



# Advent Blessings

Family Advent Devotional

These simple Advent devotions are an opportunity for your family to hear and reflect on God's Word, pray together, grow stronger family bonds, and be a light in the world.



Williamsburg Community Chapel Children's Ministry

## Advent Blessings!

Sunday, December 3

Wherever you are sitting together as a family, light one candle then turn off all the other lights in the house. Talk about what it's like to sit in the darkness. What are some problems with being in the dark? It's like being blind, isn't it? You can't see anything! Have you ever been in the dark and then someone came and turned on the light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"(John 8:12). Why do you think Jesus described himself as "the light of the world?" Talk about the differences of light and darkness.

There is a verse in the Old Testament that tells what it would be like for the world when Jesus came. It says, "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). That was what it was like when Jesus came to earth. He brought light into the whole world! The light he brought is the truth about God, and hope for all people. Jesus came to show us the way to live. Jesus wants his light (truth, hope, love) to shine through our lives too. As each person in your family loves better and follows Jesus' example, the light of Christ grows stronger in your family and shines out into the world.

We have many lights around us at Christmas time. As you see and enjoy all the lights let them remind you that Jesus IS the light of the world. You may even want to look at one another and say "*Jesus is the light of the world*" each time you go out and see the Christmas lights.

**Prayer:** *Thank you, Jesus, for coming to earth and for your promise to come again. Thank you, Jesus, for being our light so we know how to live. Help us to let your light shine through us more and more by loving others the way you love them. AMEN*

**If you have a crèche or nativity scene, first put out the stable and talk about this special place that is being prepared for the baby. Each week you can add some of the figures and let it unfold week to week.**



### Ways to talk about The Light and the hope that The Light brings:

1. Ask each person to talk about a special Christmas celebration from the past. Talk about what you are looking forward to this Christmas. How does Christmas bring you hope?
2. Share the responsibility of sending people cards this year. Give thanks for the people you are sending them to. How will these cards bring light and hope to their life?
3. Look through your Christmas ornaments and find those that remind you of Jesus who is the Light of the World. Talk about the people whose light has guided you toward what is right and true. Does the way you live light up the way to Jesus for others?
4. What are you hopeful for this Christmas?

### During the week you can:

1. Wrap a present for Jesus and put it under the tree with a slit on top. Throughout Advent drop in pieces of paper on which you have written ways your family is sharing the light of Jesus with others. Open it on Christmas Eve and read them all. (If you made a sparkle box at our advent family celebration you can use it.)
2. Help someone at school, work, home, or when you're out and about and light up their day!
3. Say kind and encouraging words to those around you and light up their day!
4. Read passages in Scripture about giving and receiving gifts: Matt. 1:18; 2:12; 6:1-4; 7:7-12; 25:35-40. (What is God's gift to us? What do the passages say about giving? How do you feel about giving and receiving a gift?)



## Advent Blessings!

Sunday, December 10

Do you remember that in the Old Testament there was a powerful king named David? Joseph, was one of David's descendants – he was from Bethlehem, the city of David. Long ago God had said that Jesus would come into the family of King David and would be born in Bethlehem. Luke 2: 1-7 tells us how God fulfilled that promise. Around the time that Jesus was going to be born, the ruler of all the land commanded that everyone go to their home city to be counted. So Joseph and Mary had to make a journey to Bethlehem. It was a long journey, about 70 or 80 miles. It would have taken them a long time, maybe a week. Joseph and Mary might have walked the whole way. Or they might have had a donkey to help them. Maybe Mary even rode on the donkey when she was tired. Because God always keeps his promises, Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem before Jesus was born.

We are on a journey too! Advent is about moving forward on our journey towards a more God-centered, peace-filled life. Peace is a word that we hear a lot. It is one of the things that we hope for. The prophet Isaiah called Jesus, "the Prince of Peace." Why do you think Isaiah called him that? Jesus came to teach us how to live our lives in love and peace. What brings you peace? What takes away your peace?

How is your Advent journey going so far? Is anyone growing "faint and weary?" What are the things happening right now in your home that are making family life too chaotic, stressed, overburdened, and empty of peace and love? Are you trying to do too much, lacking sleep, wanting your own way? Brainstorm some solutions to these problems. How can you simplify your Christmas preparations so they will bring more peace to your home and to others?

**Prayer:** *God, we are journeying toward you. Sometimes we get lost in busyness or we go through times of selfishness that sets us off on wrong paths, away from each other and away from you. Help us to be peacemakers. Help us each to shine out the light of your love and to lead others to Jesus and true peace. AMEN*



If you set up the stable of your nativity set, now add the stable animals.

Ways to talk about the journey:

1. Talk about daily trips that you make. What is fun and what is difficult about your daily trips?
2. Talk about what your faith journey is like now. What was it like in the past? What do you hope for it to be like in the future? What can you do to make that come to be?
3. Think about ways that each of you can be peacemakers at home, at school, and at work this week. Share each night how you were a peacemaker and celebrate!
4. God wants us to forgive as he forgives. Who can you forgive? How do you feel when someone forgives you? How do you feel when you forgive others? How does it feel when you aren't forgiven or when you don't forgive others?

During the week you can:

1. Tell every member of your family at least one thing you appreciate about them.
2. Give up your turn, your opinion, your immediate need today for the sake of peace and harmony in your family.
3. Admit to being wrong and say "I'm sorry" today. If you have the opportunity, forgive someone who apologizes to you.
4. Read passages in Scripture about peace: Matthew 6:25-34; John 14:27; Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:6-7. (What does Jesus' peace look like? Feel like? Does having Jesus' peace mean we'll never have troubles?)



## Advent Blessings!

Sunday, December 17

What are the best times in your family? What are the worst? What makes the difference between them? Love does! As we practice love, we feel joy. Do you ever feel so joyful you feel you'll burst? Often in the Bible when people are rejoicing they burst out in song and dance (Hannah, David, Zechariah...). What are your favorite Christmas songs? What memories do you have about these songs? Why are they your favorites?

The Christmas story is full of times of rejoicing too – by Mary, by the angels, and by the shepherds. Mary's response to the angel's news that she would be the mother of God's son was one of trust and joy. "Mary said, behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Mary's example can inspire and teach us. Do you think it was easy for Mary to trust God? When is it easy/hard for you to trust God? God wants us to trust him and follow His will for our lives, to love him enough to say "Yes" to what he asks us to do. What was the result of Mary trusting God? Mary sang a song of joy to God for making her the mother of Jesus and keeping his promises to his people to send a Savior! Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

An angel appeared to shepherds on the night that Jesus was born. That angel told them that he had good news of great joy for all the people: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord." When the angels left "the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child... the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen." Who do you want to share the good news of Jesus with? What are ways your family has shared and can share this good news (besides using words)?

**Prayer:** *Lord, Jesus, as our family grows closer to you this Advent, we are filled with joy! We thank you! We praise you! Our love is growing and our lives are changing. We are grateful! AMEN*





Today is the day to add the empty manger and Mary and Joseph to your nativity scene.

### Ways to talk about spreading the joy:

1. Talk about how each family member can spread the good news of God's love throughout their day. At home, at school, at work. Brainstorm some small ways that you can bring joy to others. Resolve to be a "herald of good tidings" at least once a day for the rest of Advent.
2. Talk about the gifts you are giving to others and the joy it brings you when someone is excited about your gift. Talk about what gift you will bring to Jesus.
3. Talk about those who have shared joy with you. Talk about how it blessed you and your response to that joy. Write a thank-you card/text to them.
4. Talk about how selfishness, pride, and jealousy can cause us to "get prickly" with one another and out of sorts – stealing our joy and the joy of those around us. Share times when you have been "prickly" this Advent and ask for those you were "prickly" with to forgive you. Then talk about the joy of being forgiven.

### During the week you can:

1. The Joy candle on the Advent wreath is pink. Go to your closets and dressers and find something pink that everyone can wear on the same day. Let the color pink be a reminder all day to keep rejoicing in God's wonderful love!
2. Listen to/sing some of your favorite Christmas songs together.
3. Have someone look at the news and find someone in the world who is hurting. Pray for that person for the rest of Advent to be able to experience peace and joy.
4. Read passages of Scripture about joy: Nehemiah 8:10; Ps.33:1-5; 28:7; 39:5; 100:1; Prov.15:23; Philemon 1:7; 1 Peter 1:6. (How do you feel when you hear these words? How is joy different from happiness?)



## Advent Blessings!

Sunday, December 24

Do you know why we give gifts at Christmas? Do you know what the greatest gift of all is, who gave it and who he gave it to? The Bible says that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” God, in love, gives us everything we need to live a life of light, hope, peace, and love. What words would you use to describe God’s love?

What are we taught to do whenever we get a gift? How do you feel when you give a gift and the person you gave it to doesn’t respond that way? We have been given the greatest gift of all! How should we respond? The people in the Bible show us what to do.

After the birth of Jesus, Mary responded by “treasuring up all these things and pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). Like Mary, we should respond to the Gift of Jesus by treasuring him, taking time to reflect on our Savior and the gifts that he has given us.

The shepherds also show us how we should respond to the gift of Jesus. “When they had seen him, they spread the word...and returned glorifying and praising God” (Luke 2:17, 20). How can we be like the shepherds in our response to the gift of Jesus?

The Wise Men in their response to the child Jesus, show us how we should respond to the gift of Jesus. “On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their treasures and presented him with gifts” (Matthew 2:11). How can we be like the Wise Men in our response to the gift of Jesus?

Jesus showed us God’s perfect love. Thanks to the love God has shown for us, we can share that love with others. Love is like a light shining in a dark place. How will you let your love shine this Christmas and in the year to come?

**Prayer:** *Lord, help us to express and celebrate our awe and wonder at Jesus’ birth on Christmas day and every day that follows. We rejoice and thank you for this greatest of all possible gifts. AMEN*

Every good and perfect gift

Is from the Lord above.

Not by our merit or our worth,

But solely by his love.



In the beginning was the Word;  
But when the time had come,  
The Babe in Bethlehem was born,  
A manger was his home.  
So, let us sing his praises now,  
Who fills us with great joy!  
God gave to us his perfect Son;  
This Holy Baby Boy.  
We are baptized, in Jesus' name.  
He gives us faith to live.  
Forgiveness he has giv'n to us.  
Help us also forgive.  
He's truly human, truly God,  
This Gift so sweet and small.  
He died and rose and lives again,  
Go out and tell to all!

By Jane Ellen Pase

Tomorrow is the day to add the baby Jesus to your nativity scene.

### Ways to talk about spreading the Good News:

1. Open the Jesus gift under your tree and read all the ways that your family shared the light of Jesus during Advent. Talk about what sharing the light of Jesus meant to each of them.
2. Read the two stories of Jesus' birth – Matthew 1:18-25 and 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20. Notice the differences in the stories. What details or characters do you find in one that you don't find in the other?
3. Talk to your children about their own names and what they mean. Share the names of Jesus and which is your favorite (King of Kings, Good Shepherd, Alpha and Omega, Light of the World, Prince of Peace, Savior, Emmanuel, The Way, Bread of life...).

