



A JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT

IMMANUEL

God with us

Awana®



Dear Friend,

Every year, on December 26, I ask myself the same questions: “*Did we do **enough** this Christmas holiday? Did we celebrate Christmas, but forget about Christ?*” Did the glorious truth that Jesus Christ came to Earth to *be with us* shine in the midst of the commitments, class parties and church plays?

And each year, the Holy Spirit reminds me that the Son of God, Immanuel, came down to *be with us*. The glory of heaven collided with Earth — humanity — to remind us that it’s never about what we do, but about Whose we are. Advent, the season of intentionally celebrating the coming of Christ, reminds us to stop, slow down and expectantly anticipate His arrival.

As you gather together to remember the true meaning of this season, here are three ways you can slow down and turn everyday moments into moments that matter:

- 1 Gather a candle for each week of Advent. When you sit down to read and share with your kids, dim the lights and light the candle.
- 2 Every day ask each of your children, “How was God *with you* today?”
- 3 Set aside time on your calendar now to read the Christmas story with your family.

Creating space for your family to remember Jesus coming to Earth to be with us is an opportunity for discipleship, not a task to be completed. Let go of the expectations. With just a little bit of intentionality, start a conversation with your kids about Christ; you won’t regret it!

From our Awana family to yours,

Merry Christmas!



IMMANUEL

God with us

WHAT DOES IMMANUEL MEAN?

Can you believe Christmas is just a few weeks away? Soon we will enjoy the scent of pine trees, familiar songs, and the colors red and green. We may even receive a few Christmas cards from family and friends!

Special messages appear everywhere during Christmastime. Cards share about close friends, schools send emails about exciting events, and churches invite us to candlelight services. Many years ago before Jesus came to Earth as a baby, God sent the prophet Isaiah to deliver a special message to a king.

This king, named Ahaz, reigned over God's people in a land called Judah. King Ahaz feared the enemies of his kingdom. But instead of trusting God for protection, he asked other kings with massive armies to protect Judah. He thought they could help him better than God could. Ahaz was very wrong! So God sent Isaiah to speak to King Ahaz. **Let's discover what God told the king by reading Isaiah 7:10-14.**

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And he [Isaiah] said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

ISAIAH 7:10-14



CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

The Lord told King Ahaz to ask Him for a miraculous sign, but the king said no.

Thankfully, God does not rely on men to do His will. He is all-powerful, and He does what He wants. He told Isaiah to tell the king a prophecy about the future of Israel. The message was a young woman would give birth to a son called Immanuel.

Ahaz was looking for someone to come and conquer his enemies. But God had an even bigger plan — He sent Someone to conquer sin! In the book of Matthew, the Bible tells us Immanuel means **God with us**. God the Father planned to send His Son, Jesus, to be **with us** in a way we'd never experienced before. King Ahaz probably did not understand at the time how important Isaiah's message was; but hundreds of years later, Immanuel would change the fate of the whole world!

During Christmas, we celebrate Jesus. Because He fulfilled prophecy, followers of God have hope. But our hope isn't in kings, armies or other people. Our hope is in Jesus — Immanuel, **God with us**.



MEMORY VERSE

**ISAIAH
7:14**

*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and **shall call His name Immanuel.**"*

WONDER TOGETHER

Immanuel means "God with us." In what situation do you need God to be with you this week?

IMMANUEL

God with us

CHRISTMAS REMINDS US OF FAMILY.

Ice skating on frozen lakes, sipping hot chocolate from oversized mugs or decorating a home with lights is more fun with a family member by your side. What activity does your family enjoy doing during Christmastime?

Sadly, because we live in a broken world, not everyone gets to celebrate Christmas with the people they love. Every family experiences brokenness because of sin. Did you know Jesus had brokenness in His family too?

While Jesus was perfect, the family line He was born into was not. Did you know He was related to a man who sold his own brother into slavery? He also had a relative from the Old Testament called King Manasseh who worshiped idols!

Why would our perfect Savior be born into a family like that? Jesus' birth, His family and His time on Earth fulfilled the prophecies and promises God gave the Israelites. **Jesus lived a perfect life, but the brokenness of His family showed people's need for a Savior!**

When God came to Earth as a baby, He did not stop being God. Jesus was fully God and fully man — a miracle! The book of John talks about Jesus becoming human. **Can you help me read John 1:14-17?**



And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about Him, and cried out, "This was He of whom I said, 'He Who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.'") For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

JOHN 1:14-17



WHAT DID JESUS BRING?

He brought grace and truth! The people in Jesus' family needed grace and truth just as much as you and I do!

Jesus came to save the angry, broken, confused and sad people. The empty, fearful, guilty and hopeless people. People like you and me.

And guess what? If you're a follower of Jesus, He's forgiven your sins, adopted you as His child and is always **with you. You are never without family during Christmas because you are part of God's family.**

During Christmas, we celebrate Jesus. Because He lived a perfect life, died in our place and rose again from the grave, Christians have an eternal family. Jesus is Immanuel, **God with us.**

MEMORY VERSE

**JOHN
1:14**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

WONDER TOGETHER

Jesus had an imperfect family and so do we. How can God use our family to show others Who He is?

IMMANUEL

God with us

SEASON OF UNEXPECTED VISITORS

The Christmas season can bring unexpected visitors to our homes, such as friends we haven't talked to in a long time, family from far away or even neighbors we don't know well. Sometimes, these visitors bring things with them: baked desserts, special gifts or even good news. Have you ever had a visitor during Christmastime? Did they bring anything with them?

Almost a year before the very first Christmas, an unexpected visitor brought a man named Joseph some unexpected news.

Joseph wasn't married to Mary yet, but the messenger told Joseph that Mary was pregnant with a baby! God sent this visitor to speak to Joseph about Mary and her unborn baby. **Let's read about the visit in Matthew 1:18-23.**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

MATTHEW 1:18-23



ANGEL FROM GOD

Who was the unexpected visitor who came to Joseph in a dream? It was an angel from God! This angel brought good news with him. Mary was pregnant with a very special baby — **the Son of God!** God chose Joseph to help Mary raise Jesus on Earth!

Can you imagine Joseph's shock? Mary's pregnancy was not sad news; it was great news for Joseph and the rest of the world! Mary would give birth to God's Son. He would live among us, and someday He would save the world from sin.

Many years later, people still meet unexpected visitors during Christmastime. They may not be angels, but they are people we can share the angel's good news with — Jesus came to be **with us** and Jesus came to **save us**.

During Christmas, we celebrate Jesus. Because He paid the penalty of sin, people who trust in Him are saved. Jesus is Immanuel, **God with us**.



MEMORY VERSE

**MATTHEW
1:21**

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for **He will save His people from their sins.**"*

WONDER TOGETHER

Jesus came to Earth to save us. How can our family share this beautiful truth with others this week?

IMMANUEL

God with us

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Guess what's coming this week! That's right, Christmas day! Many people travel long distances to be with friends or family on Christmas. Planes, cars and trains help people travel all around the world to celebrate together. Have you ever traveled to be with someone you care about on Christmas?

Did you know our Savior, Jesus, traveled all the way from heaven to be with us? **Let's read about His birth in Luke 2:1-20.**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

LUKE 2:1-7



And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

LUKE 2:8-20

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Did you catch what the angels called baby Jesus? They called Him a Savior, Christ and the Lord. Christ is the Hebrew word for Messiah. The angels told the shepherds this baby was the Promised Messiah God's people had been waiting for! Jesus was God Himself Who had come to **be with, and save**, His people!

Whether you plan to travel by plane, car or boat, or stay at home this Christmas, remember Jesus traveled a great distance **to be with us**. He came to Earth as a tiny baby to do an unimaginable task — save the world from sin.

During Christmas, we celebrate Jesus. Because He is our Savior, He is always with us. Jesus is Immanuel, **God with us**.



MEMORY VERSE

**LUKE
2:11**

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

WONDER TOGETHER

Jesus came to Earth to be our Savior. How can we tell Him "thank you" with our words and actions this week?

IMMANUEL

God with us

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a fun holiday to celebrate, but what happens after Christmas? Do we stop celebrating Jesus until next December? Does God only come to be with us during the last month of the year? **What do you think?**

I have good news. God does not stop being with us after Christmas. We should celebrate Jesus all year long!

Jesus lived a perfect life and always followed God the Father's will for His life. During His time on Earth, Jesus did many incredible miracles. He gave sight to the blind, healed the sick and prayed for children just like you!

But one day, the time came for Him to die for our sins. It was a painful and awful death. **Thankfully, His story doesn't stop at His death.** He died for our sins, rose from the dead and returned to be with God the Father. While He is away, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us here on Earth and help us live a life that honors God.

In heaven, Jesus is preparing a place for anyone who trusts Him as their Savior to come and **be with Him! Let's read Revelation 21:1-4 to learn more about heaven.**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

REVELATION 21:1-4

DWELLING PLACE OF GOD

Did you hear where the dwelling place of God is? **It's with us!** Anyone who accepts Jesus' gift of salvation becomes a child of God. One day, Jesus will return for His people to bring us to heaven. The God of the universe will be **with us** forever!

In heaven, God will be **with us** in a way we've never experienced before. We will say goodbye to death, crying and pain. Sin and its effects will no longer be part of our lives. Instead, we will live **with God** in paradise forever!

During Christmas, and all year long, we celebrate Jesus. Because He came to Earth to be with us, we can be with Him forever in heaven. Jesus is Immanuel, **God with us.**



MEMORY VERSE

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. **He will dwell with them, and they will be His people,** and God Himself will be with them as their God."*

WONDER TOGETHER

As a follower of Christ, God is always with us! When is a time you need to remember that God is always with you?

**REVELATION
21:3**