:

This last week of Advent culminates in Christmas Day. Depending on the year, this week may contain a different amount of days. You may need to double up on passages so you can finish with Christmas Eve & Christmas Day.

WEEKLY FAMILY ACTIVITY

COOKIE DELIVERY

Find your favorite cookie recipe. Spend time making some cookies together. Decide as a family someone you can show love to by dropping off cookies at their house. Have everyone write a note wishing the recipient a Merry Christmas

PEOPLE YOU LOVE POSTER

Post a piece of poster board or a sheet of paper somewhere in your house. At the top, write, "People We Love." Each day have people write down someone whom they love. Consider reaching out to those on the list you may not see this year at Christmas and let them know you are thinking about them. Take time each night to gather around the list together and pray for one or two people.

READ

Luke 2:6-7

DISCUSS

Have you ever been to a barn? How did it look and smell?

Why do you think God chose for Jesus to be born in a humble place?

How have you seen love so far in the Christmas story?

PRAY

God we praise you for your son. Thank you for the miracle of Jesus' birth- that the eternal Son of God was born as a baby on Earth. We get to experience love because you first loved us. We love you. Amen.

DAY 23

MONDAY

READ

Luke 2:8-14

DISCUSS

Why do you think the shepherds were terrified when the angel appeared to them?

What was the news the angel announced?

How would you have announced the news? Write a news headline to show what you would have said.

PRAY

God, it is good news for us to hear of Jesus' birth. Like the angels, we want to sing your praises. Help us to love others by sharing the good news of Jesus. Amen

READ

Luke 2:15-18

DISCUSS

Have you ever seen something amazing? Did you want to tell others about what you saw?

How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw baby Jesus? What did they do after they saw Him?

Who is someone you can tell about Jesus?

PRAY

God we thank you for the example of the shepherds. They heard your announcement of good news, investigated for themselves and spread the word about Jesus. Help us to be like them. As we hear from you help us to investigate and share what you are teaching us. Help us to be excited by the good news of Jesus' birth. Amen.

DAY 25

WEDNESDAY

READ

Luke 2:19

DISCUSS

What is your most prized possession? Do you think about it often?

Look up the definition of the word **ponder**.

What do you think Mary was thinking about?

Have everyone sit quietly for 2 minutes and ponder something about the Christmas story.

PRAY

Lord, your plan is profound and beyond our understanding. As we see you work in our world and in our lives help us to take time to consider, to ponder, to weigh and to appraise. Help us to reflect on what you have done in Jesus' birth and what you are doing around us today. Amen.

DAY 26

CHRISTMAS EVE

READ

Luke 2:20

DISCUSS

Why do you think the shepherds worshipped God after seeing baby Jesus?

What are some ways we worship God around Christmas time? (ex. *giving, sharing time with family, singing songs*)

Take time and sing your favorite Christmas carol together.

PRAY

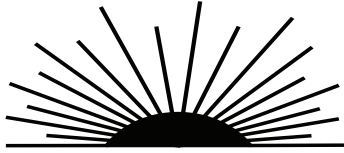
God you are worthy of all glory and praise. Thank you that we can be encouraged when we hear of how you work in others lives and we can encourage others by sharing what you do in ours. We love you God. Show us how we can worship you more this week. Amen.



HOPE



PEACE



JOY



LOVE

DAY 27

CHRISTMAS DAY

READ

Luke 2:21-40

DISCUSS

Has anyone ever made a promise to you? Did they keep their promise?

What did God promise Simeon (vs. 26)?

How did Simeon & Anna react to meeting Jesus, the Messiah?

Today is Christmas Day, how can you celebrate today that God kept His promise?

PRAY

Lord thank you for the story of Simeon and Anna. They waited to see the birth of Jesus. They trusted in your promise and felt full of hope and joy when they were able to see it fulfilled. Help us to trust your promises today. We want to be patient as you work around us and among us. Amen.