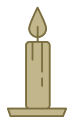


# *Advent*

Individual and Family Guide for  
Reflecting on the Advent Season







## Using this Guide

This guide includes five weeks of materials for both individual study and family discipleship during this season. Your Holly Springs Advent Guide will walk through the five advents of the season, in step with the journey we will take together as a church. These are: the Advent of Hope, the Advent of Peace, the Advent of Joy, the Advent of Love, and the Advent of Christ.

Our hope is that this will provide a simple guide for your individual study and family discipleship as we navigate this sweet season—uniting our church body in diligent study and preparation for the Lord to speak through our congregational worship and teaching, while creating opportunities to make ourselves more available to Him throughout the week. We are praying for you and your family. Whether the season of Advent is familiar or new, we pray that it will bring intentionality and rest in the Father's provision through His precious Son, Jesus—our Savior who was promised to us in Scripture, who grants us peace in chaos, who promises joy for the burdened, and whose love and sacrifice allow us life with the Father today. We hope you will use this season to understand and encounter your Savior even more intimately than before.

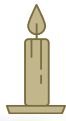
## A Note for Families

Many families choose to use Advent candles while engaging with this guide. This can be a wonderful way to involve your children and teach them about the meaning of Advent. If you decide not to use candles, please don't feel guilty. There are plenty of other ways to engage your children, and ultimately, the Word of God is sufficient. For families with toddlers, it might be wise to avoid anything flammable altogether. Some families opt for Advent wreaths, ornaments, or other child-friendly visuals instead.

If you do choose candles, anything will work! There are no special, "holy" Advent candles required. Feel free to use whatever you have on hand—leftover birthday candles, scented candles, tea lights, etc.—as long as you have five.

We've designed this guide with your family in mind. It's intended to be a simple, supportive tool for family discipleship that requires minimal preparation (and no expertise in the Old Testament).

Our prayer is that this doesn't become another burden or to-do item on your weekly schedule. Instead, we hope it creates sweet, meaningful moments for your family to grow together in understanding this special season of Advent. We're praying that you and your little ones will savor its sweetness and find a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle that can so easily steal your joy.



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# WEEK ONE HOPE INDIVIDUAL STUDY

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## **Genesis 3:15**

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.*

## **Isaiah 9:1-7**

*But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

*The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*

*You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

*For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

*For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

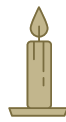
*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal for the Lord of hosts will do this.*

***Think of a time in your life when you were in deep darkness. How did you feel?***

***Who did you look to to be rescued?***

## **Advent Starts in the Beginning**

We begin our Advent journey at the very beginning of creation—and at the very first pages of the Bible. Long before the manger, the shepherds, Mary, or that silent night. In the beginning, God created everything perfect, exactly according to His design. Humanity walked with God, enjoying full access and intimacy with Him in the garden. Genesis 3 tells us they even recognized the sound of His footsteps. Adam and Eve lived in perfect relationship with their Creator—until they ate the forbidden fruit and sin entered the world. This shattered God's beautiful, flawless creation. Darkness and evil took root in every human heart. All seemed broken beyond repair, and hope appeared lost.



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## WEEK ONE

### HOPE

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But God had a plan. In the midst of the curses and chaos, God—quite subtly yet directly—gives the hope of a Redeemer. He promises a Messiah, born of a woman, who will confront the evil of the world and all the consequences of sin. He will be victorious.

## The Messiah is Coming

In the Old Testament—God’s revelation of Himself through the people of Israel—we see the promise of hope unfold. Time and again, generation after generation, God reminds His people that the Messiah is coming. He calls them to wait with eager expectation. Piece by piece, He reveals the puzzle of the coming Savior, every detail of which Jesus will perfectly fulfill in His life, death, and resurrection.

The Messiah would descend from the line of David (Isaiah 9:6–7), come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), and enter the world in the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

Many Jews held misguided expectations about their Messiah, causing many to overlook Jesus as the true fulfillment. Yet God clearly revealed the nature of Jesus’ mission: He would bring good news to the poor and proclaim liberty to the captives (Isaiah 61); He would be a Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected by men, suffering on behalf of humanity (Isaiah 53). Even the sacrificial system God gave His people would find its perfect completion and fulfillment in Jesus.

The people waited for this Messiah—for over 4,000 years, across countless generations. This hope was passed down through spoken word, through song, and eventually through the written Scriptures. Remember what Israel endured: slavery, wandering in the wilderness, endless wars, exile from their land, the struggle to rebuild, and occupation by one pagan nation after another. Life was far from easy. Many of those years were marked by profound darkness. Yet through it all, the people clung to the promise of the coming Messiah.

You may know the weight of hopelessness or deep darkness yourself. We are blessed to live in the fulfillment of that hope—He has come! Our God is faithful. Our God is trustworthy. But imagine a world ravaged by sin (as we know it all too well) with only the promise of a coming Messiah to hold onto. We see sin’s consequences in ourselves and in the world, and we know this was never God’s design. Creation groans for the redemption that is coming. The story does not end in a garden of shattered hope. This is a story of perfect redemption—a story of unshakable hope.



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## WEEK ONE HOPE

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### Reflection

Consider God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12-14). How could they have escaped Pharaoh's chains without the mighty power of God?

Now compare that bondage to the tyranny of sin—a far crueler master than any earthly king. What hope do we have of breaking free?

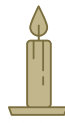
The Israelite people waited so long for their Messiah. How do you fight off doubt, frustration, exhaustion, discouragement, and temptation when waiting in hope?

You may be in a season of waiting now. How do you rely on God during this time? What might God be doing to strengthen your faith during a time of waiting?

### Prayer

What are your hopes for yourself, your family, and your community during this Advent season? What will be the priorities of this time? Bring these hopes before the Lord, and, if appropriate, make a plan to prioritize the things of God in this Advent season.

Pray for a 'soft heart.' That the word and hope of God would continue to be life changing no matter how many advent seasons you've experienced. Pray that God would open your eyes to the ways He is moving in your life and the lives around you.



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## WEEK ONE HOPE

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# FAMILY STUDY

## Light the Advent Candle

Have one member of your family light the first candle, or place whatever other visual you are using. There are four more weeks, so remind them that you will take turns!

## Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passages.

*Before they left the garden, God whispered a promise to Adam and Eve: "It will not always be so! I will come to rescue you! And when I do, I'm going to do battle against the snake. I'll get rid of the sin and the dark and the sadness you let in here. I'm coming back for you!"*

*And he would. One day, God himself would come.*

***The Jesus Storybook Bible***

*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***

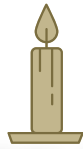
## Reflection

**Have an adult read the reflection material.**

When God first made the world everything was perfect. It was all exactly the way God wanted it to be. There wasn't any evil in the world at all. But then Adam and Eve disobeyed God. They ate from the tree that God specifically told them not to eat from. They chose to believe their way was better than God's, and went against what God had asked them to do. This is called *SIN*, and Adam and Eve brought sin into God's perfect world.

God is Holy (absolutely perfect and set-apart), and there had to be a consequence for Adam and Eve's choice to disobey. Adam and Eve were separated from God. This is very sad, and means that all of us cannot get to God because of our sin. This is a big problem, because we *need* God.

***Discuss with your children: Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, we all need to be rescued. What do we need to be rescued from?***



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## WEEK ONE HOPE

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Thankfully, God already had a plan. He would send Jesus to earth so that we would no longer be separated from Him. Jesus would come and make everything right again—like it was in the very beginning—by standing in our place and taking the punishment for our sin upon Himself. God knows we need Him, and He knew that only Jesus could make a way for us to be with God again.

But, God waited thousands of years to send Jesus, the Messiah. That's a long time. All that time God continued to give them hints and clues about Jesus's coming. But God's people faced many hard things while they were waiting. This made it hard, at times, to wait and have hope.

***Discuss with your children: How do you think it felt to wait for Jesus for so long? Why is it hard to wait for the things we want?***

God always keeps His promises. Even if it was hard to wait so long for this promise to be given God, finally Jesus came to the earth as a little baby. All of the waiting and hoping was worth it. Just like God said it would be.

Even though Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He always had a plan for us to be with him again.

### Prayer

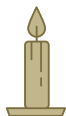
Have one member of the family thank God for His mercy and His gift of Jesus.  
Thank God for always keeping his promises.

### Song

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

### Optional: Family Activity

Make a plan to do something fun for the whole family. This could be watching a Christmas movie together, baking cookies, driving to see Christmas lights, an outing with friends, etc. Tell your children that there is something exciting coming up, but do not share with them what it is. Throughout the week, remind them of the upcoming surprise, and give them hints or clues. As their excitement (or frustration) grows, remind them of God's promised Savior and how God's people may have felt to wait.



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## WEEK TWO PEACE INDIVIDUAL STUDY

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### **Luke 2:8-14**

*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!"*

### **Isaiah 11:1-7**

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

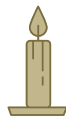
***What areas of your life do you notice peace? What areas are dominated by chaos?***

## **The Best Good News Ever**

How thrilling is it to receive good news? "We're having a baby!" "I got into my dream school!" "I scored my first soccer goal!" "The doctor says I'm cancer-free!"

But isn't it even better when someone shares it with you directly—or when you're the very first to hear? In our world of instant updates, it's easy to scroll past life's milestones. Yet there's something truly special when a friend or family member intentionally invites you into their joy.





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## WEEK TWO PEACE

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In Luke 2, we encounter not just good news, but the best news the world has ever received. God is fulfilling His ancient promise: the Savior has come—a baby has been born. The long centuries of waiting are over.

The world into which Jesus is born feels eerily familiar. Political turmoil, division among spiritual leaders, oppression, poverty, sickness, death... chaos. An innocent child enters a dangerous and disorienting world. Yet this is our Savior, come to bring peace in the midst of our chaos.

### **A Blessing to the Lowly**

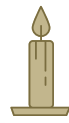
The greatest news ever given wasn't announced to the powerful, the influential, or the pious. It was delivered to humble shepherds—men who faithfully watched their flocks by night. Far from villages and cities, they were viewed as dangerous, untrustworthy, and unclean. Society's outcasts. The poor. The forgotten.

Yet we belong to an upside-down kingdom, where the last shall be first and the first shall be last. God doesn't measure by status or wealth. In His perfect wisdom and kindness, He sent the greatest announcement to those at the very bottom—and spared no glory. The shepherds heard that the Savior of the world had arrived, and they watched in awe as the heavens burst open with angelic praise for God's provision.

Time and again, God chooses the unlikely and grafts them into His story. He calls people like you and me—flawed, yet faithful—to be beacons of hope and light.

Our Savior has come. He triumphed over sin and death. He rose again. He commissioned us to go. And He is returning for His own. Let that truth sink deep into your heart and settle in your bones! Every morning, amid the chaos and trials of this world, this is your anchor. This news alone brings perfect peace that surpasses all understanding. This is the hope the world is missing. God invites us to receive His peace—and to share it freely. The shepherds didn't hesitate; they hurried to see the child in the manger. The birth of their Savior moved them to action. It must move us every day. They met the infant Jesus and left telling everyone they encountered about Him.

If this peace feels distant, know this: the Lord is near. He longs to give you the peace now available through Jesus. That tiny baby, lying in a manger, is living proof.



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## WEEK TWO PEACE

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### Reflection

How does it change your view of God to know that He chose to announce the birth of Jesus—not to the powerful or wealthy—but to humble shepherds?

The shepherds didn't keep the good news to themselves—they acted immediately and shared it with others. What might it look like for you to share the hope of Jesus in your daily life?

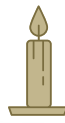
Where do you most need to experience that peace in your life right now?

God consistently chooses the “unworthy” to carry His light into the world. How can you embrace your role as an imperfect yet faithful beacon of His love and truth this week?

### Prayer

Think about how much more chaotic the Christmas season can feel. How will you prioritize peace for yourself and your family during this time? What do you need to give up? What do you need to add or prioritize?

Thank God for the peace He offers, and ask that you would remove obstacles that may prevent you from fully experiencing His peace. Thank God for using unworthy people to share His good news.



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## WEEK TWO PEACE

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# FAMILY STUDY

## Light the Advent Candle

Have one member of your family light the second candle, or place whatever other visual you are using.

## Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passages.

*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!"*

**Luke 2:8-14**

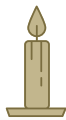
*In those days, remember, people used to laugh at the shepherds and say they were smelly and call them other rude names (which I can't possibly mention here). You see, people thought shepherds were nobodies, just scruffy old riff-raff. But God must have thought shepherds were very important indeed, because they're the ones he chose to tell the good news to first.*

**Jesus Storybook Bible**

## Reflection

Have an adult read the reflection material.

Shepherds were the people in Jesus's day that would take care of sheep. They would protect the sheep from predators, they would make sure the sheep had all the food and water that they needed, and they would travel with the sheep in the wilderness.



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## WEEK TWO PEACE

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Sounds like an important job right? But people did not like the shepherds, and they did not trust them. People were mean to the shepherds. But God cared very deeply for the shepherds, and He came and told them amazing news. An angel appeared to the shepherds to tell them that baby Jesus had been born. Then all the angels had a beautiful party in the sky to worship God and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

***Discuss with your children: Why do you think God chose to tell this wonderful news to shepherds, even though other people did not like them?***

The shepherds had a lot of things to worry about. Like we said earlier, they had to work hard to care for these sheep. They did not have a lot of money, or very many friends. Life was definitely not easy for the shepherds, and they struggled every day. God had a very special message for them. That Jesus had come to earth to give them *peace*.

***Discuss with your children: What does it mean to have peace?***

This doesn't mean that God was taking away all of the hard things about their lives, but God was doing something bigger and better! Jesus is the gift of salvation - the only thing that can give us true peace. The angel delivered a message to the shepherds of salvation from sin. The shepherds knew that this was truly good news. They immediately went and visited Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. They were so excited that they went and told everyone they could about Jesus. The Savior of the world had come.

### Prayer

**Have one member of the family thank God for the gift of Jesus, and that God chooses unlikely people to share his good news.**

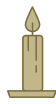
### Song

*Away in a Manger*

### Optional: Family Activity

If you haven't already fulfilled the promise of the fun event do so this week. Discuss with them what it felt like to wait, and then to receive the fun thing. For this week, give your children an opportunity to serve someone else. If you have multiple children, have them serve their sibling. If you have one child, work with them to put something together for a friend. This could be making cookies for someone else, picking out a small toy or candy bar for someone else, or giving up one of their own toys to give to someone else. If they are giving something to a friend, discuss a friend that might be forgotten about sometimes. Ask them how they feel to give someone else a good thing.





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# WEEK THREE

## JOY

# INDIVIDUAL STUDY

### **Matthew 2:1-12**

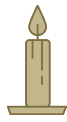
*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" For we saw his star when it rose and we have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet, "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."*

*Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the King, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until they came to rest over a place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*

### **Isaiah 60:1-6**

*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring you gold and frankincense and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.*

***Have you ever traveled a far distance for a trip? How did it feel to be so far from home? What did this experience teach you about the world?***



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## WEEK THREE

### JOY

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### The Gentile Wise Men

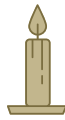
The Magi were scholars of the heavens—trained in astrology, dreams, and the language of the stars. They studied the skies and knew the rhythms of the cosmos. The wise men in Matthew 2 came from the East, likely the region of ancient Persia. We don't know their names or exact origins, but we know this: they were Gentiles, not Jews. Perhaps echoes of a coming Savior had reached them through Jewish exiles during the Babylonian captivity. Whatever the source, when they saw His star rise, they left everything and embarked on a long, faith-driven journey to find the newborn King and worship Him. Two profound truths shine through their story. First, the Magi were outsiders—foreigners with no claim to Israel's covenant promises. Why would the birth of Israel's Messiah matter to them? Yet something stirred their hearts to seek Him. Second, it was God Himself who revealed His Son to them. He hung a star in the sky—not for Israel alone, but for the nations. God drew those far off to the light of Christ, that they might kneel and offer their worship.

From the very beginning, God's plan was global. Through Jesus, salvation crosses every border, every bloodline, every tribe and tongue. One day, voices from every corner of the earth will rise together, proclaiming the sweetness of His name, confessing Him as Lord, and rejoicing in His reign. Jesus is worthy of it all—the glory, the honor, the praise of every heart.

God continues this pattern today, placing His people in specific places, at specific times, to shine for specific people. He invites us into His kingdom work. The coworkers in your office, the neighbors down the street, the barista at your favorite coffee shop—you are strategically positioned to love them and share the love of Christ.

The Magi remind us: the gospel isn't confined to America. It began nowhere near here. We know Jesus and walk with the Father because, somewhere along the way, the gospel was given to us. This truth may stir a call to distant missions—but even here in the West, we don't need to cross oceans to meet people from other nations. International students walk our campuses. Immigrants live in our cities. People who don't look like us or sound like us are literally at our doorstep.

What an opportunity. What a privilege—to join God's ancient mission, inviting all people, everywhere, to come and worship His Son.



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## WEEK THREE

### JOY

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### Reflection

The Magi were willing to be inconvenienced and leave the comfort of familiar in pursuit of a Savior. What could God be calling you to sacrifice for your relationship with him to grow and flourish?

Do you feel an intentional calling to missions? If so, how have you seen the gospel travel to faraway places? If not, what does it look like to treat your community as a mission field?

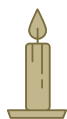
It can be easy to forget, that many of us only have access to the gospel because of the grace of God. Why is this so important to be reminded of?

Who is the person or the family that God could be strategically placing you in proximity to? How can you serve them during the holiday season?

### Prayer

Take time to pray for those brothers and sisters that are specifically working to bring the gospel to the nations. Pray for someone by name if you can.

Begin to notice how often you interact with people of a different nationality. Ask the Lord to give you faith and favor to build relationships and share the gospel.



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## WEEK THREE JOY

# FAMILY STUDY

## Light the Advent Candle

Have one member of your family light the third candle, or place whatever other visual you are using.

## Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passages.

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and we have come to worship him."*

**Matthew 2:1-2**

*So the three wise men followed the star out of the big city, along the road, into the little town of Bethlehem. They followed the star through the streets of Bethlehem out of the nice part of town, through the not-so-nice part of town, into the really-not-so-nice part of town, down a little dirt road until it stopped right over..... a little house.*

**Jesus Storybook Bible**

*"And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

**Matthew 2:10-11**

## Reflection

Have an adult read the reflection material.

The shepherds were the very first people God chose to tell about Jesus. Remember their big celebration in the sky? But that very same night, God placed a star in the sky to celebrate the birth of his Son to the world. This sign attracted some unlikely travelers, the Magi (they were educated men, or *wise men*) to come from far away. Some people think they could have traveled almost 1,000 miles to see Jesus.





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## WEEK THREE

### JOY

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The Magi were not of Jewish descent—they were Gentiles. This means they had not been raised in the Scriptures, nor had they been specifically taught about the coming Messiah. They did not attend the temple or follow Jewish traditions. Yet they were willing to travel a great distance just to see Jesus.

***Discuss with your children: Why do you think the Magi were so willing to travel to find Jesus?***

The Magi packed up all their things and left their home country in search of Jesus. They followed the special star all the way to Israel and then to the little town of Bethlehem. It took so long that Jesus was not a newborn baby anymore. He could have been as old as two years old.

When they finally found Jesus, the Bible said that they were so happy! That they were filled with joy - which is the most thankful and glad your heart can ever feel. They bowed down and worshiped Jesus. And they gave gifts of great value; gold, frankincense, and myrrh to little Jesus.

All through the Advent story, we see how generous and loving God is. He sent a group of angels to share the wonderful news of Jesus' birth with the shepherds. He also placed a bright star in the sky to lead wise men from far away to find Jesus. God wants everyone—people from every place—to know Him, love Him, trust Him, and obey Him.

One day, boys and girls, moms and dads, and people from every country and language will worship Jesus together. God is rescuing people from all around the world so that we can praise and love Him the way He deserves.

## Prayer

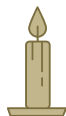
Have one member of the family thank God for inviting all different people to know Jesus.

## Song

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

## Optional: Family Activity

Take time this week to look at the map of the world. Discuss with your children how big the world really is. Maybe show them how far we are from where Jesus was born. Discuss how the news reached us. Pick different countries on the map, and pray together as a family that those people would come to know Jesus.



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# WEEK FOUR

## LOVE

# INDIVIDUAL STUDY

### John 3:16-19

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

### **Zephaniah 3:14-20**

*Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.*

### **Romans 5:6-11**

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for an unrighteous person - though perhaps for a good person one would dare to even die - but God shows his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

***What makes you feel most loved? What has someone done that you remember that made you feel seen and valued? How do you show love to others?***



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## WEEK FOUR LOVE

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### God's Love for His People

The gospel painted across the pages of Scripture is the greatest love story ever told. In the garden, humanity shattered God's perfect design. Yet in spite of our brokenness, God loved us so fiercely that He gave the perfect sacrifice on our behalf, reconciling us to Himself. Jesus left the glory of heaven and humbled Himself as a helpless infant in a manger—for our good and for the Father's glory.

If we miss this, we miss the heart of Christmas. The story doesn't end at the nativity: a wide-eyed baby, a grateful mother, a star in the sky. The true beauty of Jesus is not found in swaddling clothes, but on a cross. The gift of Jesus is not in the tiny hands of a newborn, but in the pierced hands of a man, stretched wide on a tree.

His sacrificial death is the proof of God's immeasurable love—for us: broken, selfish, sinful people. His resurrection is the proof of Christ's eternal victory over sin and death.

### The Response of Man

God knows we could never make ourselves worthy of right relationship with Him—no matter how hard we try. Yet His response is not condemnation, but invitation. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). Where we deserve eternal separation, He offers grace.

How often do we let this truth glance off our hearts without response? This love demands more than a one-time decision—it calls for a daily surrender. It reshapes how we walk through Advent. It transforms every day of the year.

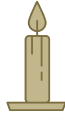
Now, we live for a holy God.

Now, every choice carries eternal weight.

Now, we are free from sin's grip.

Now, we stand in right relationship with the Father—forever.

Our prayer is that this Advent season is different. Not through fleeting emotion, forced effort, or surface-level tradition—but through true surrender. A genuine, worshipful step toward Him, moved by the baby in the manger, the cross on the hill, and the empty tomb.



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## WEEK FOUR LOVE

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### Reflection

How does viewing the gospel as an act of love shift your understanding of God's relationship with humanity?

What might a response to the gospel look like during this advent season and beyond?

How can you best reflect God's grace and love to others during your daily life?

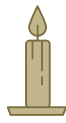
God reveals many things about His nature and character through the birth of His Son. What attributes of God do you see in this part of the Advent narrative?

### Prayer

Take a moment to worship God for his great love for you.

Thank God that His story began in a manger and ended with an empty tomb. Ask God to grow your understanding of His love for you.





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## WEEK FOUR LOVE

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# FAMILY STUDY

## Light the Advent Candle

Have one member of your family light the fourth candle, or place whatever other visual you are using.

## Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passages.

*The God who flung the planets into space and kept them whirling around and around, the God who made the universe with just a word, the one who could do anything at all - was making himself small. And coming down..... as a baby. Wait. God was sending a baby to rescue the world? "But it's too wonderful!" Mary said, her heart beating hard. "How can it be true?" "Is anything too wonderful for God?" Gabriel asked. So Mary trusted God more than what her eyes could see. And she believed. "I am God's servant," she said. "Whatever God says, I will do."*

***Jesus Storybook Bible***

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*

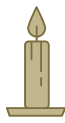
***John 3:16-17***

## Reflection

Have an adult read the reflection material.

Remember in the garden when sin first entered the world? Remember God said he had a plan - to send a Savior into the world? Why would God promise to send a Savior to fix things that we had broken? Why would he want to save us after we disobeyed?

***Discuss with your children: Why do you think God wanted to save us from our sin?***



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## WEEK FOUR LOVE

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God loves us so much—so much that He sent Jesus, His only Son, to save us from our sins. Jesus came into the world as a baby, then grew up. He taught us how to live: what we should do, how we should pray, and how to care for others. And then He laid down His life for us. He died on the cross for you and for me. He knew this was the only way we could be reunited with God. He loved us so deeply that He endured something terrifying and excruciatingly painful to repair what sin had broken when it entered the world.

***Discuss with your children: What is the best gift you have ever gotten? Why is God giving us Jesus the best gift ever?***

God was thinking of you when he sent His Son to the earth. He was thinking about all of his people, and how much he loves them. Even though we will never be perfect - we will continue to mess up and to sin - God still sent Jesus to die for us. How crazy is it for God to love us even when our sin breaks his heart? When Jesus came to the earth, he showed us how much God loves us, and he died so that his Father in heaven could be glorified.

***Discuss with your children: Why do you think God decides to love us, even though we are sinful?***

### Prayer

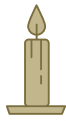
Have one member of the family thank God for his big amazing love for us!

### Song

*O Come O Come Emmanuel*

### Optional: Family Activity

Schedule a time for your family to serve and care for someone else. Volunteer at a food pantry, donate to the salvation army, or gift toys to kids in your community. Discuss with your children the love of God, and how we can reflect this love onto others. Share with them the importance of serving others.



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# WEEK FIVE CHRIST INDIVIDUAL STUDY

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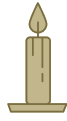
## **Micah 5:2-5**

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.*

## **Matthew 1:18-25**

*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). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

***Describe a time when you looked forward to an event for a long time. What did it feel like to wait? What did you feel when the wait was finally over?***



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## WEEK FIVE CHRIST

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### Jesus - the Perfect Fulfillment

Throughout the Old Testament, God spoke through prophets, promising a Savior who would redeem His people. They foretold how to recognize His coming and assured Israel that God had not forgotten them. This long-awaited Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, of a virgin, and would reign as King from David's line—bringing a peace the world had never known. With eager hearts, Israel waited and watched for their Deliverer. Then, on an ordinary night, the extraordinary broke through—God kept His word. Mary, bearing the promised Child, journeyed with Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem for Caesar's census. The town overflowed with David's descendants, leaving no room at the inn. In a humble stable, under a quiet sky, the moment arrived. Mary gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger. They named Him Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins.

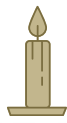
After four centuries of silence, heaven's voice returned—not in thunder, but in the cry of a newborn. The eternal Word became flesh. His first breath declared hope and the defeat of sin and death for all who believe. The Ancient of Days entered time, clothed in human frailty, armed with mercy, compassion, and power to rescue those in darkness and lead them into everlasting light.

In Jesus, every promise finds its "Yes." He fulfilled the prophets' words—perfectly, purposefully, on time. Our God is faithful. Our God is compassionate. He saw our deepest need and answered with love, sending His only Son to save.

God orchestrated every detail to announce His Son's arrival. He invited shepherds and Magi—unlikely, unworthy outsiders—into the story, revealing His heart for all nations to be saved through Christ. Piece by piece, the Author unveiled His plan, and Jesus fulfilled every prophecy, every point of the Law. He is the true and better Adam. Through His death and resurrection, He perfectly, sufficiently, eternally redeems us—if we will believe.

May this truth strengthen your heart. As Advent closes, let it be a season of remembrance: our God is faithful, compassionate, and true to every promise.





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## WEEK FIVE CHRIST

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### Reflection

Consider the Old Testament prophecies we've read throughout this season. How do you see Christ's perfect fulfillment of these?

What can you do to continue to keep your focus on Christ as we continue and end the Advent season?

What is something that God has taught you about himself during this advent season, that is important for you to continue in your walk with Him?

### Prayer

As you prepare for festivities with friends and families - reflect on the gift of Jesus being the greatest gift anyone could receive. How will this truth change the way you interact with your loved ones this week?

In prayer, thank God for His goodness in sending a Savior. Thank God that Jesus perfectly fulfills all that He promised. Confess places where your confidence in His faithfulness is weak and ask Him for increased trust, belief, and hope.



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## WEEK FIVE CHRIST

# FAMILY STUDY

## Light the Advent Candle

Have one member of your family light this week's candle, or place whatever other visual you are using. This week is the most important of all. If appropriate, have the spiritual leader of your family light the Christ candle.

## Scripture Reading

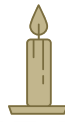
Have one member of your family read the following passages.

*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 the 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 2:3-7**

*... in the quiet of the night, God gave the world his wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. His baby son. Mary and Joseph wrapped him up to keep him warm. They made a soft bed of straw and used the animals' feeding trough as his cradle. And they gazed in wonder at God's Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus, "Emmanuel" - which means "God has come to live with us." Because of course, he had.*

**Jesus Storybook Bible**



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## WEEK FIVE CHRIST

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### Reflection

**Have an adult read the reflection material.**

This is it! This is the moment we've all been waiting for! Can you feel the **anticipation**? Remember a few weeks ago when God promised to fix everything that had been broken by sin? He promised to send a Savior to the world. Well after all this time - **thousands** of years of waiting - the people of Israel would receive the gift of Jesus. All those hints and clues that God left for his people would lead them to Jesus. Jesus was the **Messiah** that was promised.

***Discuss with your children: How do you think it would feel to wait thousands of years for Jesus?***

So God declared the wait was over. He chose a young couple—Mary and Joseph—to fulfill His plan to save the world. They traveled to Bethlehem for the census, and there, Jesus was born—just as God had promised!

Jesus, the King of kings, became a tiny baby. He entered the world in a cold, smelly stable, laid in a manger among the animals. There, the shepherds came to worship Him, and later, the Magi arrived bearing gifts. Everything unfolded exactly as God planned, and the world is forever changed because Jesus, the Savior, had come.

### Prayer

**Have one member of the family thank God for baby Jesus and for Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.**

### Song

***Silent Night***

### Optional: Family Activity

On Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, read the Christmas story in Luke in its entirety. Give your children the opportunity to share what they remember. Discuss with them the importance of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

## **Merry Christmas, Holly Springs Family**

From the quiet wonder of Bethlehem to the joy-filled hope in our hearts today, we celebrate the birth of our Savior—Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

May this Christmas draw you closer to Him and to one another. May your homes be filled with laughter, your hearts with peace, and your lives with the unshakable truth that He is with us.

With love and gratitude, Holly Springs Staff and Elders

