
GENESIS TO JESUS

24 ADVENT READINGS

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NOTES

This Advent material uses the NIRV (New International Reader's Version), as it is aimed at younger readers. In some cases parts of verses have been removed to retain clarity. These have been marked with "...".

Details of optional music CDs:

- *King of Christmas* (Colin Buchanan, 2005)
- *The King, the Snake and the Promise* (Emu Music, 1998)

Each day has a 'special verse' - these can be used as memory verses, or perhaps written down and placed in an advent box, pocket, etc for that day.

Each day is spread over two pages: the daily drawing could be done in the booklet, if desired.

This advent material was created using the Advent Tree in *Disciplines of a Godly Family*, by Kent and Barbara Hughes (Crossway Books, 2004) as the basis. Some days are almost the same as theirs, others have been completely changed.

This is designed to be started on December 1 & to finish on December 24.

DAY 1: CREATION

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty. Darkness was over the surface of the ocean. At that time, the ocean covered the earth. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day." He called the darkness "night." There was evening, and there was morning. It was day one. (Genesis 1:1-5)

In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him. ⁴ Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

THINK

What did God create?

How did God make everything?

Can you make anything by speaking?

Who was with God in the beginning?

What did the Word do?

Who is the Word?

PRAY

❖ Heavenly Father, you are so powerful that you created the world by your word alone. Thank you for creating us to live in your world. Thank you that we know Jesus was there at creation with you, and that he is the light for all people. Help us to remember that he is all we need. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the world that God created
- Special verse: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*
- Listen/sing along to *Creation Song* (The King, the Snake and the Promise CD)
- Read all of Genesis 1 and list all the things that God made
- Find examples of things from creation around the house

DAY 2: SIN

¹ *The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden'?"*

² *The woman said to the serpent, "We can eat the fruit of the trees that are in the garden. ³ But God did say, 'You must not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.' "*

⁴ *"You can be sure that you won't die," the serpent said to the woman.*

⁵ *"God knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you will know things you have never known before. You will be able to tell the difference between good and evil. You will be like God."*

⁶ *The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat. It was also pleasing to look at. And it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it. ⁷ Then both of them knew things they had never known before. They realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made clothes for themselves. ⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking in the garden. It was the coolest time of the day. They hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called out to the man. "Where are you?" he asked. ¹⁰ "I heard you in the garden," the man answered. "I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid."...*

²³ *So the Lord God drove the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he had been made out of. (Genesis 3:1-10, 23)*

All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God.

All of us have turned to our own way.

*And the Lord has placed on his servant
the sins of all of us. (Isaiah 53:6)*

*But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners,
Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*

THINK

Did Adam and Eve obey God? How? What was tempting about the fruit?

What is sin? Are you sinful? How do you know?

What should we do when we sin?

How does God show his love for us?

PRAY

- ❖ Holy God, just like Adam and Eve sinned, so do we, every day. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for us so that we can be forgiven. Help us to obey and follow you. Help us to forgive others as you forgave us. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: apple and snake.
- Special verse: *But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)*
- Listen/sing along to *God Is A Holy God* (The King, the Snake and the Promise CD)
- Listen/sing along to *Jesus Saves! Jesus Saves!* (King of Christmas CD)
- Would you have given up eternal life and a relationship with God for the knowledge of good and evil?

DAY 3: THE FLOOD

⁵ The Lord saw how bad the sins of man had become on the earth. All of the thoughts in his heart were always directed only toward what was evil. ⁶ The Lord was very sad that he had made man on the earth. His heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the Lord said, "I created man on the earth. But I will wipe them out. I will destroy people and animals alike. I will also destroy the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air. I am very sad that I have made man."

⁸ But the Lord was pleased with Noah...

¹⁷ For 40 days the flood kept coming on the earth ... ²³ Every living thing on the earth was wiped out. People and animals were destroyed. The creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped out. Everything was destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark were left....

¹¹ "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."

¹² God continued, "My covenant is between me and you and every living thing with you. It is a covenant for all time to come. "Here is the sign of the covenant I am making. ¹³ I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Sometimes when I bring clouds over the earth, a rainbow will appear in them. ¹⁵ Then I will remember my covenant between me and you and every kind of living thing. The waters will never become a flood to destroy all life again. ¹⁶ "When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it. I will remember that my covenant will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of living thing on earth." (Genesis 6:5-8; 7:17,23, 9:11-16)

When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done. (Romans 6:23)

THINK

Why did God send the flood?

What does everyone deserve?

What does God promise after the flood?

What gift does God give us? Why?

PRAY

- ❖ Lord, thank you that you have promised never to flood the earth again. Thank you that you have provided Jesus as the payment for our sin. Thank you that we can have eternal life because of him. Help us to remember this gift during Christmas. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Noah's ark & a rainbow
- Special verse: *I will remember that my covenant will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of living thing on earth. (Genesis 9:16)*
- Set up an ark and act out the flood

DAY 4: THE CALL TO ABRAM

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family. Go to the land I will show you.

² "I will make you into a great nation.

I will bless you.

I will make your name great.

You will be a blessing to others.

³ I will bless those who bless you.

I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you.

All nations on earth

will be blessed because of you."

⁴ So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot...

⁷ 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 12:1-5, 7)

THINK

What did God tell Abram to do?

What were God's promises to Abram?

How did Abram respond to God's commands and promises?

PRAY

❖ Dear Lord, we are thankful that Abram trusted you. Help us to also trust you and to obey your commands, whether they seem hard or easy. We know that Jesus always followed you, help us to do the same. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a tent
- Special verse:
I will bless those who bless you.
I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you.
All nations on earth
will be blessed because of you. (Genesis 12:3)
- Set up a tent or cubby house. Pretend it will be our house, what will it need?
- What would you take if God told you to leave your house and go somewhere else?

DAY 5: ABRAHAM PROMISED A SON

¹⁰ Then the Lord said, "You can be sure that I will return to you about this time next year. Your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already very old. Sarah was too old to have a baby. ¹² So she laughed to herself. She thought, "I'm worn out, and my husband is old. Can I really know the joy of having a baby?"

¹³ Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Will I really have a baby, now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for me? I will return to you at the appointed time next year. Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid. So she lied and said, "I didn't laugh." But the Lord said, "Yes, you did."...

^{21:1} The Lord was gracious to Sarah, just as he had said he would be. He did for Sarah what he had promised to do. ² Sarah became pregnant. She had a son by Abraham when he was old. He was born at the exact time God had promised him.

³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah had by him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him. He did it exactly as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, "God has given laughter to me. Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷ She continued, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? But I've had a son by him when he is old."

(Genesis 18:10-15; 21:1-7)

THINK

What did God promise to Abraham and Sarah?

Did Sarah believe God? Why or why not?

Did God keep his promise?

How long did it take? (compare Abraham's ages from Day 4 & 5)

Do you like waiting for promises to come true?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear God, thank you that you can do things that seem impossible to us, such as giving a baby to Sarah when she was very old. Help us to trust that you can do anything to keep your promises and that sometimes it takes a long time. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the baby Isaac
- Special verse: *Is anything too hard for me? (Genesis 18:14a)*
- Who are the babies you know? How are they a blessing?
- Carry a (toy) baby around for the day and take care of it.

DAY 6: JOSEPH

³ Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Joseph had been born to him when he was old. Israel made him a beautiful robe. ⁴ Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him ...

²³ When Joseph came to his brothers, he was wearing his beautiful robe. They took it away from him. ²⁴ And they threw him into the well. The well was empty. There wasn't any water in it ... ²⁸ The traders from Midian came by. Joseph's brothers pulled him up out of the well. They sold him to the Ishmaelite traders for eight ounces of silver. Then the traders took him to Egypt ...

³⁶ But the traders from Midian sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar was one of Pharaoh's officials. He was the captain of the palace guard. (Genesis 37:3-4, 23-4, 28, 36)

¹⁸ Then his brothers came and threw themselves down in front of him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Do you think I'm God?" ²⁰ 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. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I'll provide for you and your children." He set them free from their fears. And he spoke in a kind way to them. (Genesis 50:18-21)

²⁸ We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

THINK

How did Joseph's brothers feel about him? Why?

What did they do?

Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?

Have you forgiven someone who has hurt you? Do you need to?

Do you need to ask anyone to forgive you?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you that even though Joseph's brothers planned to hurt him, you planned good things for him. Please help us to trust you when things don't work out the way we want them to. Please take away any jealousy or hate we feel today. Thank you for forgiving us over and over again. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a beautiful coat.
- Special verse: *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*
- Wear your dressing gown or a coat. Pretend to be Joseph.

DAY 7: PASSOVER AND EXODUS

⁶ "So tell the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord. I will throw off the heavy load the Egyptians have put on your shoulders. I will set you free from being slaves to them. I will reach out my arm and save you with mighty acts when I judge Egypt. ⁷ I will take you to be my own people. I will be your God. You will know that I am the Lord your God when I throw off the load the Egyptians have put on your shoulders. ⁸ I will bring you to the land I promised with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I lifted up my hand and promised it to them. The land will belong to you. I am the Lord.' " (Exodus 6:6-8)

¹⁴ "Always remember this day. For all time to come, you and your children after you must celebrate this day as a feast in honor of the Lord. It is a law that will last forever...

²⁴ "Obey all of these directions. It's a law for you and your children after you for all time to come. ²⁵ The Lord will give you the land, just as he promised. When you enter it, keep this holy day. ²⁶ Your children will ask you, 'What does this holy day mean to you?' ²⁷ Tell them, 'It's the Passover sacrifice in honor of the Lord. He passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt. He spared our homes when he struck the Egyptians down.' " Then the people of Israel bowed down and worshiped. ²⁸ They did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron. (Exodus 12:14, 24-28)

¹³ Moses answered the people. He said, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm. You will see how the Lord will save you today. Do you see those Egyptians? You will never see them again. ¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you. Just be still."...

²¹ Then Moses reached his hand out over the Red Sea. All that night the Lord pushed the sea back with a strong east wind. He turned the sea into dry land. The waters were parted. ²² The people of Israel went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of water on their right side and on their left...

³⁰ That day the Lord saved Israel from the power of Egypt. Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ The Israelites saw the great power the Lord showed against the Egyptians. So they had respect for the Lord. They put their trust in him and in his servant Moses. (Exodus 14:13-14, 21-22, 30-31)

THINK

What did God promise the Israelites?

How did God save the Israelites in Egypt?

How did God save the Israelites crossing the Red Sea?

What did the Israelites have to do to be saved?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you that you brought the Israelites out of Egypt as you promised, and that you made them into your chosen people. We thank you that we are also your people. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: parting of the Red Sea
- Special verse: *I will take you to be my own people. I will be your God. (Exodus 6:7)*
- Have your own special Passover meal

DAY 8: MOSES AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

¹ Here are all of the words God spoke. He said,

² "I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land where you were slaves.

³ "Do not put any other gods in place of me.

⁴ "Do not make statues of gods that look like anything in the sky or on the earth or in the waters. ⁵ Do not bow down to them or worship them. I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children for the sin of their parents. I punish the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who hate me. ⁶ But for all time to come I show love to all those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ "Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will find guilty anyone who misuses his name.

⁸ "Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. ⁹ Do all of your work in six days. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a Sabbath in honor of the Lord your God. Do not do any work on that day ... ¹¹ In six days I made the heavens and the earth. I made the oceans and everything in them. But I rested on the seventh day. So I blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹² "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ "Do not commit murder.

¹⁴ "Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵ "Do not steal.

¹⁶ "Do not give false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ "Do not long for anything that belongs to your neighbor. Do not long for your neighbor's house, wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey." (Exodus 20:1-17)

¹⁵ Moses turned and went down the mountain. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. Words were written on both sides of the tablets, front and back. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God. The words had been written by God. They had been carved on the tablets. (Exodus 32:15-16)

I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you. (Psalm 110:11)

THINK

What were the 10 commandments that God gave his people?

What was written on the stone tablets?

Who wrote these words?

Why do God and our parents give us rules?

What can we do with God's word that will help keep us from sinning?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear God, thank you for giving us your word, the bible, which you have written for us. Please help us to read it and remember it, but most of all, to obey it. We know that you have given us rules for our own good because you know what is best for us. Help us to trust that your rules are good for us. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: tablets with the Ten Commandments
- Special verse: *I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you (Psalm 119:11)*
- Make some letter biscuits. If you eat them are the words of God on your heart? How can the words of God stay on your heart?

DAY 9: THE PROMISED LAND

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ² "Send some men to check out the land of Canaan. I am giving it to the people of Israel. Send one leader from each of Israel's tribes."....

²⁷ They gave Moses their report. They said, "We went into the land you sent us to. It really does have plenty of milk and honey! Here's some fruit from the land. (Numbers 13:1-2, 27)

¹ Moses, the servant of the Lord, died. After that, the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua was Moses' helper. The Lord said to Joshua, ² "My servant Moses is dead. Now then, I want you and all of these people to get ready to go across the Jordan River. I want all of you to go into the land I am about to give to the people of Israel.

³ "I will give all of you every place you walk on, just as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will reach from the Negev Desert all the way to Lebanon. The great Euphrates River will be to the east. The Mediterranean Sea will be to the west. Your territory will include all of the Hittite country.

⁵ "Joshua, no one will be able to stand up against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will never leave you. I will never desert you.

⁶ "Be strong and brave. You will lead these people, and they will take the land as their very own. It is the land I promised with an oath to give their people long ago.

⁷ "Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn away from it to the right or the left. Then you will have success everywhere you go. ⁸ Never stop reading this Scroll of the Law. Day and night you must think about what it says. Make sure you do everything that is written in it. Then things will go well with you. And you will have great success.

⁹ "Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go." (Joshua 1:1-9)

THINK

Would Canaan be a good land to live in? Why?

Why is Joshua now the leader of the people?

What does Joshua have to do?

Why does God give the people the land?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you for keeping your promise of a special land for the Israelites. Help us always remember that the place we now look forward to is our home in heaven, because of Jesus. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: good things growing in the Promised Land
- Special verse: *Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. (Joshua 1:9)*
- Find a map of the land that God promised to his people (perhaps at the back of a bible)
- Have a feast of fruit and vegetables.

DAY 10: DAVID

¹ *The Lord said to Samuel, " ... I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." ...*

⁶ *When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab. He thought, "This has to be the one the Lord wants me to anoint for him." ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart."*

⁸ *Then Jesse called for Abinadab. He had him walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord hasn't chosen him either." ⁹ Then Jesse had Shammah walk by. But Samuel said, "The Lord hasn't chosen him either." ¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said to him, "The Lord hasn't chosen any of them." ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these the only sons you have?"*

"No," Jesse answered. "My youngest son is taking care of the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him. We won't sit down to eat until he arrives." ¹² So Jesse sent for his son and had him brought in. His skin was tanned. He had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Get up and anoint him. He is the one." ¹³ So Samuel got the animal horn that was filled with olive oil. He anointed David in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came on David with power. Samuel went back to Ramah. (1 Samuel 16:1, 6-13)

THINK

What did Samuel think the new king would look like?

What does God look for in his chosen king?

How can you see what is in someone's heart? Can other people see what is in your heart?

PRAY

Lord, we know that you care about people's hearts rather than the way they look. Help us to have hearts that love you, and help us look at other people's hearts and how they act, rather than what they look like. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: David and his heart.
- Special verse: *Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)*

DAY 11: GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

⁴ *That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan. The Lord said, ...*

⁸ *"...tell my servant David, 'The Lord who rules over all says, 'I took you away from the grasslands. That's where you were taking care of your father's sheep and goats. I made you ruler over my people Israel.' I have been with you everywhere you have gone. I cut off all of your enemies when you were attacking them.*

"Now I will make you famous. Your name will be just as respected as the names of the most important people on earth. ¹⁰ I will provide a place where my people Israel can live. I will plant them in the land. Then they will have a home of their own. They will not be bothered anymore. Evil people will no longer crush them, as they did at first. ¹¹ That is what your enemies have done ever since I appointed leaders over my people Israel. But I will give you peace and rest from all of them.

"I tell you that I myself will set up a royal house for you. ¹² Some day your life will come to an end. You will join the members of your family who have already died. Then I will make one of your own sons the next king after you. And I will make his kingdom secure. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house where I will put my Name.

"I will set up the throne of his kingdom. It will last forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father. And he will be my son. When he does what is wrong, I will use other men to beat him with rods and whips. ¹⁵ I took my love away from Saul. I removed him from being king. You were there when I did it. But I will never take my love away from your son.

¹⁶ *"Your royal house and your kingdom will last forever in my sight. Your throne will last forever." (2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16)*

THINK

What does God promise David?

Who is this son of David? (*both Solomon, his actual Son; and Jesus, the ultimate son of David*)

PRAY

- ❖ Thank you God for giving David such wonderful promises. We know that Jesus is the one who is your true Son, thank you that his kingdom is secure. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a throne
- Special verse: *I will set up the throne of his kingdom. It will last forever. I will be his father. And he will be my son. (2 Samuel 7:13b-14)*
- Listen/sing along to *David Was a Mighty King* (The King, the Snake and the Promise CD)

DAY 12: JOSIAH FINDS THE LAW

Note: *Josiah became king after a long time of people's ignoring God and his word.*

¹¹ *The king heard the words of the Scroll of the Law. When he did, he tore his royal robes.* ¹² *He gave orders to the priest ...* ¹³ *"Go. Ask the Lord for advice. Ask him about what is written in this scroll that has been found. Do it for me. Also do it for the people and the whole nation of Judah. The Lord's anger is burning against us. That's because our people before us didn't obey the words of this scroll. They didn't do everything that is written there about us." ...*

^{23:1} *Then the king called together all of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.* ² *He went up to the Lord's temple. The people of Judah and Jerusalem went with him. So did the priests and prophets. All of them went, from the least important of them to the most important.*

The king had all of the words of the Scroll of the Covenant read to them. The scroll had been found in the Lord's temple. ³ *The king stood next to his pillar. He agreed to the terms of the covenant in front of the Lord. He promised to follow him and obey his commands, directions and rules. He promised to obey them with all his heart and with all his soul. So he agreed to the terms of the covenant that were written down in that scroll. Then all of the people committed themselves to the covenant. (2 Kings 22:11-13; 23:1-3)*

¹⁰⁵ *Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.
It is like a light that guides me. (Psalm 119:105)*

THINK

What had happened to God's word before Josiah's time?

What did King Josiah do when he found the book? Why? *(the tearing of robes is a sign of distress that they had not obeyed the words of the law)*

What did the King and the people agree to do?

Why should we read the Bible?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Father, thank you for your words, which are written in the Bible. Thank for the way it tells us about you, us and the world—and especially about Jesus. Help us to follow your words this Christmas. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a scroll or bible
- Special verse: *Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me. (Psalm 119:105)*
- With a torch, pretend it is God's word lighting the way.

DAY 13: EXILE AND RETURN TO THE LAND

Note: Israel was invaded by foreigners and the people were removed from the Promised Land.

⁷ All of that took place because the people of Israel had committed sins against the Lord their God. He had brought them up out of Egypt. He had brought them out from under the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But they worshiped other gods.

⁸ The Lord had driven out other nations to make room for them. But they followed the evil practices of those nations. They also followed the practices that the kings of Israel had started. ⁹ The people of Israel did things against the Lord their God in secret. What they did wasn't right ...

¹¹ ... The Israelites did evil things that made the Lord very angry. ¹² They worshiped statues of gods. They did it even though the Lord had said, "Do not do that." ...

¹⁴ But the people wouldn't listen. They were as stubborn as their people of long ago had been. Those people didn't trust in the Lord their God. ¹⁵ They refused to obey his rules. They broke the covenant he had made with them. They didn't pay any attention to the warnings he had given them. They worshiped worthless statues of gods. Then they themselves became worthless. They followed the example of the nations that were around them. They did it even though the Lord had ordered them not to. He had said, "Do not do as they do." They did the very things the Lord had told them not to do. (2 Kings 17:7-9a, 11b-12, 14-15)

Note: God later allowed the people to return to the land, using the King of Persia.

² "Cyrus, the king of Persia, says,

'The Lord is the God of heaven. He has given me all of the kingdoms on earth. He has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.

³ 'Any one of his people among you can go up to Jerusalem. And may your God be with you. You can build the Lord's temple. He is the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

⁴ 'The people who are still left alive in every place must bring him gifts. They must provide him with silver and gold. They must bring goods and livestock. They should also bring any offerings they choose to. All of those gifts will be for God's temple in Jerusalem.' " (Ezra 1:2-4)

¹³ But we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth. Godliness will make its home there. All of this is in keeping with God's promise. (2 Peter 3:13)

THINK

Why did the Israelites have to go into exile?

Who let them come back?

Do we want to go to the Promised Land? Where is our true home?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Lord, we know that you are patient with all who sin against you, but we also know that you will judge all people at the end of time. Help us to trust in you and obey your word so that we may enjoy your true land - heaven. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the Israelites leaving the Promised Land
- Special verse: *But we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth. (2 Peter 3:13a)*

DAY 14: PROPHECY OF THE SHOOT FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE

¹ *Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down.*

A new little tree will grow from its stump.

From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit.

² *The Spirit of the Lord will rest on that Branch.*

He will help him to be wise and understanding.

He will help him make wise plans and carry them out.

He will help him know the Lord and have respect for him.

³ *The Branch will take delight*

in respecting the Lord.

He will not judge things only by the way they look.

He won't make decisions based simply on what people say.

⁴ *He will always do what is right*

when he judges those who are in need.

He'll be completely fair

when he makes decisions about poor people.

When he commands that people be punished,

it will happen.

When he orders that evil people be put to death,

it will take place.

⁵ *He will put godliness on as if it were his belt.*

He'll wear faithfulness around his waist. (Isaiah 11:1-5)

THINK

Jesse was the father of David, from whose descendants came Jesus.

Who is the new branch growing out of Jesse?

How did Isaiah know about Jesus hundreds of years before he was born?

What will the branch be like?

PRAY

- ❖ Thank you God for promising your Son long ago through the prophets. Thank you that even Isaiah knew what he would be like - wise, fair, faithful and godly. Please help us to be more like Jesus every day. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a tree stump with a green leaf growing out of it
- Special verse: *Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down. A new little tree will grow from its stump. From its roots a branch will grow and produce fruit. (Isaiah 11:1)*
- Find plants in the garden with new shoots on them.

DAY 15: PROPHECY OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE

⁶ *A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us.
He will rule over us.
And he will be called
Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.
He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever
and Prince Who Brings Peace.*
⁷ *The authority of his rule will continue to grow.
The peace he brings will never end.
He will rule on David's throne
and over his kingdom.
He will make the kingdom strong and secure.
His rule will be based on what is fair and right.
It will last forever.
The Lord's great love will make sure that happens.
He rules over all. (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

²⁷ *I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you
as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid.
(John 14:27)*

THINK

Who is this talking about?

What different names is he called in these verses?

What things trouble you? Can Jesus bring peace to you?

PRAY

❖ Thank you Jesus for being our Prince of Peace. Help us not to be troubled or afraid, but to be filled with your peace. Help us to bring your peace to our troubled world. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a dove and a crown.
- Special verse:
*And he will be called
Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.
He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever
and Prince Who Brings Peace. (Isaiah 9:6b)*
- Make a crown.

DAY 16: PROPHECY OF A GENTLE SHEPHERD

¹¹ *He takes care of his flock like a shepherd.
He gathers the lambs in his arms.
He carries them close to his heart.
He gently leads those that have little ones. (Isaiah 40:11)*

¹ *The Lord is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need.
² He lets me lie down in fields of green grass.
He leads me beside quiet waters. (Psalm 23:1-2)*

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27)

THINK

What are some ways that shepherds care for their sheep?

How are we like sheep?

What is Jesus like if he is our shepherd?

PRAY

❖ Thank you Jesus that you are our shepherd, you care for us and protect us. Help us to listen to your voice and follow you. Amen

OPTIONAL

- A shepherd's crook and a lamb
- Special verse: *My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27)*

DAY 17: PROPHECY OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT

⁶ *All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God.
All of us have turned to our own way.
And the Lord has placed on his servant
the sins of all of us.*

⁷ *He was beaten down and made to suffer.
But he didn't open his mouth.
He was led away like a sheep to be killed.
Lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off.
In the same way, he didn't open his mouth.*

⁸ *He was arrested and sentenced to death.
Then he was taken away.
He was cut off from this life.
He was punished for the sins of my people. (Isaiah 53:6-8a)*

¹⁴ *I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.* ¹⁵
*They know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I
give my life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15)*

THINK

What was God's plan for Jesus?

Why is it important that Jesus died?

Why did Jesus die?

PRAY

❖ Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place as payment for our sins, so that we could have the best Christmas gift—your Son and eternal life with you forever. Help us also to share this gift with others by telling them about Jesus and showing them his love. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a cross
- Special verse: *I give my life for the sheep. (John 10:15b)*

DAY 18: PROPHECY OF THE NEW COVENANT

³¹ "A new day is coming," announces the Lord.

"I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel. I will also make it with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their people long ago.

That was when I took them by the hand. I led them out of Egypt. But they broke my covenant. They did it even though I was like a husband to them," announces the Lord.

³³ "This is the covenant I will make with Israel after that time," announces the Lord.

"I will put my law in their minds. I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God. And they will be my people. ³⁴ A man will not need to teach his neighbour anymore. And he will not need to teach his friend anymore. He will not say, 'Know the Lord.' Everyone will know me. From the least important of them to the most important, all of them will know me," announces the Lord. "I will forgive their evil ways. I will not remember their sins anymore." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

THINK

A covenant is a promise. Do people always keep their promises?

Does God keep his promises?

What does God promise in these verses?

How should we respond to these promises?

PRAY

❖ Dear Father, thank you that you forgive us and live in us when we believe in you. Write your law on our hearts and minds. We trust your promises, God. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a heart
- Special verse: *I will put my law in their minds. I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God. And they will be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33b)*

DAY 19: PROPHECY OF BETHLEHEM

² *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.
His family line goes back to the early years of your nation.
It goes all the way back to days of long ago." (Micah 5:2)*

¹ *In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be listed.*

⁴ *So Joseph went also. He 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. ⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. (Luke 2:1-5)*

THINK

What did the Old Testament prophets know ahead of time about where Jesus would be born?

How did they know?

Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you for planning long ago to send your Son to save us and that you even planned what town he was to be born in. Help us remember that you have also planned our lives and where we live. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the village of Bethlehem
- Special verse: *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)*
- Make Bethlehem from building blocks, Lego or cardboard.

DAY 20: PROMISES TO MARY & JOSEPH

²⁶ In the sixth month after Elizabeth had become pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. ²⁷ He was sent to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. He came from the family line of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you."

²⁹ Mary was very upset because of his words. She wondered what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. ³¹ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king like his father David of long ago. ³³ He will rule forever over his people, who came from Jacob's family. His kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How can this happen?" Mary asked the angel. "I am a virgin."

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Your relative Elizabeth is old. And even she is going to have a child. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸ "I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together, it became clear that she was going to have a baby. She became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph was a godly man. He did not want to put her to shame in public. So he planned to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But as Joseph was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That is because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All of this took place to bring about what the Lord had said would happen. He had said through the prophet, ²³ "The virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be called Immanuel." —(Isaiah 7:14) The name Immanuel means "God with us."

²⁴ Joseph woke up. He did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do. He took Mary home as his wife. (Matthew 1:18-24)

THINK

What news did the angel bring to Mary? How did she react?

What news did the angel bring to Joseph? How did he react?

Do you think it was hard for Mary and Joseph to trust God?

PRAY

- ❖ Thank you, God, that you sent an angel to tell Mary and Joseph about Jesus. We know they believed you, even though it seemed impossible. Help us to also trust you in all things. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Joseph & pregnant Mary
- Special verse: *She 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)*

DAY 21: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

¹ In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be listed.

⁴ So Joseph went also. He 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. ⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

⁶ While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

¹⁶ God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. ¹⁷ God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

THINK

Where did Mary put Jesus? Why?

Who sent Jesus into the world?

Why did Jesus come to earth?

PRAY

❖ Dear Father, thank you for sending your Son to our world to save us. You planned it all long ago. We are amazed at how much you love us - so much that you sent Jesus. Thank you. Amen.

OPTIONAL:

- Draw a picture: baby Jesus in the manger
- Special verse: *God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. (John 3:16)*
- Listen/ sing along to *Jesus Saves! Jesus Saves!* (King of Christmas CD)
- Listen/ sing along to *Glory to God in The Highest* (King of Christmas CD)
- Listen/ sing along to *On that Very First Christmas* (King of Christmas CD)
- Make a manger scene together

DAY 22: ANGELS PROCLAIM THE COMING OF CHRIST

⁸ There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹² Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

¹⁴ "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.

²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told. (Luke 2:8-20)

THINK

What did the angels tell the shepherds?

What different reactions did the shepherds have to the angels?

Where did the shepherds go?

Then what did they do?

How did Mary respond to all these things?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear God, like the angels we want all glory to go to you in heaven. Help us to tell everyone about your son, Jesus, like the shepherds did. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: angels
- Special verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)*
- Listen/sing along to *Angels Singin' Glory* (King of Christmas CD)
- Listen/sing along to *Glory to God in the Highest* (King of Christmas CD)
- Make an angel (eg with paper plate craft) to decorate your Christmas tree or home.

DAY 23: THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

²⁵ *In Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was a good and godly man. He was waiting for God's promise to Israel to happen. The Holy Spirit was with him.* ²⁶ *The Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.* ²⁷ *The Spirit led him into the temple courtyard.*

Then Jesus' parents brought the child in. They came to do for him what the Law required.

²⁸ *Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,*

²⁹ *"Lord, you are the King over all.*

Now let me, your servant, go in peace.

That is what you promised.

³⁰ *My eyes have seen your salvation.*

³¹ *You have prepared it in the sight of all people.*

³² *It is a light to be given to those who aren't Jews.*

It will bring glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:25-32)

Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life." (John 8:12)

THINK

How did Simeon describe Jesus?

How can you be a light for Jesus in this world?

PRAY

❖ Thank you Jesus that you are the light of the world - help us to follow you and never be in darkness. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a candle with flame, or a light
- Special verse: *I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life. (John 8:12b)*
- Burn a candle to remember that Jesus is the light of the world.

DAY 24: THE STAR

¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea. After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him." ³ When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was troubled too. ⁴ So Herod called together all the chief priests of the people. He also called the teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ was going to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written. He said,

⁶ " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah.
A ruler will come out of you.

He will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " —(Micah 5:2)

⁷ Then Herod called for the Wise Men secretly. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go! Make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, bring me a report. Then I can go and worship him too." ⁹ After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh. ¹² But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road. (Matthew 2:1-12)

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches. I am the Root and the Son of David. I am the bright Morning Star." (Revelation 22:16)

THINK

Why did the Wise Men come?

Why was King Herod upset?

Do you think Herod really wanted to worship the new king?

How is Jesus described in Revelation 22:16?

PRAY

❖ Father, thank you for showing your love to the whole world when you sent your star to shine on us. Just as the wise men were filled with joy, let us also be filled with joy that you are with us. Thank you that tomorrow we celebrate your birth. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a three wise men following the star
- Special verse: *When they saw the star, they were filled with joy (Matthew 2:10)*
- Listen & sing to all of King of Christmas CD, especially The Magi, Happy Happy Day & The King of Christmas
- Craft idea: make a star and use it to decorate your Christmas tree or a window of your home.

