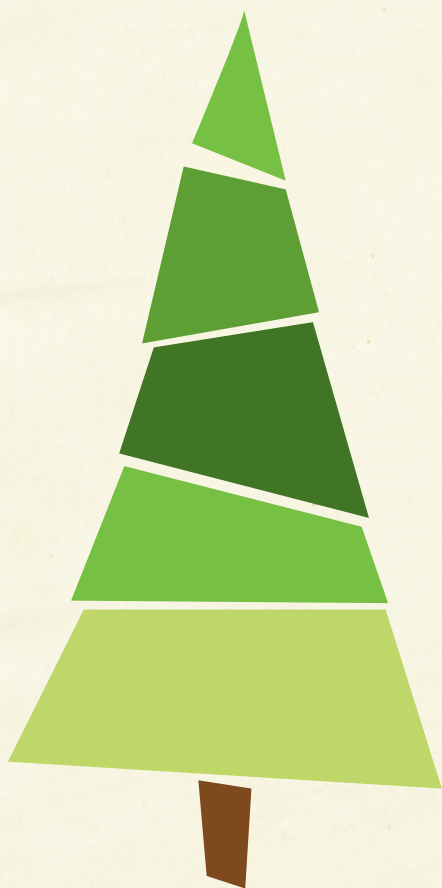


# Christmas

ADVENT TREE



## A FAMILY GUIDE

Help your family focus on the hope  
of Christmas all season long

# A LITTLE BACKGROUND

## What is advent?

Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means “coming”. In it’s most basic form advent is a time for God’s people to prepare themselves for the celebration of the first coming of Jesus (Christmas), and to look forward with joy to the second coming Christ. Historically there are four Sundays of Advent leading up to Christmas day and usually a candle is lit each Sunday.

## Why an advent tree?

As Christian parents it’s our job to teach our kids who God is and what he has done. Each Christmas it is a challenge to direct our children’s hearts towards the everlasting joy of Jesus, instead of the temporary happiness that comes with a new toy. We must constantly teach our kids to enjoy their toys, but worship Christ. And advent tree is a fun way to do this as a family. It engages the kids and helps focus your family on greatness of God all season long.

## What is an advent tree?

An advent tree is some sort of tree, be it real or fake, paper or plastic that you set up in your home at the beginning of December. Each day you read a story from the Old Testament, your kids colour an ornament that goes with the story and then they hang their ornaments on the tree. The idea is that your family will follow the story line of the Bible from Creation to The Fall to the time of Waiting for the Saviour, and then finally to the coming of Jesus Christ — the Saviour of the world.

Note: We have decided to break slightly from tradition and start the advent tree on December 1. That way you can save this guide and make it into a yearly tradition. Also, all Bible quotations are from the NIRV unless otherwise noted.

# TO START...

## Put up a tree

It can be any kind of tree, but it's best to put it somewhere central so your kids can explain it to guests.

THEN EACH DAY STARTING DEC 1...

1. Read the story
2. Make ornament
3. Hang on tree

THAT'S IT! BY CHRISTMAS YOU'LL HAVE  
A TREE FILLED WITH STORIES OF GOD.



Note: If you miss a day, just skip it or have the kids just do the ornament.



## Main Story Points

- In the beginning there was only God.
- God created the universe out of nothing.
- God made man in His image.
- Everything God made was very good.

God saw everything He had made.  
And it was very good. There was  
evening, and there was morning.  
It was day six. —Genesis 1:31

## Questions:

On what day did God create human beings?

Day 6.

How are we different than the other parts of God's creation?

We have everlasting souls. We can do some of the things God can do like think, love, create and rejoice.

Do you think God needed to create the world to be happy?

No. God doesn't need anything from anyone to be happy. He has himself. He wanted to create the universe to display how awesome He is.

DEC. 2

GENESIS 2:16 & 3:1-9

THE FALL

EVIL ENTERS THE WORLD

## Main Story Points

- God said eating the fruit would bring death.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God.
- This was the first Sin.
- Sin brought God's curse and death to all people.

God said, "You must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die" —Genesis 2:16

## Questions:

What is sin?

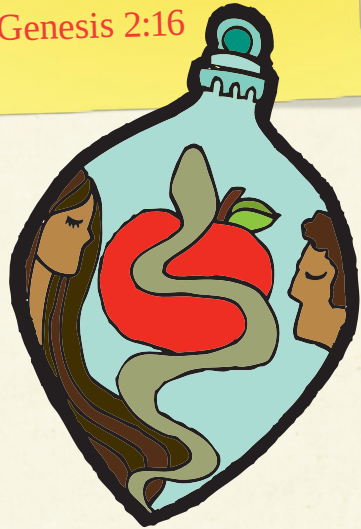
Sin is disobeying God.

What are the consequences of sin?

Death and separation from the love of God forever.

God said Adam and Eve would die if they ate the fruit, so why didn't He kill them right away?

Because God still loved Adam and Eve and because it was His plan from the beginning was to save them from their sin by sending Jesus to die in their place.



## Main Story Points

- All humanity was rejecting God.
- God said he would destroy all the people with a flood.
- God saved Noah's family and all the animals using the ark.

The Lord saw how bad the sins of man had become on the earth. All of the thoughts in his heart were always directed towards only evil... But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. —Genesis 6:5 & 6:8

### Questions:

Did all the people on earth deserve to be destroyed?

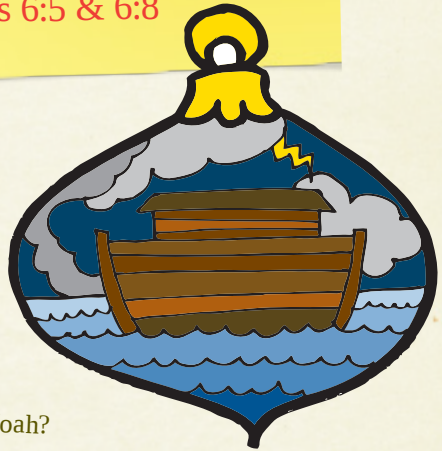
Yes, their hearts and actions were all evil.

Why did God find "favour" with Noah?

It was because of God's grace. "Grace" means God is happy with us and shows kindness to us, even though we don't deserve it.

What is the best example of God's grace in our lives?

That Jesus (God the Son) would come to earth as a human, live a perfect life, and die for our sins.





## Main Story Points

- God made a covenant with Noah.
- God said He would never again destroy all life on earth with a flood.
- God put a rainbow in the sky as a symbol of that promise.

Here is my covenant that I am making with you. The waters of a flood will never destroy all life again. A flood will never destroy the earth again. —Genesis 9:11

## Questions:

God sent the flood to destroy the world because of sin.

Was there sin after the flood?

Yes.

But instead of destroying the earth with water again to deal with sin, God had a better plan. What was His plan to deal with sin?

He would send Jesus to pay for our sins and give us life, forever.

God said the rainbow would remind us of his covenant never to send a flood again. What is a covenant?

A covenant is a promise to do something no matter what, and God always keeps His promises.

DEC. 5

GENESIS 12:1-7

ABRAHAM

WALKING BY FAITH



## Main Story Points

- God told Abraham to leave his home.
- God promised to bless Abraham.
- Abraham trusted and obeyed God. He took his family into the land that God showed him.

The Lord appeared to Abram at Shechem. He said, “I will give this land to your children after you.” So Abram built an altar there to honour the Lord who had appeared to him. —Genesis 12:7

## Questions:

How did Abraham obey God?

He left his home and moved his whole family to the land that God showed him.

Abraham had faith in God. What is faith?

It's believing in something even though you don't see it. Abraham believed that God would bless him with land even though he couldn't see it yet.

When he saw the good land, Abraham honoured God by building an altar. How can we honour God?

By living totally for Him.



## Main Story Points

- God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac.
- Abraham was willing to obey God.
- God provided a ram to be sacrificed in Isaac's place.

Abraham looked up. There in a bush he saw a ram. It was caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram. He sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. —Genesis 22:13

## Questions:

God tested Abraham's faith by telling him to sacrifice Isaac.

What is a sacrifice?

It's when you give something up for someone.

Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice his only son?

He had faith that God's promise to bless him and his family would be true even if Isaac died.

God provided an animal for Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac. What does this substitution point us forward to?

When Jesus would be sacrificed on the cross as a substitute for us.



## Main Story Points

- Jacob had a dream in which angels were going up and down a ladder between earth and heaven.
- The Lord said He would bless Jacob and always be with him.

The Lord said, “I am with you. I will watch over you everywhere you go and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” —Genesis 28:15



## Questions:

What were the angels doing in Jacob's dream?  
They were going up and down a ladder between heaven and earth.

What is this a picture of?  
It's a picture of a meeting place between heaven and earth. This looks forward to Jesus who will be the strong bridge for us from earth to heaven.

What is God's promise to Jacob?  
He will watch over Jacob and fulfill His promise.

DEC. 8

GENESIS 37:12-36 & 50:15-21

JOSEPH

GOD'S PLAN FOR GOOD

## Main Story Points

- Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt.
- By God's power, Joseph became an important ruler in Egypt.
- God used Joseph to save many lives, including his brothers.

Joseph said, "You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives." —Genesis 50:20



### Questions:

What evil did Joseph's brothers do to him?  
*They sold him into slavery.*

What good did God bring out of the situation?  
*Egypt and all of Joseph's family were saved from the famine.*

Romans 8:28, tells us that God works "all things together for good for those who love God." Do you believe that? Just think of the immense good that came from the death of Jesus.

*He would send Jesus to pay for our sins and give us life.*

DEC. 9

EXODUS 12:21-28

MOSES

PASSOVER



## Main Story Points

- God judged Egypt because Pharaoh wouldn't let his people go.
- God sent 10 plagues.
- God made a way to spare the Israelites from the last plague - they killed a lamb and put its blood on their doorframe.

The Lord will go through the land to strike the Egyptians down. He'll see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe. He will pass over that house. —Exodus 12:23

## Questions:

Why do you think Pharaoh wouldn't let the Israelites go?

He thought he was the one in charge, not God.

God judged Egypt to show His true strength.

What was the last plague?

Every first born male would be killed.

What was the passover supposed to remind the people of?

The mercy of God. He passed over the Israelites houses even though they were sinful too.

What does the passover sacrifice point us forward to?

God passes over our sins because of Jesus.

## Main Story Points

- Pharaoh finally lets God's people go.
- God leads them to the edge of the Red Sea, but the Egyptians follow.
- God saves his people by leading them through the Red Sea.

God said, "I will make the hearts of the Egyptians stubborn. They will go in after the Israelites. I will gain glory for myself because of what will happen to Pharaoh and his whole army." —Exodus 14:17

### Questions:

What is the "glory" that God wants for himself?

It's His amazingness...

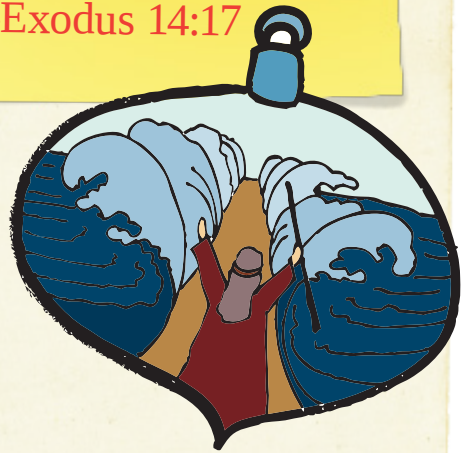
How wonderful and powerful He is.

How did God get glory for Himself in this story?

He showed that he is not only more powerful than the Egyptians, but He is also gracious and loving because he saved His people in an amazing way.

How does Jesus bring Glory to God the Father?

Jesus shows the grace and mercy of God. He took our punishment for our sins on himself... No other god has done that.



## Main Story Points

- Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God.
- God gave Moses 10 rules for how to live a sinless life.
- God wrote these rules on two tablets of stone.
- The rules were for all people then and now.

Israel, listen to me. Here are the rules and laws I'm announcing to you today. Learn them well. Be sure to follow them. —Deuteronomy 5:1

## Questions:

The 10 commandments show us the best way to live. But is it possible to follow them perfectly?

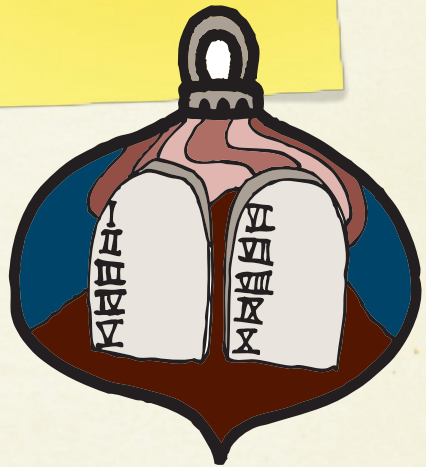
No.

What do we call it when we break one of God's commandments?

Sin.

So what hope do we have if we can't keep the commandments perfectly?

The hope we have is the same one the people back then had... that somehow, someday God would find a way to deal with their sin in mercy. Do you know how God did that?



## Main Story Points

- God chose David to be king over Israel.
- David was a good shepherd to God's people.
- But David was not without sin.

All of the elders of Israel came to see King David at Hebron. There the king made a covenant with them in the sight of the Lord. They announced David as king over Israel. —2 Samuel 5:3

### Questions:

Did God want David to be king?  
Yes, God chose David to be king.

Was David a good leader?  
Yes, he was the greatest king Israel had ever seen.

Was David perfect? (See 2 Samuel 12:13)  
No, David sinned against God.

How is Jesus an even greater king than David?  
Jesus never sinned. He leads his people perfectly. He rules the entire universe and will one day judge all evil.



DEC. 13

ISAIAH 9:6-7

ISAIAH

A CHILD WILL COME

## Main Story Points

- Isaiah was a prophet of God.
- He foretold that one day a child would be born who brings justice & peace.
- This child will be a gift from God.

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 (ESV)

### Questions:

Who is Isaiah talking about?

Jesus Christ.

Did the people back then know Jesus was the child Isaiah was talking about? Did they know when he was going to come?

No, they just trusted that God would send this child at the right time and that he would be a blessing to God's people.

Jesus shows us that God's promises always come true. Praise Him for that today.





DEC. 14

ISAIAH 11:6-9

ISAIAH

PEACE ON EARTH

## Main Story Points

- Isaiah shows us how different things will be when Jesus comes back to rule the earth again.
- He tells us that in that day peace will extend even to the animal kingdom.
- We can look forward to the complete peace of heaven.



None of these animals will harm or destroy anything or anyone on my holy mountain of Zion. The oceans are full of water. In the same way the earth will be filled with knowledge of the Lord. —Isaiah 11:9

### Questions:

What dangerous animals do these verses mention?

Wolves, lions, leopards, bears, cobras.

How is it possible that these animals will no longer be dangerous in heaven?

Because Jesus will make all things new and perfect.

And He is the Prince of Peace.

What would you tell a friend about what heaven will be like?

It will be a real, physical, absolute paradise. It will be our world made perfect and we will be close friends with God.

DEC. 15

ISAIAH 53:1-6

ISAIAH

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

## Main Story Points

- Isaiah was a prophet of God about 750 years before Jesus.
- He foretold that one day a child would be born who brings peace and justice.
- This child will be a gift from God.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. —Isaiah 53:5



## Questions:

Who is the servant Isaiah was talking about?  
Jesus Christ.

Why did Jesus need to suffer and die to make us whole?  
Because we are all sinful and sin must be punished with death. Jesus took the punishment we deserved.

How did Isaiah know what Jesus would do so many years later?

God told him. God had always planned that Jesus would come to earth as a baby, live a perfect life and then die on the cross for us. It was God's plan to show His love and mercy.

## Main Story Points

- Elijah challenges King Ahab and all those that worship Baal to a test.
- They set up two offerings and both pray. Only the God of Israel shows up with fire from heaven.
- The people worship the one true God.

Elijah said to the people, “If the Lord is the one and only God, follow Him. But if Baal is the one and only God, follow him” —1 Kings 18:21

### Questions:

What was the test all about?

Asking Baal and God to burn up an offering.

Why didn't Baal send fire when the prophets prayed to him?

Because Baal doesn't really exist. He is a false god.

What was the reaction when the fire of the Lord came down?

The people realized that the Lord is the one true God.

They saw He actually exists and has power.

Then they worshipped Him.

If you believe that the Lord is the one and only God, what should you do?

Worship Him, just like the people did back then.



DEC. 17

JONAH 3:1-4:11

JONAH

COMPASSION & MERCY

## Main Story Points

- Jonah told the Ninevites God was going to punish them for their sin.
- Nineveh repented of their sin.
- God had compassion and did not destroy the city.
- Jonah learned to have compassion for other people.

When God saw what the Ninevites did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He had said he would do to them, and He did not do it. —Jonah 3:10 (ESV)

## Questions:

The Ninevites turned from their evil way, what does that mean?

It means they stopped living their way and started living God's way. They repented, or turned from sin.

God showed compassion to the Ninevites. What is that?

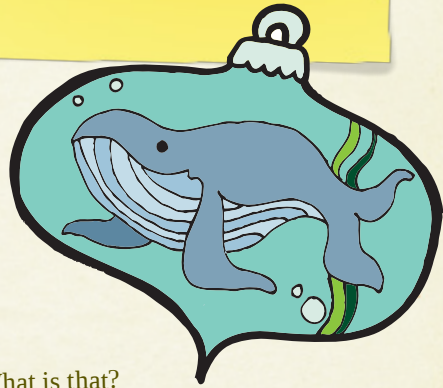
Compassion is a loving concern for the suffering of others.

God showed mercy to the Ninevites. What is that?

Mercy is not giving someone what they deserve.

What is the lesson for us?

God is merciful to all sinners who turn from their sin and ask for forgiveness. We should act the same towards other people.



DEC. 18

MICAH 5:2-4

BETHLEHEM

LITTLE CITY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

## Main Story Points

- Micah was a prophet that lived 750 years before Jesus.
- He foretold that the ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem.
- This ruler would will bring peace to the people.

The Lord says, “Bethlehem, you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come a ruler over Israel for me.” —Micah 5:2

### Questions:

How did Micah know that Bethlehem would be where Jesus was born?

God told him. That’s what prophets do; God tells them things only he knows and the prophets tell everybody.

Bethlehem is a little town.

Why do you think God chose for Jesus to be born there?

Jesus came in humility the first time around. He came to rule our hearts and make a way to be right with God. When he returns again He will come in power as a ruler over all.



DEC. 19

HABAKKUK 2:1 & 3:16-19

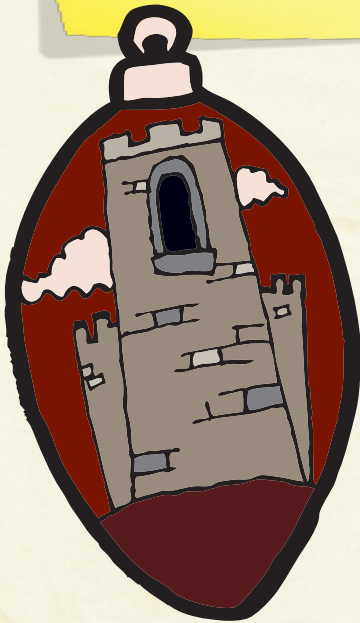
HABAKKUK

WAITING ON GOD

## Main Story Points

- Habakkuk had big questions for God about sin & evil.
- He learned that God has a good plan and it will deal with evil.
- He learned that it is good to wait on God and that there is always reason to be glad.

But I will still be glad because of what the Lord has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy. —Habakkuk 3:18



## Questions:

Will Jesus deal with all the evil in the world one day?

Yes!

Waiting on God to work things out for good is tough, what can we do to be more patient?

Remember what God has done for us already through Jesus Christ.

What should our everyday attitude be?

Joyful! No matter what the problem is, we have a hope that will not be destroyed. This comes through Jesus who is God, but came to earth as a baby so He could save us. Amazing!

DEC. 20

LUKE 1:5-25

TRUSTING

GOD WILL DO WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO

## Main Story Points

- Zechariah and Elizabeth have been praying for a child.
- God tells Zechariah that he will have a child, but because he does not believe he is made silent and must wait.

But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John.” —Luke 1:13

### Questions:

What had Zechariah and Elizabeth been praying for?

A baby.

What answer did God give?

They would have a baby boy and he would be important in the Lord's eyes.

Why is Zechariah made silent?

He doubted that God could give them a baby because they were so old.

What should we learn from this?

We should trust that God will do what He says He will do.



DEC. 21

MATTHEW 3:1-6

REPENTANCE

MAKES A WAY TO GOD



## Main Story Points

- John the Baptist was Zechariah's son.
- His job was to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah.
- He told them to turn from their sins because the kingdom of heaven is near.

John said, "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of heaven is near." —Matthew 3:2

## Questions:

John told everyone to turn from their sin and repent.  
What does that look like?

It means you say sorry to God for your sins  
and start living God's way.

Is turning from sin just about your actions?

No, it's mainly about your heart. You have  
to start thinking and feeling differently -then you act differently.  
God's first concern is what's going on inside us.

Why is repentance important for getting close to God?

Sin always leads away from God, so the first thing we have to do is  
turn from sin and go towards God.



## Main Story Points

- An angel appears to Mary.
- He tells her that she will have a baby and that his name will be Jesus.
- He also says the son will be the “Son of the Most High God” and that he will rule forever.

You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.  
—Luke 1:32

### Questions:

Jesus is called “Son of the Most High God” does that mean Jesus isn’t God?

No, Jesus is “God: The Son”.

He is just as much God as

God: The Father and God: The Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches there is 1 God in 3 persons.

We call it the Trinity!



Who will Jesus be a king like?

Like David.

How will Jesus be a greater king than David?

His kingdom will never end!

DEC. 23

MATTHEW 1:18-24

JESUS

THE LORD IS SALVATION

## Main Story Points

- An angel appeared to Joseph to tell him it was okay to marry Mary.
- He said the baby she carried was from God and that they should name him Jesus.
- Joseph obeyed God.

[Mary] is going to have a son.  
You must give him the name Jesus.  
That is because he will save his  
people from their sins. —Matthew 1:21

### Questions:

Where did the angel say  
Mary's baby came from?

God: The Holy Spirit

The angel told Joseph to name him  
Jesus. What does that name mean?

It means "The Lord is Salvation".

What would Jesus save us from?

Our sins.

So, was it always God's plan to send Jesus to the cross  
to die for our sins, or did it just happen that way?

It was always God's plan to send Jesus to die.

It was His amazing plan to save us from sin  
and bring glory to Himself.



DEC. 24

LUKE 2:1-5

JESUS

PROPHECY FULFILLED



## Main Story Points

- Caesar Augustus, the Emperor of Rome, said that everyone had to go to their home town to be counted.
- Joseph and Mary must travel to Bethlehem; Joseph's home town.

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. —Luke 2:4

## Questions:

Do you remember which prophet said the Saviour would be born in Bethlehem?

Micah (Micah 5:2)

Do you remember which prophet said the Saviour would come from the line of David?

Isaiah (Isaiah 9:7)

What does this show us?

God's prophets were telling the truth and God's people were right to wait for the coming of the Saviour — Jesus Christ!

DEC. 25

LUKE 2:6-20

JESUS IS BORN

THE WAITING IS OVER

## Main Story Points

- Mary gives birth to Jesus in a manger.
- Angels appear to shepherds to tell them the good news.
- The shepherds go to find the child.
- The shepherds tell everyone what they have seen.
- Everyone is amazed.

The angel said, “Do not be afraid I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the city of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.”

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven appeared praising God. They said: “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those He is pleased with on earth!” —Luke 2:10-14



## Questions:

What is the good news that the angels announced?

Finally a saviour had been sent from God to deal with the problem of sin. Finally there would be a way to be right with God forever!

What did the shepherds do when they heard the news?

They went to find Jesus, then they went to tell everyone.

What did the angels do?

They praised God and gave Him glory.

What should we do if we know the good news of Jesus today?

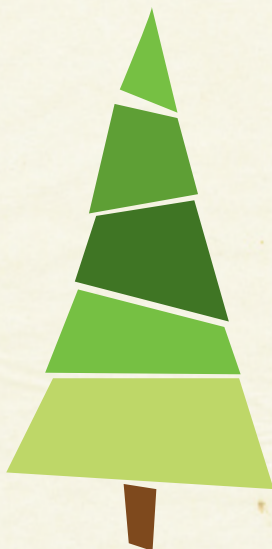
Praise God as a family (like the angels did) for the hope that came into the world with Jesus. Look for opportunities to tell the good news (like the shepherds did) to all those who haven't heard.

## **Merry Christmas!**

You can save this booklet  
to be used year after year.  
It's a great tradition to start  
with your family!

God bless, and we hope that  
you remember the true reason  
we celebrate this Christmas  
season.





---

This guide was produced on behalf of the Children's Ministries at *Willingdon Church* and *Westside Church*. You are free to duplicate and distribute this guide in your church for ministry purposes. Please do not sell or change the content of this guide in any way.

---

**westside**

Westside Church  
777 Homer St.  
Vancouver, BC

willington **kids**

Willingdon Church  
4812 Willingdon Ave  
Burnaby, BC