

Advent Family Devotions *25 days, December 1 to Christmas*

These Advent family devotions take your family from the first promise in Genesis to the wise men worshiping Jesus, one short reading a day from December 1 to Christmas Day. They follow the same path as our Advent Bible reading plan: eighteen days of promises from the Old Testament, then seven days of the Christmas story, so children see God keep every promise He made.

Each day takes about ten minutes: read a few verses aloud, read the short talk, ask the questions (the first is for little ones, the last for older children and adults), try the activity and pray together. Light a candle each night if you like. Tick off each day and the page remembers where you are.

DAY 1 · TUE, DEC 1

The first promise

READ

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied, "and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and every beast of the field! On your belly will you go, and dust you will eat, all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

— Genesis 3:13-15 (BSB)

TALK

Advent means coming. For twenty-five days we will read God's promises that Jesus was coming, and then see them come true. The very first promise came on the saddest day in the Bible. Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, and sin came into the world. But God did not leave them without hope. He promised that a child of the woman would one day crush the serpent's head. That child is Jesus, who came to defeat sin and death.

ASK

- What did God promise in verse 15?
- Why was it kind of God to make a promise on such a sad day?
- What does the word Advent mean?

DO

Turn off the lights and light one candle, or switch on one small lamp. Talk about how one light changes a dark room. Light it again each night this Advent as you read.

PRAY

Father God, thank You that even on the saddest day You made a promise. Thank You for sending Jesus to defeat sin. Amen.

DAY 2 • WED, DEC 2

A blessing for all nations

READ

Then the LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country, your kindred, and your father’s household, and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

– Genesis 12:1-3 (BSB)

TALK

God chose a man named Abram and told him to leave his home and go to a land God would show him. God promised to bless Abram and make his family a great nation. Then He said something amazing: “all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.” Many years later, Jesus was born into Abram’s family, and through Jesus people from every nation, including our family, can know God.

ASK

- What did God ask Abram to do?
- Who are all the families of the earth? Is our family one of them?
- Would it be hard to leave home to follow God? Why?

DO

Find a map or globe. Point to where Abram’s family came from (Ur, in modern Iraq) and then to where you live. Choose one other country and pray for the families there.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for blessing all the families of the earth through Jesus, including ours. Please bless families in every nation. Amen.

DAY 3 • THU, DEC 3

A star from Jacob

READ

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come forth from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel. He will crush the skulls of Moab and strike down all the sons of Sheth.

– Numbers 24:17 (BSB)

TALK

A king who was afraid of Israel paid a prophet named Balaam to curse God's people. But God made Balaam bless them instead. Then Balaam saw far into the future: "A star will come forth from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel." A scepter is the rod a king holds. God was promising a King from Israel. Long afterward, wise men followed a star to find the newborn King, Jesus.

ASK

- What two things did Balaam see coming from Israel?
- What is a scepter for?
- Who followed a star to find Jesus?

DO

Cut a star out of paper and put it up high somewhere in your home. Each day this Advent, move it a little closer to your nativity scene or the place where you read.

PRAY

Jesus, You are the King God promised long ago. Thank You that nothing can stop God's promises. Amen.

A prophet like Moses

READ

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to him. This is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God or see this great fire anymore, so that we will not die!” Then the LORD said to me, “They have spoken well. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

– Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (BSB)

TALK

Moses spoke God’s words to the people of Israel. At Mount Sinai, also called Horeb, the people were so frightened by God’s voice and the great fire that they asked Moses to speak to them instead. So God promised to send another prophet like Moses, who would tell the people everything God commanded. Jesus is that Prophet. When Jesus was on a mountain with His friends, God said from a cloud, “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”

ASK

- What did God promise in verse 18?
- Why were the people afraid at the mountain?
- How can we listen to Jesus today?

DO

Play a whisper game: pass a short message around the circle and see if it arrives right. Then read Matthew 11:28 slowly and talk about what Jesus is saying to you.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You speak the words of God. Help our family listen to You and do what You say. Amen.

A son of David forever

READ

And when your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My loving devotion will never be removed from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and kingdom will endure forever before Me, and your throne will be established forever.”

— 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (BSB)

TALK

King David wanted to build a house for God, a temple. But God said He would build David a house instead: a family of kings. He promised that one of David’s descendants would have a kingdom that lasts forever. Many kings came from David’s family, but they all died, and their kingdoms ended. Then an angel told Mary that God would give her son Jesus “the throne of His father David.” His kingdom will never end.

ASK

- What did David want to build for God? What did God promise to build for David?
- How long will this King’s kingdom last (v. 16)?
- Why is it good news that Jesus’ kingdom never ends?

DO

Build a tower with blocks, cups or books, then let it fall. Talk about how everything people build falls down one day, but Jesus’ kingdom lasts forever.

PRAY

King Jesus, Your kingdom will never end. Thank You that we can belong to it. Rule in our home and in our hearts. Amen.

The King on Zion

READ

“I have installed My King on Zion, upon My holy mountain.” I will proclaim the decree spoken to Me by the LORD: “You are My Son; today I have become Your Father. Ask Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession. You will break them with an iron scepter; You will shatter them like pottery.” Therefore be wise, O kings; be admonished, O judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish in your rebellion, when His wrath ignites in an instant. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

— Psalm 2:6-12 (BSB)

TALK

Psalm 2 is about kings and nations who want to be free of God’s rule. God is not worried. He says, “I have installed My King on Zion,” which is Jerusalem. Then God speaks to His King as His Son: “You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.” The book of Hebrews tells us this Son is Jesus. The psalm ends with an invitation: “Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.”

ASK

- What does God call His King in verse 7?
- What will God give the King (v. 8)?
- What does it mean to take refuge in Jesus?

DO

Build a fort with blankets and chairs and read verse 12 inside it. Talk about how Jesus is a safe place to run to when we are scared or sorry.

PRAY

Father, thank You for Jesus, the King You have set on His throne forever. We take refuge in Him. Amen.

The virgin will be with child

READ

Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.

— Isaiah 7:13-14 (BSB)

TALK

King Ahaz was afraid of enemy armies, and he would not trust God. So God gave the house of David a sign: “Behold, the virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.” Immanuel means God with us. About seven hundred years later, Matthew wrote that this promise came true when Mary, a virgin, gave birth to Jesus. God did not only send help; He came Himself.

ASK

- What sign did God promise in verse 14?
- What does the name Immanuel mean?
- When do you most need to remember that God is with you?

DO

Write IMMANUEL in big letters and decorate it together. Put it by the front door or on the fridge where everyone will see it this month.

PRAY

Immanuel, God with us, thank You for coming to be with us. Help us remember You are with us at school, at work and at home. Amen.

A child is born to us

READ

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this.

— Isaiah 9:6-7 (BSB)

TALK

Isaiah wrote to people living in dark and frightening times. He promised them a great light, and a child: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” Listen to His names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. No ordinary baby could be called Mighty God. This child is Jesus, God the Son, who came as a baby, and of His peace there will be no end.

ASK

- Which of the four names in verse 6 do you like best? Why?
- What will have no end, according to verse 7?
- Where do you need Jesus to be your Prince of Peace?

DO

Write the four names from verse 6 on four cards. Each person picks one and says why that name is good news.

PRAY

Jesus, You are Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. Thank You for being born for us. Amen.

A shoot from the stump of Jesse

READ

Then a shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what His eyes see, and He will not decide by what His ears hear,

— Isaiah 11:1-3 (BSB)

TALK

Jesse was King David's father. Isaiah knew that David's family of kings would be cut down like a tree, leaving only a stump. But he promised that a new shoot would grow from the stump of Jesse: a King on whom the Spirit of the LORD would rest, full of wisdom and understanding. When everything looked finished, God was not finished. Jesus is that new shoot from David's family.

ASK

- Who was Jesse?
- What does the Spirit give this King (v. 2)?
- What does a green shoot from an old stump teach us about God?

DO

Draw a tree stump with one green shoot growing from it. Some families make a Jesse tree in Advent, hanging a picture for each day's story. You could start one today.

PRAY

Lord, when things look finished, You can make something new grow. Thank You for Jesus, the shoot from the stump of Jesse. Amen.

Comfort for God's people

READ

“Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God. “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her forced labor has been completed; her iniquity has been pardoned. For she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins.” A voice of one calling: “Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground will become smooth, and the rugged land a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all humanity together will see it.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

— Isaiah 40:1-5 (BSB)

TALK

God's people had suffered because of their sins. Then God spoke tender words: comfort, comfort My people. Their sin would be pardoned. And a voice would call, “Prepare the way for the LORD.” Hundreds of years later, John the Baptist was that voice, getting people ready to meet Jesus. Advent is a time for us to prepare the way too, by turning our hearts toward God.

ASK

- What does God tell His messengers to do in verse 1?
- Who was the voice that prepared the way for Jesus?
- How could our family prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent?

DO

Clear a path through a messy room together. Then talk: what is one thing in our hearts we need to clear away to make room for Jesus?

PRAY

God of all comfort, thank You for pardoning our sin. Prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus this Christmas. Amen.

The gentle Servant

READ

“Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights. I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break and a smoldering wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow weak or discouraged before He has established justice on the earth. In His law the islands will put their hope.”

— Isaiah 42:1-4 (BSB)

TALK

God speaks of “My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights.” This Servant will bring justice to the nations, but gently: “A bruised reed He will not break.” A bruised reed is a weak, bent stem that would snap easily. Matthew tells us this Servant is Jesus. He is strong enough to rule the world and gentle enough to care for people who feel weak and broken.

ASK

- What will God put on His Servant (v. 1)?
- What is a bruised reed? What does the Servant do with it?
- Have you ever felt like a bruised reed?

DO

Find a bent blade of grass or a thin twig. Notice how easily it could snap. Talk about how gently Jesus treats people who are hurting, and how we can be gentle too.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, thank You for being gentle with the weak and hurting. Make us gentle with each other too. Amen.

The suffering Servant

READ

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Like one from whom men hide their faces, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows; yet we considered Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each one has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

— Isaiah 53:3-6 (BSB)

TALK

Isaiah describes a Servant who would be rejected and would suffer, not for His own wrongs, but for ours: “He was pierced for our transgressions.” Then Isaiah tells the truth about us: “We all like sheep have gone astray.” Jesus came at Christmas so that He could go to the cross for us. The baby in the manger is the Savior who carried our sins.

ASK

- Why was the Servant pierced and crushed (v. 5)?
- What do sheep do in verse 6? How are we like them?
- Why is the cross part of the Christmas story?

DO

Read verse 5 again slowly while someone holds a small cross. Give everyone a quiet moment to thank Jesus in their own words.

PRAY

Jesus, You were pierced for our sins and crushed for our wrongs. Thank You for coming to be our Savior. Amen.

Arise, shine

READ

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. For behold, darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples; but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

— Isaiah 60:1-3 (BSB)

TALK

Imagine a night so dark you cannot see your hand. Then the sun comes up. Isaiah says to God's people, "Arise, shine, for your light has come." While darkness covers the earth, the glory of the LORD rises on His people, and nations come to that light. Jesus is the Light of the world, and the wise men were among the first from far-off nations to come to Him.

ASK

- What covers the earth in verse 2? What rises on God's people?
- Who will come to the light (v. 3)?
- How can our family shine Jesus' light to others this Christmas?

DO

Sit together in the dark for a moment. Then light one candle or switch on a flashlight and read verse 1 together, loudly.

PRAY

Lord, You are our light. Help us arise and shine, so that others come to know You. Amen.

Good news for the poor

READ

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of our God's vengeance, to comfort all who mourn, to console the mourners in Zion—to give them a crown of beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for a spirit of despair. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

— Isaiah 61:1-3 (BSB)

TALK

Someone filled with God's Spirit says He has come to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, and to give "a crown of beauty for ashes." Many years later, Jesus stood up in the synagogue in His hometown, read these very words, and said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus came for the poor, the sad and the stuck.

ASK

- Who does this passage bring good news to?
- What does God give instead of ashes and mourning (v. 3)?
- Who do you know who is sad or in need this Christmas?

DO

Choose one person or family who is poor, lonely or grieving this season. Make a card, bake something or put together a gift for them this week.

PRAY

Jesus, You came with good news for the poor and healing for the brokenhearted. Show us who we can help this Christmas. Amen.

Out of Bethlehem

READ

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come forth for Me One to be ruler over Israel—One whose origins are of old, from the days of eternity. Therefore Israel will be abandoned until she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of His brothers will return to the children of Israel. He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD His God. And they will dwell securely, for then His greatness will extend to the ends of the earth.

— Micah 5:2-4 (BSB)

TALK

Bethlehem was a little town, “small among the clans of Judah.” But God promised that out of Bethlehem would come a ruler for Israel, One “whose origins are of old, from the days of eternity.” That means this ruler was alive before He was born! When King Herod asked where the Christ would be born, the priests answered with this very promise: in Bethlehem.

ASK

- Why do you think God chose a small town like Bethlehem?
- What will this ruler do for His flock (v. 4)?
- How can someone be alive before they are born? Who is this ruler?

DO

Find Bethlehem on a map. Then talk about a time God used something small, or someone young, to do something big.

PRAY

Lord, You chose little Bethlehem for the birth of Your Son. Thank You that You use small places and small people. Amen.

A righteous Branch for David

READ

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He will reign wisely as King and will administer justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is His name by which He will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

— Jeremiah 23:5-6 (BSB)

TALK

Jeremiah lived when the kings of Judah were doing evil and the nation was falling apart. God promised a different kind of king: a righteous Branch from David's family, who would rule wisely and do what is right. His name would be The LORD Our Righteousness. We cannot make ourselves right with God, but Jesus, the righteous King, makes us right with Him.

ASK

- What kind of king does God promise in verse 5?
- What is the King's name in verse 6?
- How does Jesus make us right with God?

DO

Talk together: what makes a good leader? Then pray for the leaders of your country, your town and your church by name.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for Jesus, the King who always does what is right. Please help our leaders to be wise and fair. Amen.

DAY 17 • THU, DEC 17

Your King is coming

READ

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

— Zechariah 9:9 (BSB)

TALK

Kings usually rode war horses or chariots to show their power. But Zechariah said God's King would come "humble and riding on a donkey." About five hundred years later, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey while the crowds shouted Hosanna. Jesus is a King, but a humble King. At Christmas He came not to a palace but to a manger.

ASK

- How does the King come in verse 9?
- Why would a king ride a donkey instead of a war horse?
- How can we be humble like Jesus this week?

DO

Act out Jesus riding into Jerusalem: one person is the donkey, everyone else waves scarves or paper branches and shouts Hosanna. Then talk about why Jesus chose a donkey.

PRAY

King Jesus, You are righteous and victorious, and You are humble. Teach us to be humble too. Amen.

DAY 18 • FRI, DEC 18

The messenger who prepares the way

READ

"Behold, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple—the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight—see, He is coming," says the LORD of Hosts.

— Malachi 3:1 (BSB)

TALK

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. After it, God's people waited about four hundred years for another prophet. Malachi promised that God would send a messenger to prepare the way, and then the Lord Himself would suddenly come to His temple. Jesus said that John the Baptist was that messenger. The long wait was almost over.

ASK

- Who would God send first, according to verse 1?
- Who would come after the messenger?
- What is the hardest thing about waiting?

DO

Talk about the longest you have ever waited for something. Count how many days are left until Christmas, then think about God's people waiting four hundred years.

PRAY

Lord, thank You that You always keep Your promises, even after a long wait. Help us wait for You with hope. Amen.

DAY 19 • SAT, DEC 19

Joseph's dream

READ

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged in marriage to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and was unwilling to disgrace her publicly, he resolved to divorce her quietly. But after he had pondered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to embrace Mary as your wife, for the One conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" (which means, "God with us").

— Matthew 1:18-23 (BSB)

TALK

Joseph was engaged to Mary, and he found out she was going to have a baby. He knew it was not his child, so he planned to end the engagement quietly. But an angel told him in a dream that the baby was from the

Holy Spirit: “You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” Joseph believed God and obeyed.

ASK

- What was Joseph going to do, and what changed his mind?
- Why was the baby to be named Jesus (v. 21)?
- When is it hard to obey God? What helped Joseph?

DO

Ask each person what their own name means, or why it was chosen for them. Then talk about why Jesus’ name is the best name of all.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You that You came to save us from our sins. Help us trust and obey God like Joseph did. Amen.

DAY 20 • SUN, DEC 20

Gabriel comes to Mary

READ

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. The angel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. So the angel told her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end!”

— Luke 1:26-33 (BSB)

TALK

God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary in the little town of Nazareth. Mary was troubled, but the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” She would have a son named Jesus, the Son of the Most High, and His kingdom would never end. A few verses later Mary answered with faith: “I am the Lord’s servant.”

ASK

- What did the angel say about Mary's son (vv. 31–33)?
- How do you think Mary felt?
- What would it look like for you to say yes to God?

DO

Act out Gabriel's visit to Mary. Then let each person finish the sentence: God, I will trust You with ...

PRAY

Lord God, thank You for Mary's faith. Help us trust You and say yes to You, even when we are afraid. Amen.

DAY 21 • MON, DEC 21

The Word became flesh

READ

The true Light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

— John 1:9–14 (BSB)

TALK

John does not start his Gospel in Bethlehem. He starts before anything was made, with the Word, who was with God and was God. Everything was made through Him. Then comes the most astonishing sentence: “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” The Maker of the world became a baby. And to everyone who receives Him, He gives the right to become children of God.

ASK

- What did the Word become (v. 14)?
- What does Jesus give to those who receive Him (v. 12)?
- Why is it amazing that the Maker of everything became a baby?

DO

Look at something your family made together. Talk about how the One who made the whole world came to live in it with us.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You are the Word who became flesh. We receive You. Thank You for making us children of God. Amen.

DAY 22 • TUE, DEC 22

God sent His Son

READ

But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God.

— Galatians 4:4-7 (BSB)

TALK

God chose the perfect time for the first Christmas: “when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman.” Jesus came to rescue us so that we could be adopted into God’s family. Now God sends His Spirit into our hearts, and we can call God “Abba, Father!” Abba is a family word for father. Christmas means we can belong to God’s family.

ASK

- Who did God send, and when (v. 4)?
- What can we call God because of Jesus (v. 6)?
- What is the best thing about belonging to a family?

DO

Look at family photos together, or draw a picture of your family. Talk about how everyone who trusts Jesus belongs to God’s family too.

PRAY

Abba, Father, thank You for sending Your Son at just the right time, and for adopting us into Your family. Amen.

He humbled Himself

READ

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

— Philippians 2:5-11 (BSB)

TALK

Jesus is God, yet He did not hold on to His glory. He “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.” He came as a baby, grew up, served others and obeyed God all the way to the cross. That is why God has given Him “the name above all names.” One day every knee will bow and every tongue will say that Jesus Christ is Lord.

ASK

- What did Jesus give up to come to earth?
- How far did Jesus’ obedience go (v. 8)?
- How can you serve someone in our family this week?

DO

Give everyone a secret servant job for tomorrow: make someone’s bed, do their chore, write them a kind note. Tomorrow, share what you did.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You humbled Yourself and became a servant for us. Every knee will bow to You. Make us humble servants too. Amen.

Jesus is born

READ

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds residing in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! And this will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there appeared with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests!”

— Luke 2:7-14 (BSB)

TALK

Tonight is Christmas Eve. After all the promises, it finally happened. Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. That night an angel told shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” Every promise we have read this month comes true in this baby.

ASK

- Where did Mary lay Jesus, and why?
- Who heard the news first? How did they feel at first?
- Which promise from this month is your favorite to see come true?

DO

Read the passage again by candlelight, moving the nativity figures as you read. Then sing a carol together, such as Silent Night or O Come, All Ye Faithful.

PRAY

Glory to God in the highest! Thank You, Father, for sending Jesus, our Savior, Christ the Lord. Amen.

The wise men worship the King

READ

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great delight. On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

— Matthew 2:9-11 (BSB)

TALK

Merry Christmas! Wise men from the east followed the star to find the newborn King. Matthew says they found Him in a house, so they probably came some time after His birth, but today we remember them too. When they saw the star, they were full of joy. They fell down and worshiped Jesus and gave Him gold, frankincense and myrrh. The greatest gift is Jesus Himself, and the best gift we can give Him is our hearts.

ASK

- How did the wise men feel when they saw the star?
- What did they do when they saw Jesus (v. 11)?
- What gift could you give Jesus this year?

DO

Before or after opening presents, go around the room and say one thing you want to give Jesus this year: time, kindness, obedience or praise.

PRAY

Jesus, we worship You today, like the wise men. You are the greatest gift. We give You our hearts. Merry Christmas, Lord! Amen.

Tips for family devotions

Keep it short. Ten minutes is plenty. If the children are restless, read the verses and pray, and save the rest for tomorrow.

Same time, same place. After dinner or at bedtime works for most families. A candle or a special lamp helps children know it is Advent time.

Let children read. Older children can read the verses aloud. Little ones can hold the candle, move the paper star or choose the carol.

Missed a day?. Just read today's. Or catch up on the weekend by reading two together. The page remembers which days you have ticked.

More family devotions

Family Devotions for Young Kids · 10 days

Family Dinner Devotions · 10 days

Thanksgiving Family Devotions · 7 days

Holy Week Family Devotions · 8 days

Advent Bible reading plan

Advent prayers

A Christmas prayer for family

Christmas prayer points

All family devotions

Questions