



FAMILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

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A TIME OF WAITING AND PREPARING FOR
THE CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S BIRTH



ADVENT FOCUS: HOPE

If you could wish for anything, what would it be? What would have to happen to make that wish come true? Is it something you think will really happen? Wishes feel a little bit like dreaming about something coming true—like we see in Disney movies. Hope is different. Hope is the confident expectation that something will happen. When we hope for something, it is something we believe will happen because there has been proof it is possible.



*When we give our life to Jesus,
our hope should be in Christ alone.*

SCRIPTURE: Read **GENESIS 15:1-6** together as a family.

There was no evidence in Abraham's life that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abraham believed God and expected it to happen because of who he knew God to be. One of Abraham's descendants was Jesus! If you've given your life to Jesus, you are adopted into God's family, too.

ACTIVITY:

During the Scripture reading, give each child and adult an "egg" of Silly Putty (or some Play-Doh). Invite them to make an object that most represents how they're feeling about Jesus right now.



KIDS ASK PARENTS:

What did you wish for when you were my age?
What is something you hope for today?

PARENTS ASK KIDS:

What is one thing you hope to ask Jesus one day?



ADVENT FOCUS: LOVE

What's the first thing you think of when you hear the word "love"? What's an item you love? A person? Love has several different meanings in the English language. The New Testament was originally written in Greek, and the word "love" has a lot of different meanings in Greek as well. The type of love God has for people is not the same as the love we have for things; it is a pure, sacrificial, unconditional love that desires another's highest good. This is the kind of love God has for us. The plan for Jesus's birth is an example of how much God loves all people and wants everyone to know of his love.

SCRIPTURE: Read **LUKE 1:26-38** together as a family.

Can you imagine how Mary must have felt after this conversation? Mary had no idea what all lay ahead of her, but she knew God loved her. Because of this love, she trusted God's plan. God loves us, too. We can trust his love and know he always desires our highest good—even when it doesn't "feel" like it. God **IS** love.

ACTIVITY:

Today, take some time to pray a blessing on each person present. Parents can bless all of the children or set the example by blessing the eldest child first (then each child blesses the next youngest child, and the final child blesses the parent).

For example: "Thank you God for (child's name). You have given (child's name) the gift of (talent/gifting child possesses). Continue to protect and grow (child's name).

Help (child's name) to use (talent/gift) to serve you and to serve others."



KIDS ASK PARENTS:

Share about a time when you felt loved by God.

PARENTS ASK KIDS:

Share about a time when you felt loved by God.



ADVENT FOCUS: JOY

What's one gift you hope you get for Christmas this year? How will getting it make you feel? How will you feel if you don't get it? Happiness is a temporary feeling that comes and goes based on our circumstances. Joy, on the other hand, is not an emotion that comes and goes. It is not based on our circumstances. Joy comes from God alone. Even when we are sad, we can still have joy because we know Jesus. When we have a relationship with Jesus, we can know God is with us, he is in control, and he always has our highest good in mind.

SCRIPTURE: Read **LUKE 2:8-20** as a family.

Why would the shepherds “RUN WITH JOY” to see Jesus? Because they knew God was sending a Savior, and this was him. Joy is an eager anticipation about wonderful things to come. The shepherds experienced this as they ran to Bethlehem to see Jesus. While we wait for Christ to come again, we don't have to be troubled by all of the bad things in this world. God has given us a joy no one can take away. No matter what happens, knowing Jesus means we experience difficulties differently than the world. And that is cause for joy.

ACTIVITY:

This time of year is full of lists. This year, make a new list! The most effective way to teach our children about the goodness of God is by counting our blessings. Take a long piece of paper (use the paper handed out at church), and every evening before going to bed, invite all members of the family to rattle off things they are thankful for. Make a long list. The only rule: nothing can be listed twice. Hang the list where it can be seen and added to nightly.



KIDS ASK PARENTS:

When have you gone through something difficult and still experienced joy?

PARENTS ASK KIDS:

What brings you joy at Christmastime?





ADVENT FOCUS: PEACE

What comes to your mind when you think of the word “peace”? Do any images or pictures come to mind? Biblical peace is more than just the absence of conflict; it is taking action to restore a broken situation. It’s more than feeling calm inside; it’s actually about being whole and complete. When something is whole, it is as it was intended (or created) to be. God created us for relationship with him. The peace that comes from God is not something we can create on our own; it is a fruit of the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE: Read **ISAIAH 9:6-7** as a family.

We were created to walk and talk with God. Think back to the Garden of Eden; Adam and Eve walked and talked with God. They were whole. There was no sin; only peace. Remember, in the Garden of Eden, sin entered the world. Because of his great love for us, God has always had a plan. Jesus is God’s answer to our sin. Jesus came to restore the wholeness present in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

ACTIVITY:

Today, invite your children to do all of the praying. Offer prayers of thanksgiving at different times throughout the day. Try praying without much formality. You don’t always need to bow your head or close your eyes; just say aloud a conversational prayer of thanks whenever the mood strikes. The week of Christmas is often very hectic, and we can forget about the reason for Christmas altogether. This week, when life starts feeling that way, pause in prayer and focus back on Jesus, our Prince of Peace.



KIDS ASK PARENTS:

Have you ever had peace in a situation when it didn’t make sense?
Can you tell me about it?

PARENTS ASK KIDS:

Share about a time you were afraid and needed to know God was with you.



JOY TO THE WORLD
THE LORD HAS COME!
LET EARTH RECEIVE HER KING!



Merry Christmas



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