

A D V E N T 2 0 1 7



Born IS THE King

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Advent Wreath

Celebrating Advent as a family is a great way to be sure to not let the true meaning of Christmas get lost in the hustle and bustle of the season. Christians have been observing Advent, the "coming" or "arriving" of Jesus Christ, for centuries. Perhaps the most common tradition is the Advent Wreath. The Advent Wreath has four candles that are lit once a week in sequential order symbolic of the hope, love, joy, and peace given to mankind by God with the gift of Jesus. On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day all the candles are lit.

The Christmas story can be found in Matthew chapters one and two and in Luke chapters one and two.

We will be celebrating Advent together in our weekend worship services beginning Saturday, November 25th and Sunday, November 26th. We encourage families to celebrate Advent at home by getting together once a week around an Advent Wreath and celebrating the true meaning of Christmas - God giving us the best gift ever, His Son, Jesus! This will help you have an intentional way of talking about the wonder of God's love, sacrifice, and grace for all of us.

PREPARING THE ADVENT WREATH

Be sure to include the entire family in this preparation and weekly celebration. Find a place in your home where you can gather around the wreath as a family. A kitchen table or coffee table in the living room works great. The Advent Wreath should have a prominent place in your home and remain there for the entire Advent season. Insert the four candles into the Advent ring. Some place a fifth candle (white pillar) in the center of the wreath to light on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

WEEKLY ADVENT FAMILY TIMES

Pick a day and time of the week when your family can gather together (once a week for the four weeks of Advent) for about 15 minutes (possibly before, during or after an evening meal). Use this Advent Wreath Guide and begin or continue a meaningful family Christmas tradition.

You don't have to use every question. We have tried to provide a couple of questions for various ages. Not all questions are appropriate for all ages.

Faith @ Home Advent Activities

These ideas can be done together as a family to help reinforce the true meaning of Christmas during Advent.

Also, see the BLESS strategy at the end of this booklet.

- Bake cookies and take them to a neighbor.
- Watch *The Nativity* or *It's A Wonderful Life* together.
- As a family shovel a neighbor's driveway or sidewalk.
- Sing familiar carols during your Advent family times.
- Get together with several families and go caroling at a nursing home.
- Provide Christmas dinner or gifts for a needy family.
- Decorate your home together.
- Make homemade Christmas cards that describe the true meaning of Christmas and send them to your friends.
- Build a snowman, an entire snowman family, or a snowman nativity.
- Choose an ornament from the Giving Tree or adopt an entire family to provide gifts for children and families.
- Organize a family fund raiser to support the Christmas Offering.

Week One // November 26 - December 2

God Promises the Messiah, Our Savior

Light the first purple candle.

READ TOGETHER

Have someone read Isaiah 9:1-7.

Talk about the true meaning of Christmas...

- What is it like to wait for something good to happen?
- How do you feel when something good has been promised to you, but it doesn't happen when you want it to? How do you act?
- What are some good things you hope God will do for you/us soon?
- Based on the titles of Jesus in verse six, what are some of the good things God will give His people/us?

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank You for blessing us with Your goodness. We know that everything good comes from You. Thank You for loving us so much and giving us Jesus, so we can know You. Help us to follow Jesus together.

SERVE TOGETHER

What will we do together as a family to help others experience the true meaning of Christmas? Who can we bless? How will we bless them?

PLAY TOGETHER

Is there something fun we can do together to celebrate Christmas? Is there a family tradition we should continue or begin?

WEEKLY FOCUS

This week focus on:

He (Jesus) will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace!



Week Two // December 3-9

The Angel Meets Mary

Light the first purple candle.

Ask someone to summarize what you talked about last week.

Light the second purple candle.

READ TOGETHER

Have someone read Luke 1:26-38.

Talk about the true meaning of Christmas...

- What are some of the things that amaze you most about the Christmas story? (story of Jesus' birth)
- Would you like to meet an angel? Why or why not?
- What would be different about Mary's child from other children? Why is this significant?
- In what area of your/our life do you/we need to believe that "nothing is impossible with God?"

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank you that nothing is impossible for You. Help us to trust You when it is hard to understand what You want us to do.

SERVE TOGETHER

What will we do together as a family to help others experience the true meaning of Christmas? Who can we bless? How will we bless them?

PLAY TOGETHER

Is there something fun we can do together to celebrate Christmas? Is there a family tradition we should continue or begin?

WEEKLY FOCUS

This week focus on:

Nothing is impossible with God.



Week Three // December 10-16

Jesus is Born

*Light the first two purple candles.
Remind each other what you talked about the last two weeks.
Light the pink candle.*

READ TOGETHER

Have someone read Matthew 1:18-25.

Talk about the true meaning of Christmas...

- What are some good qualities in your parents?
- How can we know what God wants us to do when angels don't come to tell us?
- Why was Jesus born? What is a savior? What do people/we need to be rescued from?
- How or when have you felt that God is with you/us?

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank You for giving us the gift of Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for rescuing us from the darkness of living just to please ourselves. Help us to live fully for You by following Jesus together.

SERVE TOGETHER

What will we do together as a family to help others experience the true meaning of Christmas? Who can we bless? How will we bless them?

PLAY TOGETHER

Is there something fun we can do together to celebrate Christmas? Is there a family tradition we should continue or begin?

WEEKLY FOCUS

This week focus on:

Immanuel means, God is with us!



Week Four // December 17-23
God Became Human

*Light the first two purple candles and the pink candle as you remind each other of the verses you've already read together.
Light the final purple candle.*

READ TOGETHER

Have someone read John 1:1-14.

Talk about the true meaning of Christmas...

- What do we learn about Jesus (the Word) from these verses? What does it mean that the Word (Jesus) was with God in the beginning?
- What do these verses teach us about Christmas?
- Why would God want to or need to become a human?
- How does a person become part of God's family?

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank You for showing us how much You love us by becoming a human being and living here on earth among us. Thank You for giving us life! Help us live a life worth sharing with others.

SERVE TOGETHER

What will we do together as a family to help others experience the true meaning of Christmas? Who can we bless? How will we bless them?

PLAY TOGETHER

Is there something fun we can do together to celebrate Christmas? Is there a family tradition we should continue or begin?

WEEKLY FOCUS

This week focus on:

Jesus gives life to everything!



Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
Good News of Great Joy

*Light the four candles and review the previous weeks readings.
Light the white candle (in the center of the wreath) to represent Jesus.*

READ TOGETHER

Have someone read Luke 2:1-20.

Talk about the true meaning of Christmas...

- Talk about your family history, favorite memories, anticipation of birth of children, etc...
- If you could be anyone in this story, who would you like to be? Why?
- Where were you born? Was anything unusual? What was unusual about the birth of Jesus?
- To whom did the angels tell the good news of Jesus? Why them?
- How can we spread the good news of Jesus?

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. Help us share Jesus and your love with everyone we know. May the way we live honor you and bless others.

SERVE TOGETHER

What will we do together as a family to help others experience the true meaning of Christmas? Who can we bless? How will we bless them?

PLAY TOGETHER

Is there something fun we can do together to celebrate Christmas? Is there a family tradition we should continue or begin?

WEEKLY FOCUS

This week focus on:

The gift of Jesus is for everyone!

B.L.E.S.S STRATEGY

God wants to use us to bless people around us. When we bless others they experience God's love, grace, and goodness in tangible ways. Identify a person to bless and then...

Begin by praying for them.

Listen to them.

Eat with them.

Serve them.

Share your faith story with them.

BECOMING A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

God wants you to be a part of His family. Nothing makes God happier than when one of his children decides to come home. In fact, the Bible says that all of Heaven has a party! (see Luke 15) He wants to have a close relationship with you everyday. He not only promises you eternal life in Heaven, but God wants you to have a meaningful and fulfilling life here on earth. Jesus said, ***“My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.” John 10:10***

The problem is that most of us want to run our own life. We want to do what we think will make us happy and usually we don't even consider what God wants. Even when we never think about God, He is thinking about us. Think about these verses from the Bible. *continued on next page...*

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“But to all who believed Him and accepted him, He gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 You must believe that Jesus is God’s Son, that He died to pay for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead.

“If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.” 1 John 1:9 You must tell God that you are sorry for the way you have been living to please yourself and not living to please Him.

“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.” Acts 3:19 To repent means you have a change of heart. You turn from living your life to please yourself, doing whatever you want – and you turn to living your life to please God, doing whatever He wants.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23 The good news is that Jesus makes it possible for us to have a wonderful new relationship with God when we put our faith in Him each and everyday! As we follow God’s Son, Jesus, and read God’s Word, the Bible, we learn to live God’s way as a part of God’s family.

A great way to begin a new relationship with God is to talk to God about how you feel and what you think. We call this praying. Many people have prayed a prayer similar to this...

“Dear Jesus, I believe you are God’s Son. Thank you for dying on the cross so that my sins can be forgiven. I am sorry that I have sinned. I want to stop living for myself and turn to follow you. I surrender my life to you as my Savior and my Lord. Thank you for loving me and accepting me into your family. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Another word used to describe God’s family is “church.” As a part of God’s family you are a part of God’s Church. Our church is here to help people follow Jesus together, loving, seeking and serving others.

Please contact Sharon in the church office (649-6335) to learn how you can grow in your new relationship with God.

