

The background is a dark blue night sky filled with small white stars. A large, bright starburst with many thin lines radiating from a central point is positioned in the upper center. Below the sky, a silhouette of a person with their arms raised is shown against a lighter, yellowish glow. The foreground features stylized, colorful plants in shades of green, orange, and purple.

# FAMILY ADVENT GUIDE

*A 4-Week Devotional*

*This Advent Guide belongs to*



*“She will bear a son, and you shall call  
his name Jesus, for he will save his  
people from their sins.”*

*Matthew 1:21*



## BEFORE YOU START

Go through each of the week's readings and activities together as a family. Feel free to do what will suit your family best - whether you choose to do all the activities, or select one or two, you can decide to do them all at once, or spread it out over the course of the week!

You might already have a tradition of lighting an Advent candle in an Advent wreath; feel free to add these conversation prompts and suggestions to this moment. Or perhaps you'll create some new traditions with your family!

Whether you make it fancy and full of festive details, or go for a simpler approach, the most important thing is to set aside special moments to spend time together with God as you prepare your hearts for Christmas.



Week 1

# HOPE

## READ & THINK ABOUT IT!

People were in big trouble. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, chose their own path instead of following God, and everyone since then has been trapped in a cycle of making bad choices. We call that sin, and it brings sadness, pain, and brokenness.

God had a plan all along. He would send Jesus, His own Son, fully God, born as a human being, down to earth to save and rescue us. Jesus would take care of that sin problem once and for all. People waited for many many years, hoping that one day their rescuer would come.

The right time came, and Jesus was born. As He grew up, He showed the world how to live and how much God loved them. Because of Jesus, we can be made clean, new, and so close to God, we can have His Spirit living in us.

We still wait with hope because Jesus says He will come back again too. That's another wonderful promise we have certain hope that He will keep!

*But the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared. He saved us. It wasn't because of the good things we had done. It was because of his mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely. That's because of what Jesus Christ our Savior has done. His grace made us right with God. So now we have received the hope of eternal life as God's children.*

*Titus 3:4-7 (NIRV)*

## TALK ABOUT IT

- *What are some good things you've had to wait a long time for? How did you feel while you were waiting? How did you feel when the waiting finally ended?*
- *Sometimes when we hope for good things, we don't get them or they don't happen. How does that make you feel? Sometimes we get something better than what we hoped for. We can put our hope in God, because while we might not always understand how He works, we can know that He always keeps His promises.*

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY!

- Read the story of Adam and Eve in a storybook Bible or look it up in Genesis 2 and 3. Talk about the sin problem and the hope of the promise of Jesus
- Bake some cookies together as a family. As you put together the ingredients and wait for them to bake, talk about how God's people waited for Jesus to be born. They had a certain hope that he would come, and we know that eventually he will come again . . . just like we know that the dessert will eventually be ready. When it's time to enjoy your baked goodies, talk about how good it is when the waiting is over!
- Sing or play a Christmas song about the waiting ("Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" or "O Come O Come Emmanuel").

## PRAY TOGETHER!

*Thank you, God, for keeping your promise to send Jesus to save us. We are waiting with hope and excitement for Christmas, just like people long ago waited with hope and excitement for Jesus. Give us the same certain hope that you continue to keep your promises, and that Jesus will come again and bring us to eternal life with you! In Jesus name we pray, Amen.*



Week 2

# PEACE

## READ & THINK ABOUT IT!

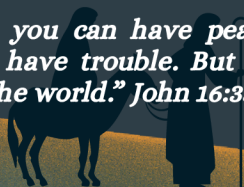
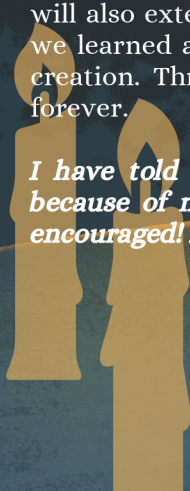
When God made the world, it was peaceful and beautiful. Everything was in the right place. The friendship between God and the people he made was also beautiful and peaceful. Before the sin problem, God spent time with Adam and Eve, walking through their garden home, talking together. Can you imagine how fun and amazing that would be?

But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and the relationship changed. Imagine a crying, angry baby who pushes away the arms of a loving parent offering a bottle. In a similar way, Adam and Eve said “NO” to God’s good rules. Instead of peaceful walks together, they tried to hide from him. Their sin built a wall between God and themselves.

Long before that first Christmas, a man named Isaiah said Jesus would be “the Prince of Peace” (See Isaiah 9:6). That’s because Jesus would take the death punishment that we deserve. He would break down the wall of sin between us and God. That means we don’t need to try to run away or hide from God the way Adam and Eve did. Because of Jesus, we have peace with God!

Imagine a quiet, peaceful, sleeping baby. When a baby is well fed and comfortable, they can finally relax, with eyes closed, gentle breathing, and deep rest. God cares for you more than any earthly parent could. He sent Jesus to mend the relationship that was broken with sin. The peace He brings will also extend to the world around us too: that future hope we learned about last week will bring perfect peace in all of creation. Through Jesus, we have complete peace with God forever.

***I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.” John 16:33***



## TALK ABOUT IT

- *Have you ever had to comfort someone? Why were they sad or upset? What did you do to help them feel better?*
- *What comforts you and brings you a feeling of peace and calm? Is it a person, a place, or an object? Earthly things will not last, but the peace God promises will be forever.*

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY!

- Look up Isaiah 11:6-9. These verses talk about the future when all will be at perfect peace, to the point that wild animals that are predator and prey will be able to live together peacefully. Draw and color some examples you read about, or play pretend as those animals!
- Create a calm, cozy, peaceful moment together. Enjoy some apple cider or hot chocolate together as a family. Snuggle together on the couch with a comfy blanket. Try turning off the lights and sitting in candlelight! Have a conversation about what brings you peace and calmness. Read and reflect on Psalm 4:8 - In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord make me dwell in safety.
- Sing or play a Christmas song about peace (“Silent Night”, “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”)

## PRAY TOGETHER!

*Father God, we thank you for giving us Jesus, and the peace we have because of Him. Thank you that He fixed and restored our broken relationship, and forgiven us of our sin. Knowing this helps quiet our fears and calms our hearts. We thank you, knowing that in a world that still suffers from the effects of sin, we can look forward to a forever peace that you will bring when you come back again. And thank you that we can be still and sure that you are God while we wait. Amen.*



## Week 3

# JOY

### READ & THINK ABOUT IT!

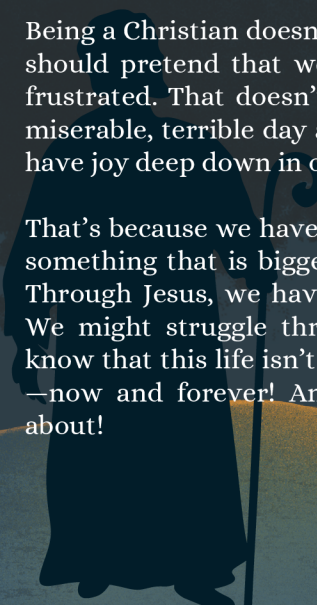
*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." . . . 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, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

*From Luke 2:8-20*

Joy is more than a feeling; it is a way of living that comes from knowing that we are God's children - forgiven and loved by Him. This is good news that brings us great joy!

Being a Christian doesn't mean we are always happy or that we should pretend that we are. It's okay to feel sad or upset or frustrated. That doesn't mean God has left us. We can have a miserable, terrible day and feel anything but happy . . . but still have joy deep down in our hearts.

That's because we have something amazing to look forward to, something that is bigger than whatever feelings we're feeling. Through Jesus, we have been promised eternal life with God. We might struggle through tough times in this life, but we know that this life isn't the end. The presence of God is with us —now and forever! And that's something to truly be joyful about!





## TALK ABOUT IT

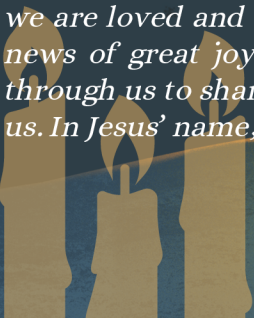
- *Happiness is a feeling that comes and goes depending on your situation. Can you think of times you've been happy? It can be easy for our happiness to be ruined. Has that ever happened to you?*
- *Share a time when things didn't go as planned. Did you respond or react with joy?*
- *What can you do to help remind you to be joyful, even when times are tough?*

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY!

- Make and write Christmas cards for friends and family members as a fun and festive way to share in the joy of the Lord. Or plan a joyful party or gathering and invite people who could use a bit of cheering up! Remember, it's not about making the cards or the party spectacular - it's about creating a moment to celebrate reasons to be joyful, not just happy.
- Act out the story from today's passage (Luke 2:8-20), and think about how joyful those shepherds must have felt. You could also try telling the story using Lego mini-figures or other figurines. Consider filming it and making it a fun video!
- Sing or play a Christmas song about joy ("Joy to the World", "Angels We Have Heard on High")

## PRAY TOGETHER!

*Heavenly Father, we need your help. Sometimes life is hard and we are sometimes overwhelmed with the challenges we face. Please remind us that you are here in our lives, and that we are your children. Help us be filled with your joy, knowing we are loved and saved from our sin. Thank you for the good news of great joy that the angels gave the shepherds! Work through us to share that joy with the world and people around us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*



Week 4

# LOVE

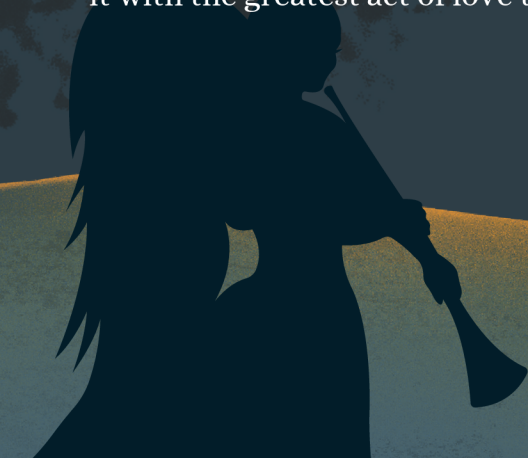
## READ & THINK ABOUT IT!

When people talk about Jesus at Christmas, they usually talk about Jesus as a little newborn baby. Of course, that's the original story we celebrate, but the whole reason why Jesus was born as a human being was to grow up. He would teach people how to live and show them how much God loved them.

*Here is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him. Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we should also love one another. No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us. His love is made complete in us.*

*1 John 4:9-12*

Out of his incredible love for us, God made a way for us to be with him. Sin and death have us trapped. There is nothing we could do to help ourselves, so he did it for us. Jesus dying on the cross and rising back to life has freed us. We don't need to be afraid of death; our hero, Saviour, and King has conquered it with the greatest act of love there ever was.



## TALK ABOUT IT

- *Think about the most loving person you have ever known. How did he or she show love?*
- *Are there people in your life who are sometimes hard to love? How can we love them the way God loves them?*

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY!

- Think of ways you can love others by giving and serving. Maybe you'll collect food for the food bank, or collect recycling to raise money for people in need. Maybe you'll drop off groceries to someone in your neighborhood. During wintertime, it's a loving thing to gift people with socks, gloves, and other warm clothing, especially if they're experiencing homelessness.
- Think or look up as many Bible verses about God's love as you can and write them on strips of coloured paper. Attach them into loops and make a paper chain. Use it to decorate your home or even your Christmas tree to help encourage you to love God and love people.
- Sing or play a Christmas song about God's love ("O Holy Night", "O Little Town of Bethlehem") Talk about what the words mean: are there any phrases or parts of the song that help you imagine the love that comes from God, and His good news?

## PRAY TOGETHER!

*Lord Jesus, thank you for becoming a human and making your home on earth with us. Thank you that we can have your Holy Spirit to make our hearts your home today! Help us know and understand your great love, and live it out as we follow you. Help us to show others—with our words and actions—that your love is real. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

