
THE BIRTH OF JESUS

24 ADVENT READINGS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Day 1: Jesus' family tree	3
Day 2: An angel appears to Zechariah	4
Day 3: John's birth is predicted	5
Day 4: The angel appears to Mary	6
Day 5: Mary and the angel	7
Day 6: An angel appears to Joseph	8
Day 7: Mary visits Elizabeth	9
Day 8: Mary's song	10
Day 9: Birth of John the Baptist	11
Day 10: Zechariah's Song	12
Day 11: Zechariah's Song (continued)	13
Day 12: Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem	14
Day 13: Jesus is born	15
Day 14: An angel appears to shepherds	16
Day 15: The angels praise God	17
Day 16: Jesus is taken to the temple	18
Day 17: Simeon in the temple	19
Day 18: Anna in the temple	20
Day 19: Wise men come	21
Day 20: Wise Men visit Jesus	22
Day 21: Flee to Egypt	23
Day 22: To Nazareth	24
Day 23: The Word of God	25
Day 24: Jesus is the Word	26
Notes	27

DAY 1: JESUS' FAMILY TREE

This is a record of the family line of Jesus Christ. He is the son of David. He is also the son of Abraham.

² Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers...

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz. Rahab was Boaz's mother.

Boaz was the father of Obed. Ruth was Obed's mother.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ And Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon...

¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary. And Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were 14 from David until the Jewish people were forced to go away to Babylon. And there were 14 from that time to the Christ. (Matthew 1:1-2, 5-6a, 16-17)

THINK

Who is Jesus related to?

Do you know anything about any of these people? (eg. Abraham or David)
Abraham (Gen 17:6) and David (2 Sam 7:12-13) were both promised that there would be kings who came from their family. Who is the special king from their family? (*Jesus*)

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that Jesus has a family and that we know who his father and grandfathers were. Thank you that he is the true king that you promised would come. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a family tree for Jesus
- Special verse: He is the son of David. He is also the son of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1b)
- Look at Luke 4 to see how that genealogy also covers from Abraham back to Adam and God
- Draw your family tree - can you trace it as far back as Jesus can? (42 generations)

DAY 2: AN ANGEL APPEARS TO ZECHARIAH

Herod was king of Judea. During the time he was ruling, there was a priest named Zechariah... His wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them did what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed all the Lord's commandments and rules faithfully. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was not able to have any. And they were both very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah's group was on duty. He was serving as a priest in God's temple. ⁹ He happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of the Lord. There he was supposed to burn incense. ¹⁰ The time came for this to be done. All who had gathered to worship were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was amazed and terrified. (Luke 1:5-12)

THINK

How did Zechariah and Elizabeth live?

Why did Zechariah and Elizabeth have no children?

Who appeared to Zechariah?

How did he feel when he saw the angel?

How would you feel if an angel appeared to you?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you that Zechariah and Elizabeth lived the way you wanted them to, even though they did not have the children that they wanted. Help us to live your way, even when our lives are hard. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Zechariah in the temple with the angel
- Special verse: Both of them did what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed all the Lord's commandments and rules faithfully. (Luke 1:6)

DAY 3: JOHN'S BIRTH IS PREDICTED

¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. ¹⁵ He will be important in the Lord's eyes.

"He must never use wine or other such drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too."

¹⁹ The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true when the time is right."

²¹ During that time, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out. They wondered why he stayed in the temple so long. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple. They knew this because he kept motioning to them. He still could not speak.

²³ When his time of service was over, he returned home. ²⁴ After that, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months. ²⁵ "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days, he has been kind to me. He has taken away my shame among the people." (Luke 1:13-25)

THINK

What did the angel promise to Zechariah?

What will John do?

Why did Zechariah doubt the angel?

What is the angel's name?

What happened to Zechariah because he doubted?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, help us to trust your words in the bible and not to doubt them like Zechariah did. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Pregnant Elizabeth, and Zechariah with his mouth closed.
- Special verse: He will prepare the way for the Lord (Luke 1:17)

DAY 4: THE ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY

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." (Luke 1:26-33)

THINK

What did the angel Gabriel say first to Mary?

How did Mary feel when she heard and saw the angel?

What did Gabriel then tell Mary? What does he promise about Jesus?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you so much for Jesus. You promised Mary that he would be your son and a king who rules forever. Help us to always love your son & our king, Jesus. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Mary with the angel
- Special verse: 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. (Luke 1:32)
- Nativity: if you have a nativity set, you can also 'act out' the events each day with the figurines.

DAY 5: MARY AND THE ANGEL

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 1:34-38)

THINK

Why did Mary think she couldn't have a baby? (v34, *she did not have a husband*)

Who does the angel say will be her baby's father?

Can God do this?

How does Mary respond?

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, we know that you are truly Jesus' father. Help us to always trust in you as our father in heaven. We thank you for Mary, who accepted this amazing news of the angel. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Mary pregnant
- Special verse: Nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

DAY 6: AN ANGEL APPEARS TO JOSEPH

¹⁸ ... 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

Why was Joseph planning to divorce Mary?

How did the angel appear to Joseph?

What did the angel say to him?

What does the angel promise about the baby?

What did Joseph do? Did he divorce her?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you that Joseph trusted in you and your angel, and because of that Jesus had Joseph as his father on earth. We thank you for our father (eg. Daddy, Dad) whom you have given to us on earth. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the angel and Joseph
- 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 7: MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

³⁹ *At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in Judea's hill country.*
⁴⁰ *There she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.* ⁴¹ *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* ⁴² *In a loud voice she called out, "God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have!"*
⁴³ *But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me?* ⁴⁴ *As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy.* ⁴⁵ *You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that what the Lord has said to you will be done!"* (Luke 1:39-45)

THINK

Where did Mary go?

How does Mary know Elizabeth? (see Day 5, v36)

What did Elizabeth's baby (still inside her) do when she heard Mary's voice?

Why?

Why is Mary blessed?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Lord, we are happy like Elizabeth knowing the blessing you gave to Mary. Let us remember that Jesus is our Lord and help us to trust in him. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Mary and Elizabeth, together and both pregnant.
- Special verse: You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that what the Lord has said to you will be done! (Luke 1:45)

DAY 8: MARY'S SONG

⁴⁶ Mary said,

"My soul gives glory to the Lord.

⁴⁷ *My spirit delights in God my Savior.*

⁴⁸ *He has taken note of me*

even though I am not important.

From now on all people will call me blessed.

⁴⁹ *The Mighty One has done great things for me.*

His name is holy.

⁵⁰ *He shows his mercy to those who have respect for him,*

from parent to child down through the years.

⁵¹ *He has done mighty things with his arm.*

He has scattered those who are proud in their deepest thoughts.

⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones.*

But he has lifted up people who are not important.

⁵³ *He has filled those who are hungry with good things.*

But he has sent those who are rich away empty.

⁵⁴ *He has helped the people of Israel, who serve him.*

He has always remembered to be kind

⁵⁵ *to Abraham and his children down through the years.*

He has done it just as he said to our people of long ago."

⁵⁶ *Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she returned home.*

(Luke 1:46-56)

THINK

Why has God taken note of Mary? (v48, no reason)

What does Mary say about who God is and what he has done?

How long did Mary visit Elizabeth?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, just as Mary sang to you, let us also give glory to God and let us sing praise to you our Saviour. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Mary singing about God
- Special verse: The Mighty One has done great things for me. His name is holy. (Luke 1:49)

DAY 9: BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

⁵⁷ The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. She gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very kind to her. They shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day, they came to have the child circumcised. They were going to name him Zechariah, like his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother spoke up. "No!" she said. "He must be called John."

⁶¹ They said to her, "No one among your relatives has that name."

⁶² Then they motioned to his father. They wanted to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed.

⁶⁴ Right away Zechariah could speak again. His first words gave praise to God. ⁶⁵ The neighbors were all filled with fear and wonder. All through Judea's hill country, people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it. And because the Lord was with John, they asked, "What is this child going to be?" (Luke 1:57-66)

THINK

Why do Elizabeth and Zechariah name their son John? (see Day 3, v13)

Why did Zechariah write down his son's name? (see Day 3, v 20)

Why was Zechariah able to speak again? (v64, see Day 3, v20)

How did people react to John's birth?

PRAY

❖ Dear Lord, thank you for your kindness to Zechariah and Elizabeth in giving them a son, John. We thank you that they praised you for your work in their lives. Help us to also praise you each day. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the baby John and his parents
- Special verse: Right away Zechariah could speak again. His first words gave praise to God. (John 1:64)
- Ask your parents how they decided on your name.

DAY 10: ZECHARIAH'S SONG

⁶⁷ *His [John's] father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prophesied,*

⁶⁸ *"Give praise to the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has come and set his people free.*

⁶⁹ *He has acted with great power and has saved us.
He did it for those who are from the family line of his servant David.*

⁷⁰ *Long ago holy prophets said he would do it.*

⁷¹ *He has saved us from our enemies.
We are rescued from all who hate us.*

⁷² *He has been kind to our people.
He has remembered his holy covenant.*

⁷³ *He made an oath to our father Abraham.*

⁷⁴ *He promised to save us from our enemies,
so that we could serve him without fear. (Luke 1:67-74)*

THINK

Who does Zechariah prophesy about?

What does he praise God for?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Lord God, thank you for acting in your great power to save your people and for all the promises you have made. We are so thankful for your power and your salvation. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Zechariah praising God
- Special verse: Give praise to the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come and set his people free. (Luke 1:68)

DAY 11: ZECHARIAH'S SONG (CONTINUED)

⁷⁵ *He wants us to be holy and godly as long as we live.*

⁷⁶ *"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.
You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for him.*

⁷⁷ *You will tell his people how they can be saved.*

You will tell them that their sins can be forgiven.

⁷⁸ *All of that will happen because our God is tender and caring.*

His kindness will bring the rising sun to us from heaven.

⁷⁹ *It will shine on those living in darkness*

and in the shadow of death.

It will guide our feet on the path of peace."

⁸⁰ *The child grew up, and his spirit became strong. He lived in the desert
until he appeared openly to Israel. (Luke 1:75-80)*

THINK

What will this child, John, be?

What will he do?

Why?

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much that you show people how they can be saved and their sins forgiven, because you are tender and caring. Thank you for Jesus who died for us so that we can be forgiven and saved too. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: John speaking to people
- Special verse: You will tell his people how they can be saved. You will tell them that their sins can be forgiven. (Luke 1:77)
- Listen/sing along to *Everybody Get Ready* (King of Christmas CD)

DAY 12: JOSEPH AND MARY GO TO BETHLEHEM

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

Why did everyone go to their own town (where they were born)?

Where did Joseph go to?

Why did he go there?

Why did Mary go with him?

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that you even planned where Jesus would be born. Help us to remember that you have also planned our lives and where we live. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Joseph and Mary travelling to Bethlehem
- Special verse: All went to their own towns to be listed. (Luke 2:3)
- Look up Micah 5:2. What was promised about Bethlehem? How does it come true in this passage in Luke 2?
- Listen/sing along to *Glory to God in the Highest* (King of Christmas CD)

DAY 13: JESUS IS BORN

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 2:6-7)

THINK

Where did Mary put Jesus?

Why?

What is a manger? (*an animal feeding trough*)

PRAY

❖ Dear Lord, we thank you for your Son Jesus, born on earth to be our saviour. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the baby Jesus in the manger
- Special verse: She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. (Luke 2:7a)
- Listen/sing along to *Glory to God in the Highest* (King of Christmas CD)

DAY 14: AN ANGEL APPEARS TO SHEPHERDS

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 Saviour 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."* (Luke 2:8-12)

THINK

Who did the angel appear to?

How did they feel?

What did the angel tell them?

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that you sent the saviour to be born, Jesus. Help us to share this happy news with others.
Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the angel appearing to the shepherds
- Special verse: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)
- Listen/sing along to *Good News (Sing for Joy)*, (*King of Christmas* CD)
- Make an angel (eg. with paper plate craft) to decorate your Christmas tree or home.

DAY 15: THE ANGELS PRAISE GOD

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 2:13-20)

THINK

Many angels then appeared - what did they do?

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: the shepherds visiting Jesus
- Special verse: May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!
(Luke 2:14)
- Listen/sing along to *Angels Singin' Glory, Glory to God in the Highest & On That Very First Christmas* (King of Christmas CD)

DAY 16: JESUS IS TAKEN TO THE TEMPLE

²¹ *When the child was eight days old, he was circumcised. At the same time he was named Jesus. This was the name the angel had given him before his mother became pregnant.*

²² *The time for making them pure came as it is written in the Law of Moses. So Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. There they presented him to the Lord. ²³ In the Law of the Lord it says, "The first boy born in every family must be set apart for the Lord."—(Exodus 13:2,12) ²⁴ They also offered a sacrifice. They did it in keeping with the Law, which says, "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." —(Leviticus 12:8) (Luke 2:21-24)*

THINK

Why did they name the baby Jesus?

Why did they present him to the Lord in Jerusalem?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you that Mary and Joseph continued to follow your words - in naming Jesus and in presenting him to you as their first born son. We thank you that Jesus truly is your son, whom you love. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the baby Jesus in the temple
- Special verse: So Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. There they presented him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b)

DAY 17: SIMEON IN THE TEMPLE

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."

³³ The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them ... (Luke 2:25-34)

THINK

Why was Simeon at the temple?

What did God show Simeon about Jesus?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear God, we thank you that Jesus is the salvation you planned for all people. Help us to show others that Jesus is the light of your salvation. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Simeon holding the baby Jesus in the temple
- Special verse: My eyes have seen your salvation. (Luke 2:30)

DAY 18: ANNA IN THE TEMPLE

³⁶ *There was also a prophet named Anna. She was the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher. Anna was very old. After getting married, she lived with her husband seven years.* ³⁷ *Then she was a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple. She worshiped night and day, praying and going without eating.*

³⁸ *Anna came up to Jesus' family at that very moment. She gave thanks to God. And she spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the time when Jerusalem would be set free. (Luke 2:36-38)*

THINK

Who else came up to Jesus' family in the temple?

What did she say about Jesus?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear God, we know that you only show the way for all people to be free, by trusting in your son Jesus. Help us to keep trusting in him each day. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Anna with the baby Jesus in the temple
- Special verse: Anna came up to Jesus' family at that very moment. She gave thanks to God. (Luke 2:38)

DAY 19: WISE MEN COME

^{2:1} *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." (Matthew 2:1-8)*

THINK

Why did the wise men come?

Why was King Herod upset? (*he did not want there to be another king who would be a rival*)

Do you think Herod really wanted to worship the new king? (*no, he wanted to find him but not to worship him*)

PRAY

❖ Dear God, even wise men came from far away to worship Jesus the King. Please help us to always worship him. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the wise men following the star
- Special verse: 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." (Matthew 2:2)
- Listen/sing along to *The Magi (King of Christmas CD)*
- Craft idea: make a star and use it to decorate your Christmas tree or a window of your home.

DAY 20: WISE MEN VISIT JESUS

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 2:9-12)*

THINK

What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?

Why did they worship him? (*v11, they knew he was a king*)

What did God warn them?

PRAY

❖ Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that the wise men knew that Jesus was the king. Like them, help us to always be joyful that we know our Jesus, our king. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: the wise men giving gifts to Jesus
- Special verse: When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. (Matthew 2:10)
- Listen/sing along to *The Magi* (King of Christmas CD)
- Listen/sing along to *On That Very First Christmas* (King of Christmas CD)
- Craft idea: make presents for Jesus

DAY 21: FLEE TO EGYPT

¹³ *When the Wise Men had left, Joseph had a dream. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is going to search for the child. He wants to kill him."*

¹⁴ *Joseph got up. During the night, he left for Egypt with the child and his mother Mary.* ¹⁵ *They stayed there until King Herod died. So the words the Lord had spoken through the prophet came true. He had said, "I chose to bring my son out of Egypt."—(Hosea 11:1)*
(Matthew 2:13-15)

THINK

What happened in Joseph's dream?

What did Joseph do?

How did it the words of Hosea in the Old Testament come true?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, thank you for warning Joseph of the danger to his family, and thank you for providing a safe home for them in Egypt. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Joseph, Mary and Jesus going to Egypt
- Special verse: So the words the Lord had spoken through the prophet came true. He had said, "I chose to bring my son out of Egypt." (Matthew 2:15b)

DAY 22: TO NAZARETH

¹⁹ After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. ²⁰ The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother. Go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

²¹ So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother Mary back to the land of Israel. ²² But then he heard that Archelaus was king of Judea. Archelaus was ruling in place of his father Herod. This made Joseph afraid to go there.

Warned in a dream, Joseph went back to the land of Galilee instead. ²³ There he lived in a town called Nazareth. So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, "He will be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2:19-23)

THINK

Where did Joseph and his family finally settle to live?

PRAY

❖ Dear God, at every point of Jesus' childhood, we have seen you caring for his family and showing them the way to go. Help us to always remember that you also care for us and that you show us how to live in the bible. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Jesus in the town of Nazareth
- Special verse: So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, "He will be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2:23b)

DAY 23: THE WORD OF GOD

^{1:1} *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

Who is the Word (*v1, Jesus*)

What did the Word do?

What did Jesus have? (*v4, life, the light for all people*)

PRAY

❖ Dear God in heaven, thank you that Jesus is your Word, truly God, and that he made all things. Amen

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: a light or glowing candle, and words (the word of God)
- Special verse: Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. (John 1:4)

DAY 24: JESUS IS THE WORD

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

THINK

What did the Word do?

Where did he come from?

What is he like?

PRAY

- ❖ Dear Father, thank you that today we celebrate that Jesus came to earth as a baby. Help us to celebrate every day! We pray that you might help us to follow him each day, to see his glory and to also be full of grace and truth. Amen.

OPTIONAL

- Draw a picture: Jesus grown up
- Special verse: It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth. (John 1:14b)
- Listen/sing along to all of *King of Christmas* CD, especially *Happy Happy Day & King of Christmas*

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 "...".
- In some cases additional words have been added to retain clarity. These are marked with "[*italics*]"

Details of optional music CDs:

- *King of Christmas* (Colin Buchanan, 2005)

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.

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

