



THE *Journey* TO HOPE

2025 FAMILY ADVENT GUIDE

Welcome to The Journey to Hope

A 25-Day Advent Guide for Families

Advent is a season of waiting, wondering, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus. In a world that moves quickly, Advent invites us to slow down—to notice God's presence, remember His promises, and look with hope toward the Savior who came to bring light into our darkness.

This guide was created to help your family walk together on a journey toward Christmas—one simple, meaningful step at a time.

Each day includes four elements designed to spark conversation, reflection, and joy:

1. A Verse

A short Scripture reading that anchors the day in God's Word.

2. A Devotional

A simple, child-friendly reflection that connects the verse to the larger story of Advent.

3. Two Discussion Questions

Open-ended prompts to help both kids and adults think, talk, and grow together. There are no "right answers"—just space for honest conversation.

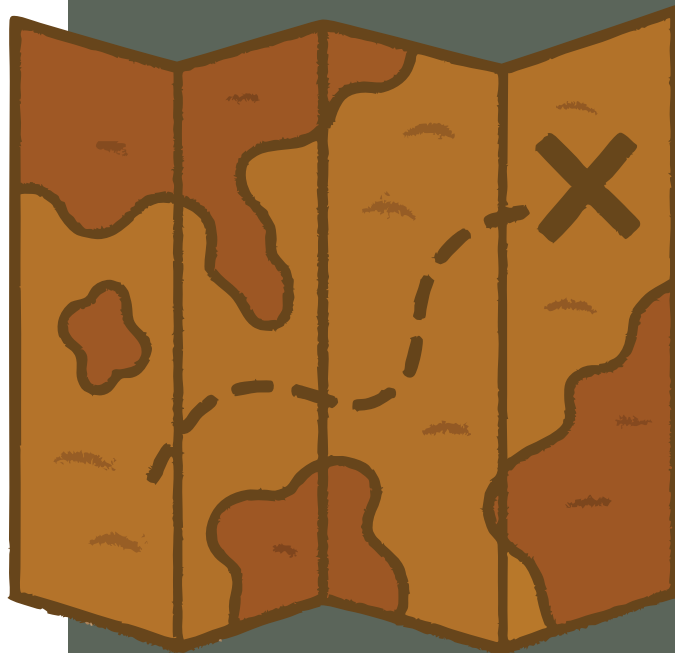
4. An Activity or Craft

A hands-on way to engage the story. From simple crafts and drawing prompts to serving ideas and family traditions. All activities can be done with basic household items and a few minutes of time.

How to Use This Guide

There's no perfect way to do Advent. You don't need the "right setup," the quietest house, or the most organized craft supplies. Use this guide in whatever fits your family best:

- Pick a time of day—breakfast, carpool, bedtime, or after dinner.
- Read the verse and devotional aloud—even if it's quick or a little chaotic.
- Let conversation flow naturally as you discuss the two questions.
- Choose an activity—or save it for the weekend if a night is busy.
- Give yourself grace. If you miss a day, simply begin again. Advent is about presence, not perfection.



The Purpose Behind This Guide

Christmas can easily become crowded with lists, events, and noise. The Journey to Hope helps families return to the heart of the season:

Jesus—our Promise, our Light, our Savior, and our Hope.

This guide is meant to:

- help children understand the big story of Scripture leading to Jesus,
- create meaningful rhythms that draw families closer to one another,
- spark moments of joy, curiosity, and worship,
- shape hearts to slow down and honor Christ above everything else.

Our prayer is that as you journey through these 25 days, your home will be filled with simple moments of wonder, connection, and hope...and that the story of Jesus will come alive in new ways for each person in your family.

Let's begin the journey together.



DAY 1 – THE PROMISE OF HOPE

VERSE:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." - Isaiah 9:2

DEVOTIONAL:

Long before Jesus was born, God promised a light would shine in the darkness. Advent is about waiting with hope for that light—Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

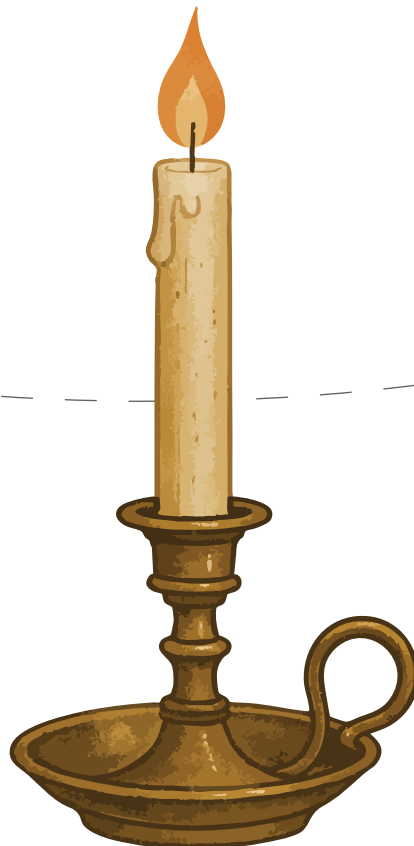
Where do you see darkness in the world?

How can we share light with others?

ACTIVITY:

Light a single candle to remind you that hope begins small but grows bright.

NOTES



DAY 2 – GOD’S BIG RESCUE PLAN

VERSE:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” – Genesis 3:15

DEVOTIONAL:

From the very beginning, after sin entered the world, God promised a Rescuer. Christmas is the fulfillment of that promise.

QUESTIONS:

Why do we need a Rescuer?

How does it feel to know God had a plan all along?

ACTIVITY:

Build a “Rescue Kit.”

Gather a small box or bag and let each family member add one item that represents “help” or “hope” (a flashlight, bandage, snack, small toy, encouraging note, etc.). Talk about how Jesus came as God’s rescue plan—and how we can bring hope to others too. Then donate the kit to someone who might need encouragement (a neighbor, teacher, or friend).

NOTES



DAY 3 – THE ROOT OF JESSE

VERSE:

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."

– Isaiah 11:1

DEVOTIONAL:

God promised a new beginning would grow from
Jesse's family tree. That "branch" was Jesus!

QUESTIONS:

Why do you think God used family lines to tell His story?

What does it mean that Jesus brings new life?

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ACTIVITY:

Collect a branch or twig and decorate it with
ribbons or paper ornaments.



DAY 4 – THE COMING KING

VERSE:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clan of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." - Micah 5:2

DEVOTIONAL:

God promised that a ruler would come from Bethlehem, a small town. God often uses small things to do great things.

QUESTIONS:

Why do you think God chose a small town like Bethlehem?

Can you think of something small that became great?

ACTIVITY:

Bake small cookies together to celebrate how God uses little things.

Tip: Share some with a neighbor or friend to brighten their day!

NOTES



DAY 5 – GOD IS WITH US

VERSE:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." - Isaiah 7:14

DEVOTIONAL:

The name Immanuel means "God with us." Jesus is the greatest gift: God coming close.

QUESTIONS:

How does it make you feel to know God is with us?

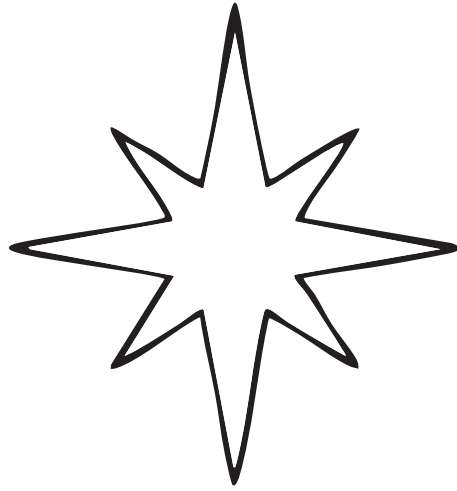
When do you feel closest to God?

ACTIVITY:

Complete the coloring sheet on the next page.

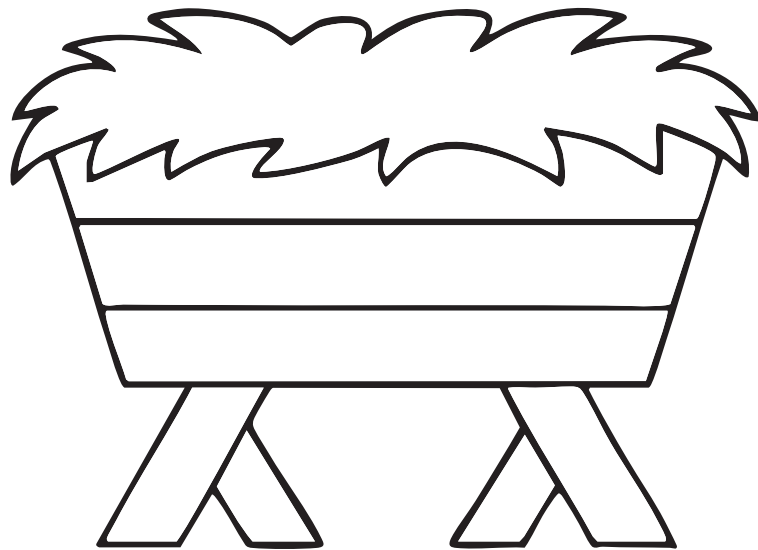
NOTES





IMMANUEL

God With Us



DAY 6 – WAITING IN HOPE

VERSE:

"I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope." – Psalm 130:5

DEVOTIONAL:

God's people waited hundreds of years for the Savior. Advent reminds us that waiting is part of faith.

QUESTIONS:

What's hard about waiting?

What can waiting teach us?

ACTIVITY:

Make a paper chain countdown to Christmas.

Supplies:

- Colored paper (construction paper or any scrap paper)
- Scissors
- Tape, glue, or a stapler
- Markers or crayons

Instructions:

- Cut the Paper

Cut your paper into long strips—about 1 inch wide and 6–8 inches long.

You'll need 20–25 strips, depending on how long you want your chain.

- Write Hope-Filled Words

On each strip, write a word or phrase that reminds your family of the hope we have in Jesus.

Examples: peace, joy, light, Savior, Emmanuel, promise, love, God is with us, take heart.

- Make the First Link

Take your first strip, form it into a circle, and tape or staple the ends together.

- Add More Links

Loop the next strip through the first circle, then tape or staple it closed.

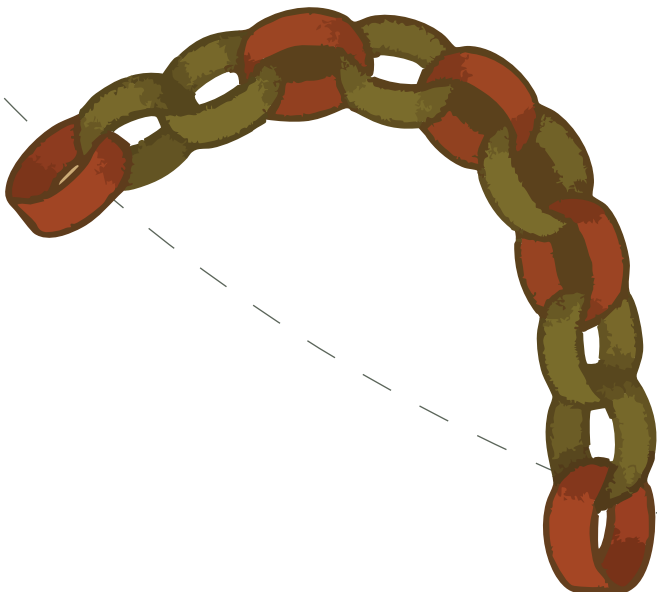
Continue until you have your full chain.

- Hang Your Countdown

Hang the chain somewhere your family will see every day—on the fridge, mantel, staircase, or a bedroom door.

- One Link a Day

Each day leading up to Christmas, tear off one link and read the word together. Talk for a moment about how that word points you toward Jesus.



DAY 7 – MARY’S YES

VERSE:

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.” –
Luke 1:38

DEVOTIONAL:

When the angel told Mary she would carry Jesus, she said, “I am the Lord’s servant.” She trusted God’s plan.

QUESTIONS:

How do you think Mary felt?

How can we say “yes” to God today?

ACTIVITY:

Write some things you need to say “yes” to inside the heart.

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DAY 8 – JOSEPH’S DREAM

VERSE:

“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” - Matthew 1:20

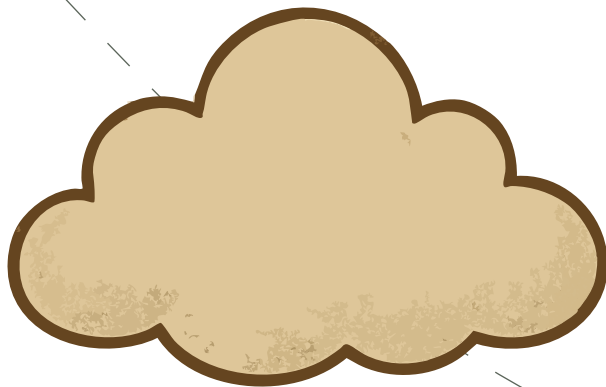
DEVOTIONAL:

God spoke to Joseph in a dream. Even though it was scary, Joseph obeyed and cared for Mary and Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

Why do you think Joseph trusted God’s dream?

What’s a time you chose to do the right thing even when it was hard?



ACTIVITY:

Make a “Dream Cloud” to remember how God spoke to Joseph.

Supplies:

- White paper or cardstock
- Cotton balls or tissue paper
- Glue
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

Instructions:

- Prepare your cloud

Using the outline on the next page as your base.

- Add “Dream Fluff”

Glue cotton balls or scrunched tissue paper around the edges to make it soft and dreamy.

- Write the Message

In the center of the cloud, write:
“God Speaks. I Will Listen.”

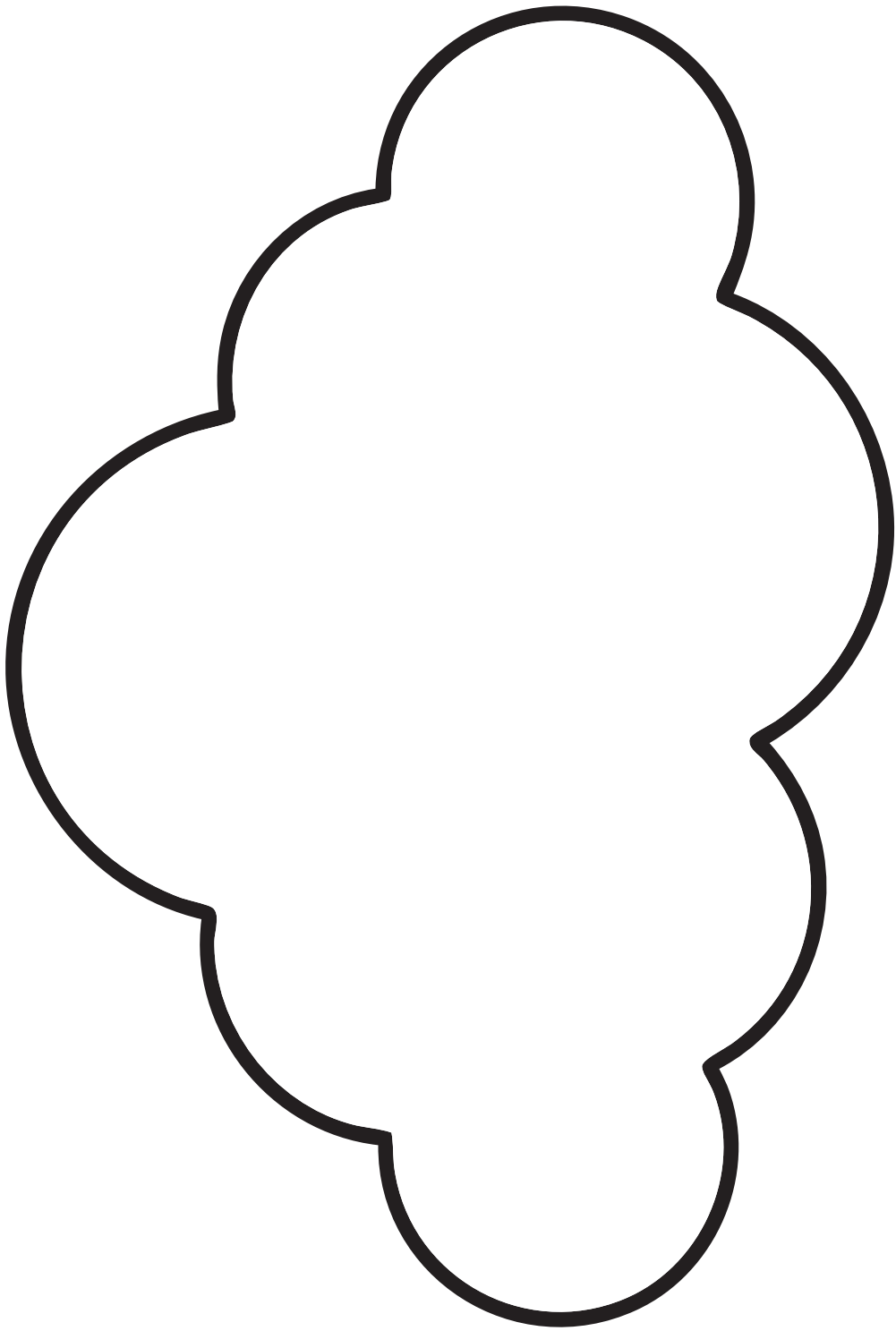
(Kids can also write their own short prayer to God.)

- Decorate

Add stars, moons, or sparkles with markers or crayons.

- Hang It Up

Place the cloud beside the child’s bed to remind them that, just like Joseph, we can listen and trust when God speaks.



DAY 9 – A LONG JOURNEY

VERSE:

“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.” - Luke 2:4-5

DEVOTIONAL:

Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, even though Mary was about to give birth. Their journey reminds us that God guides us even when life is hard.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever gone on a long trip?

How do you think Mary and Joseph trusted God on their journey?

ACTIVITY:

Take a family walk and talk about the journey to Bethlehem.

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DAY 10 – NO ROOM AT THE INN

VERSE:

"and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." - Luke 2:7

DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus wasn't born in a palace but in a humble stable. God's Son came in humility to serve us.

QUESTIONS:

Why do you think God chose a stable for Jesus' birth?

What does it teach us about humility?

ACTIVITY:

Build a small "stable" with blocks or cardboard.

Bonus: Grab some toy animals and dolls you might have lying around and set up a manger scene.

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DAY 11 – THE BIRTH OF JESUS

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VERSE:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

- Luke 2:11

DEVOTIONAL:

The angels announced: "Today a Savior has been born!" The greatest gift had finally come.

QUESTIONS:

Why is Jesus' birth such good news?

How can we celebrate Him today?

ACTIVITY:

Bake a birthday cake for Jesus.



DAY 12 – THE SHEPHERDS’ SURPRISE

VERSE:

“When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

- Luke 2:15

DEVOTIONAL:

The angels didn’t go to kings but to shepherds. God’s good news is for everyone—rich or poor.

QUESTIONS:

Why do you think the angels told the shepherds first?

Who can you share good news with?



ACTIVITY:

Good News Scavenger Hunt

Instructions:

- Hide 5–7 “Good News” Cards

Write short messages on small pieces of paper such as:

“God loves you!”

“Jesus is born!”

“Don’t be afraid.”

“Joy to the world!”

“Peace is here.”

Hide them around the house (easy or tricky—your choice!).

- Send Out the “Shepherds”

Kids pretend to be shepherds in the field, going out to find the “good news” messages hidden around the home.

- Celebrate Each Find

Every time someone discovers a card, read it out loud together and shout:

“Good news of great joy!”

- Gather & Share

Loop the next strip through the first circle, then tape or staple it closed.

Continue until you have your full chain.

- Hang Your Countdown

When all the cards are collected, sit together and read them again.

Talk about how surprising and exciting it must have been when the angels came to the shepherds.

DAY 13 – GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

VERSE:

“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” – Luke 2:10

DEVOTIONAL:

The angel said Jesus’ birth brings joy to all people. Jesus is for the whole world.

QUESTIONS:

What brings you joy?

NOTES

How can we spread joy this week?

ACTIVITY:

Deliver cookies or cards to a neighbor.



DAY 14 – THE WISE MEN’S STAR

VERSE:

“and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” – Matthew 2:2

DEVOTIONAL:

The wise men followed a star to find Jesus.
When we seek Him, He leads us.

QUESTIONS:

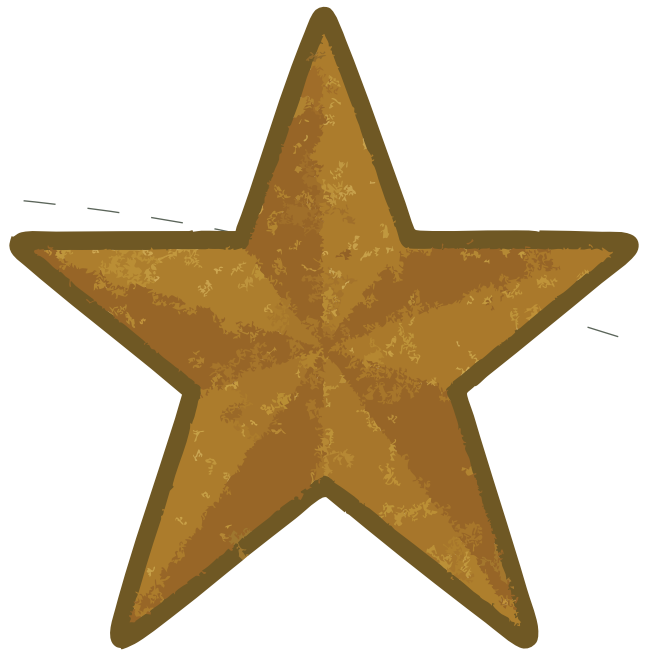
How do you seek Jesus?

What helps guide you, like the star guided the wise men?

ACTIVITY:

Draw stars on paper, decorate them, cut them out, and hang them in your home.

NOTES



DAY 15 – GIFTS FOR THE KING

VERSE:

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." – Matthew 2:11

DEVOTIONAL:

The wise men gave Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Their gifts showed honor.

QUESTIONS:

What gift can we give Jesus?

Why is giving better than receiving?

ACTIVITY:

Make a list of ways to "give" to Jesus (kindness, serving).

NOTES



DAY 16 – A REFUGEE KING

VERSE:

“So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,”

- Matthew 2:14

DEVOTIONAL:

Joseph fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt to keep Him safe. Even as a child, Jesus knew what it meant to be without a home.

QUESTIONS:

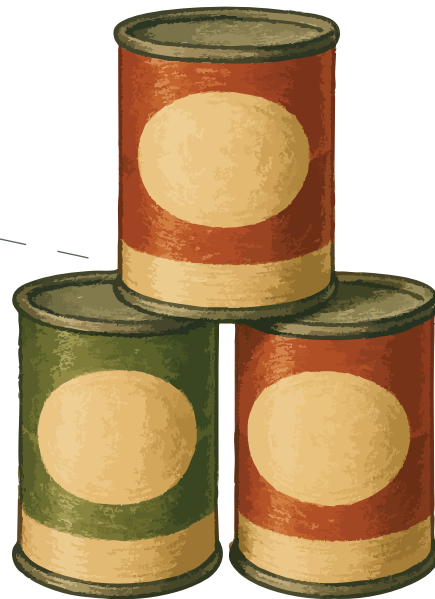
How does Jesus understand people who are hurting?

How can we care for those in need?

ACTIVITY:

Donate canned food or clothing to a local shelter.

NOTES



DAY 17 – THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

VERSE:

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” – John 8:12

DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus called Himself the Light of the World. His light pushes away darkness.

QUESTIONS:

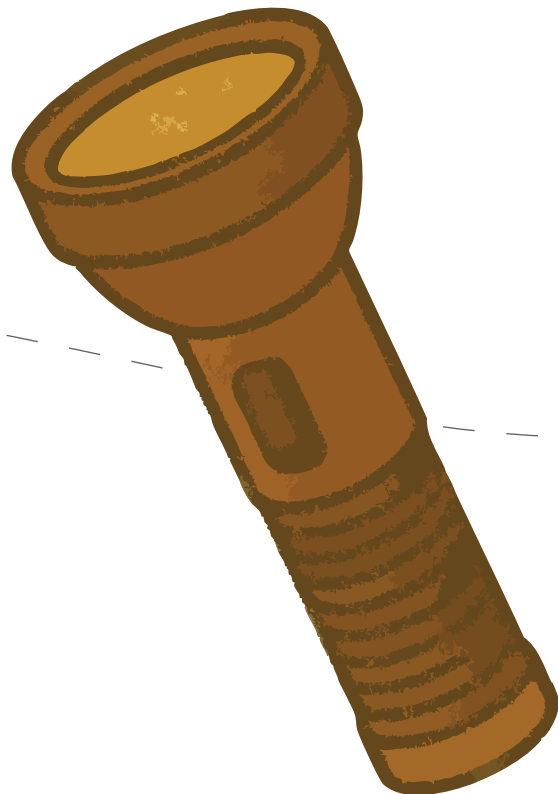
How does light help us in the dark?

How can you shine Jesus’ light?

ACTIVITY:

Go outside with flashlights and talk about how light changes everything.

NOTES



DAY 18 – THE WORD BECAME FLESH

VERSE:

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:14

DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus called Himself the Light of the World. His light pushes away darkness.

QUESTIONS:

What does it mean that God became human?

Why is it amazing that God lived among us?

ACTIVITY:

Act out the Nativity story as a family.
Use the script on the next page!

NOTES



NATIVITY PLAY

Characters

(pick who plays what — or use stuffed animals!)

Mary

Joseph

Angel

Shepherd(s)

Wise Men

Baby Jesus (doll or wrapped blanket)

Animals (optional... and always funny)

1. The Angel Visits Mary

Reader: "God sent an angel to Mary and told her she would have a baby named Jesus."

Action: Angel steps forward and gently "announces" the message.

Mary smiles, nods, and says, "I trust God."

2. Joseph Learns the Good News

Reader: "An angel told Joseph in a dream that the baby was from God."

Action: Joseph pretends to sleep.

Angel taps him and says, "Don't be afraid."

Joseph wakes up and stands beside Mary.

3. The Journey to Bethlehem

Reader: "Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem."

Action: Mary and Joseph walk slowly around the room.

Optional: someone leads a pretend donkey.

4. No Room at the Inn

Reader: "There was no room for them, so they stayed in a stable."

Action: Mary and Joseph knock on an imaginary door.

"Innkeeper" shakes their head.

They settle on a blanket "stable."

5. Jesus Is Born

Reader: "Mary gave birth to Jesus and laid Him in a manger."

Action: Mary gently places Baby Jesus in a box or basket.

Everyone kneels or sits quietly for one moment.

6. Angels Appear to the Shepherds

Reader: "Angels told shepherds the Good News."

Action: Shepherds pretend to watch sheep.

Angel(s) stretch arms wide and say, "Glory to God!"

Shepherds look amazed.

7. Shepherds Visit Jesus

Reader: "The shepherds hurried to see Jesus."

Action: Shepherds walk or run to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

They kneel and say, "Thank You, God!"

8. Wise Men Follow the Star

Reader: "Wise men followed a star and brought gifts."

Action: Wise Men walk behind an adult or child holding a paper star.

They place small items (pretend gifts) beside Baby Jesus.

9. Everyone Rejoices!

Reader: "All who saw Him were filled with joy and praised God."

Action: Everyone gathers around Jesus.

Families say together:

"Thank You, Jesus, for coming!"

DAY 19 – GOD’S GIFT OF PEACE

VERSE:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

- John 14:27

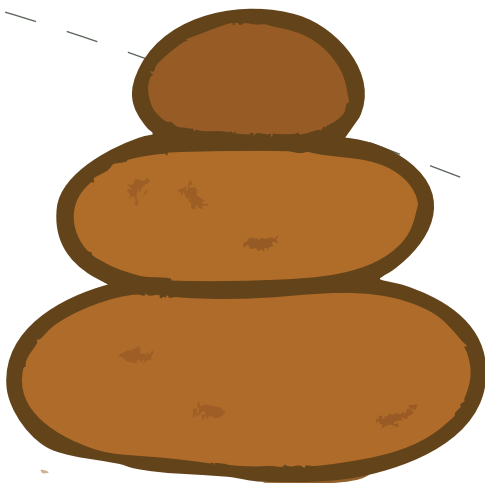
DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus came to bring peace to our hearts and our world. True peace is only found in Him.

QUESTIONS:

What does peace feel like?

How can we be peacemakers in our family?



ACTIVITY:

Create “Peace Pebbles” to remind your family of God’s peace.

Supplies:

- A few smooth rocks or pebbles (from your yard, a park, or a craft store)
- Paint pens or permanent markers
- Optional: acrylic paint, clear sealer

Instructions:

- Find Your Pebbles

Go on a short family walk and gather a few smooth stones.

(If it’s cold or dark, use craft-store rocks.)

- Write a Peace Word

On each pebble, write a word connected to God’s peace—Ideas: peace, still, calm, rest, trust, Jesus, be not afraid.

- Decorate the Pebbles

Add small designs like hearts, doves, stars, or olive branches.

- Let Them Dry

If using paint, let them dry completely. Optionally seal them with clear finish for durability.

- Use Your Peace Pebbles

-Place one beside each family member’s bed as a nightly reminder.

-Put one in your car or kitchen to bring peace into busy moments.

-Give one away to someone who needs encouragement.

DAY 20 – A JOYFUL SONG

VERSE:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior," - Luke 1:46-47

DEVOTIONAL:

Mary sang a song of praise when she heard the news of Jesus. Worship is a way we show joy in God.

QUESTIONS:

What's your favorite worship song?

Why do songs help us praise God?

ACTIVITY:

Sing a Christmas carol together as a family.

NOTES



DAY 21 – THE GOOD SHEPHERD

VERSE:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." – John 10:11

DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. He knows and cares for each one of us.

QUESTIONS:

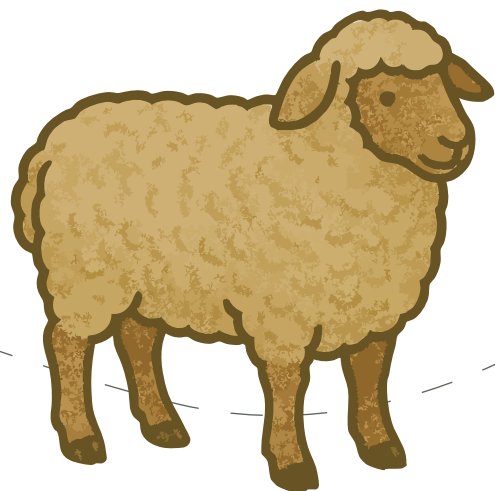
How does it feel to know Jesus cares for you personally?

How can we follow His voice?

NOTES

ACTIVITY:

Draw a shepherd with sheep and write each family member's name on a sheep.



DAY 22 – HOPE FOR THE NATIONS

VERSE:

"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." - Isaiah 49:6

DEVOTIONAL:

Jesus didn't just come for Israel—He came for the whole world. He is hope for every nation.

QUESTIONS:

Why is it good news that Jesus is for everyone?

How can we pray for people in other countries?

ACTIVITY:

Look at a world map and pray for another nation.

NOTES



DAY 23 – THE PRINCE OF PEACE

VERSE:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." – Isaiah 9:6

DEVOTIONAL:

One of Jesus' names is "Prince of Peace."
He rules with gentleness and love.

QUESTIONS:

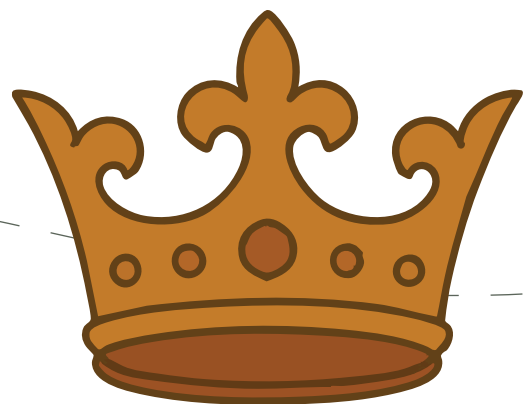
How is Jesus' kingdom different from earthly kingdoms?

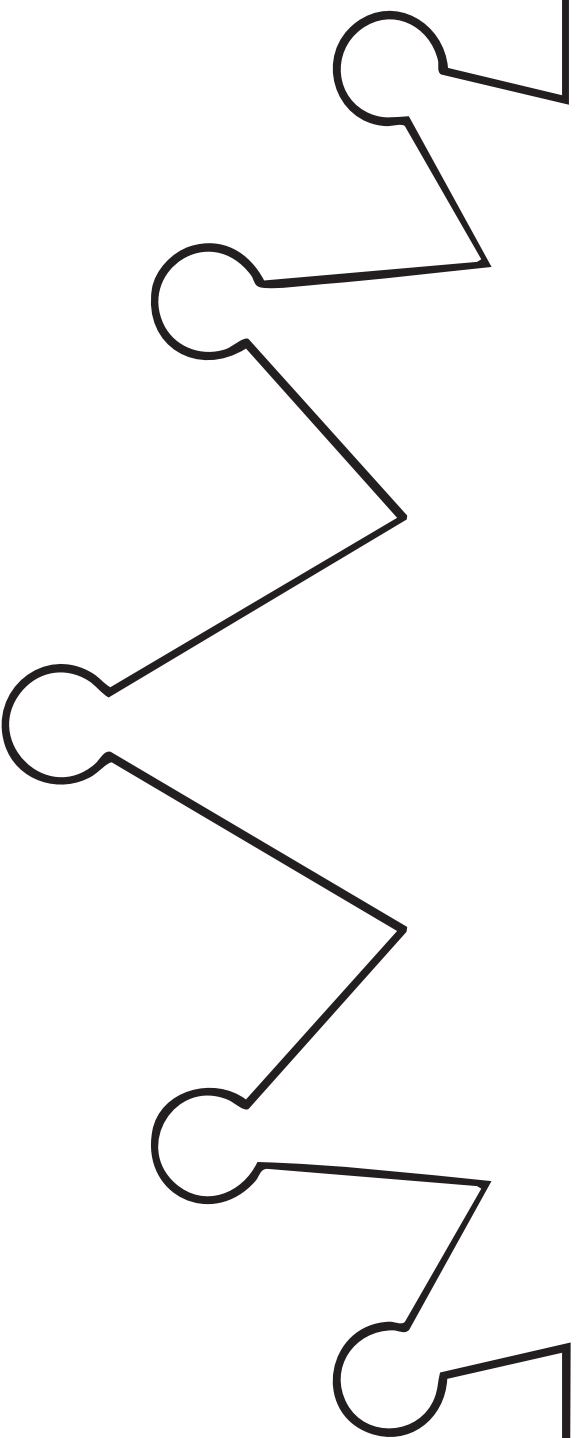
Where do you need His peace today?

ACTIVITY:

Color, cut out, and tape together the crown on the next page as a reminder that Jesus is our Prince of Peace.

NOTES





DAY 24 – THE GREATEST GIFT

VERSE:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” – John 3:16

DEVOTIONAL:

God gave His only Son so we could have eternal life. Christmas is about receiving this gift of love.

QUESTIONS:

Why is Jesus the greatest gift?

How can we receive His gift today?

ACTIVITY:

Wrap an empty box, label it “Jesus,” and put it under the tree as a reminder.

NOTES



DAY 25 – CHRIST THE LORD

VERSE:

"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." - Luke 2:20

DEVOTIONAL:

On Christmas Day we celebrate that Jesus has come! The shepherds praised God, and we can too.

QUESTIONS:

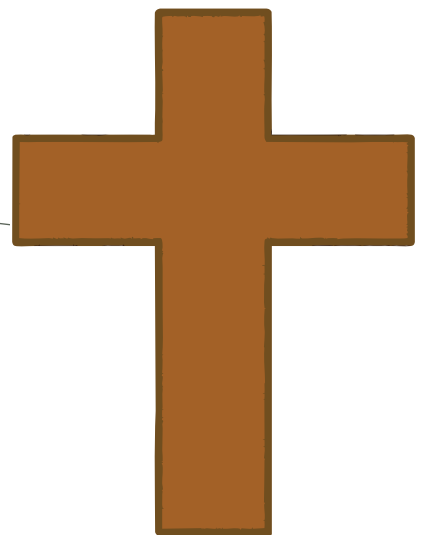
What are you thankful for this Christmas?

How will you celebrate Jesus today?

ACTIVITY:

Read the Christmas story together, then pray and thank God for sending His Son.

NOTES



Want to make a difference
this Christmas season?

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT.



GIVE ONLINE

Your gift matched X2 at
zoemeanslife.org/match



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ZOE
MINISTRIES AND HOW
WE ARE SHARING HOPE TO THE
PEOPLE OF EAST AFRICA,
VISIT **ZOEMEANSLIFE.ORG**

