



The Peaceable Kingdom by Edward Hicks (1780-1849)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Family Advent Devotional Booklet

A collection of prayers, readings, songs,
stories, and activities for families to do
together each day of Advent

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Advent, 2016

Books to read together

To Whom the Angel Spoke by Terry Kay

I Am Christmas by Nancy White Carlstrom

Grumpy Shepherd by Paddie Devon

Refuge by Anne Booth

Spark Story Bible "Jesus Is Born" pg. 212 - 217

The Children's Bible in 365 Stories "God's Promise Comes True" #243, pg 279

Things to do together

Place the baby Jesus in the manger of your nativity set. Bring the shepherds to the stable to visit Jesus.

Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus today!

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This booklet belongs to the

family

Welcome to this Advent Journey

The word “advent” goes all the way back to the people who spoke Latin in ancient Rome. Back then the word was ‘advenire’, and simply meant to come toward. Over time the word became ‘advent’ and means that ‘something’ is coming’.

In the church when we use the word ‘Advent’, with a capital “A”, it doesn’t mean just anything is coming; it means that something really important is coming - **Christ is coming!** and when someone this important is coming we need to get ready! In the Church four special weeks are set aside to prepare for Christ to come. These weeks are called ‘Advent’, and during Advent we prepare for Jesus’ coming as a baby in Bethlehem, and also as our Saviour who will come again and usher in the promised kingdom of God.

There are many ways to prepare for Jesus’ coming into our lives. One important way is to set aside time to be quiet, offer prayers, hear the stories of God’s plan for Jesus’ birth, and think about what it means for each of us and the church. This booklet, along with a simple Advent wreath, will help your family build a ritual that invites everyone to get ready for Jesus to come among us. Find a quiet time; early in the morning, during the evening meal, or before bed to gather as a family and follow the worship liturgies found in this booklet. Share responsibility for leading when saying the prayers, reading the scripture texts, and lighting the candles.

Each scripture encourages active waiting as we anticipate Jesus’ birth and the coming kingdom of God. Chat as a family about what the scripture is telling you about these events, and how you are to participate in them. I hope that these moments will be for your family a time of joy as you prepare for Christ to come into your home this season.

CHRISTMAS DAY

The Birth of Jesus

Gathering Response

L: Glory to God in the heavenly heights,

R: **Peace to all children, young people, adults and older adults on earth who please God.**

Scripture Reading

Hear the story of the birth of Jesus. What does this story mean to you? Who will you tell this story to? What part of the story will you remember especially deep in your heart?

Christmas Day - Luke 2:1-20

Light the first, second, third, fourth and final candles of Advent

1: This is the candle of HOPE (blue/purple candle)

2: This is the candle of PEACE (blue/purple candle)

3: This is the candle of JOY (pink candle)

4: This is the candle of LOVE (blue/purple candle)

All: This is the CHRIST candle, bringing HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE into the whole world this day and every day. (white candle)

Unison Prayer

God of promises fulfilled, our waiting is over. We thank you for your love as we celebrate the birth of your son, Jesus. Amen.

Songs to sing together

Away in the manger (BofP #149)

Oh come, all ye faithful (BofP #159)

While shepherds watched (BofP # 138)

Go, tell it on the mountain (BofP #133)

living into their name, whether through it's meaning, or in light of the history behind its choosing

Bring Mary and Joseph together and move them day by day, closer to the stable of your nativity set. until they are in the stable on Christmas Eve.

Add a picture of the nativity to your Christ candle by wrapping family artwork around a chubby white candle. First colour a picture of the nativity on a piece of white tissue paper using 'Sharpie' magic markers. Make sure your picture will fit on the side of your candle. Cut out your picture leaving about 1 cm of white edge around the picture. Lay the picture over the candle and then wrap your candle in a layer of wax paper and tape the wax paper securely so the picture does not slip away from the candle. Using a blow dryer on the the hot setting warm the wax paper and the candle enough that the picture adheres to the candle. Once the picture is secure remove the wax paper and throw it away. Place your Christ candle in the centre of your Advent wreath for lighting on Christmas day.

In addition to the daily family devotions you will find suggestions for additional family activities each the week.

Songs to Sing

You may wish to include the song suggestions in your family devotion time, or learn one or more of the songs to sing in the car or when you are doing things around the house. Each song was chosen because it is easy for all ages to sing and speaks about one or more of the of the themes recorded in the daily scriptures for that week. When you see 'BofP' it refers to the Presbyterian Church in Canada's *Book of Praise*. Songs not in the BofP may already be familiar to you or can be found easily online.

Books to Read

Each week you will find a number of picture book suggestions to read together as a family. Most of these can be found at your local bookstore or library in the 3 - 5 year old section. Even though they are picture books they are rich with ideas for all ages. Some of the books retell the Nativity story with emphasis on the weekly theme, while others are secular stories that draw out themes through words and pictures relevant to the lives of children. Use these as bedtime stories, or include them in your devotional time together.

Things to Do

Advent is a time of 'active waiting', and children learn patience and participation as they discover new things to do to mark the time until the birth of Jesus. Each week you will discover a variety of simple activities for your family to do together. Don't feel obliged to do all of the activities; pick and choose the ones you have time for and know you will enjoy together. There is something for everyone to enjoy.

Advent 1 - HOPE

What Are We Waiting For?

Gathering Responsive Reading

L: Wake up sleepy Christians,

R: **The night is over and dawn is about to happen.**

L: Be up and awake,

R: **To see what God is doing.**

L: We can't waste a minute,

R: **We must be up and about.**

(based on Rom. 13:11-14)

Scripture Reading

This first week of Advent is all about 'watchful waiting.' What are we waiting for in these four weeks? And what are we to be doing while we wait? Listen for clues in each day's reading.

Sunday - Romans 13:11-12

Monday - Matthew 24:36-39

Tuesday - Isaiah 2:1-2

Wednesday - Isaiah 2:3-4

Thursday - Psalm 122

Friday - Romans 13:13-14

Saturday - Isaiah 2:5-6

Light the first candle of your Advent wreath

All: This is the candle of HOPE (blue/purple candle)

Unison Prayer

God our hope, we watch and wait for you. Help us to be patient as we prepare for your gift of Jesus. Wake us up to see the signs of your coming glory. Amen.

Unison Prayer

Long ago, O God, you promised to send us Emmanuel. You told Joseph that his son would be 'Emmanuel' reminding us that we can know everything we need to know about you through your son. We thank you for your promises and the gift of your son. Amen.

Songs to sing together

Hope is a star, v. 4 (BofP #119)

Father, I adore you

Silent night (BofP #154)

Books to read together

Beautiful Hands by Kathryn Otoshi

Plant a Kiss by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts

Jesus the Word by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones

Spark Story Bible "Angels Visit" pg. 199 - 201 (begin the story at the top of pg. 199)

The Children's Bible in 365 Stories "Joseph" #242, pg 278

Things to do together

Invite friends and/or newcomers to dinner. Don't worry about having a perfect meal or a perfect house, just have an ordinary, family meal - everyone knows that the days before Christmas are the busiest. It is your guests that make this meal extra-special. Share stories around the table of Christmas memories and Christmas joys, play a board game together, decorate the tree, or make a craft together. Do whatever allows your guests to feel welcome and loved.

Share the story of why each member of the family has the name they do. Who was named after someone else? Who has a name that was just a favourite, and why did they like that name so much? Look up in a baby name book, or online the meaning of all of the names in your family. How is each person

Advent 4 - LOVE

God With Us

Gathering Response

L: We see the glory with our own eyes,

R: **The one-of-a-kind glory,**

L: Like Father, like Son,

R: **Generous inside and out,**

L: True from Start to finish.

(John 1:14, The Message)

Scripture Reading

In a number of these readings the baby is given a name, "Emmanuel." What does the meaning of the name Emmanuel tell us about what we might expect from Jesus as he grows up? Remember some of your favourite stories about the things Jesus did and the things Jesus said. What things do you know about God, because of Jesus?

Sunday - Matthew 1:18-25

Monday - Isaiah 7:14-16

Tuesday - John 1:1-5, 14, 16-18

Wednesday - Matthew 28:20c

Thursday - Psalm 97:1-2, 6

Friday - Colossians 1:15

Saturday - Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Light the first, second, third and fourth candles of Advent

1: This is the candle of HOPE (blue/purple candle)

2: This is the candle of PEACE (blue/purple candle)

3. This is the candle of JOY (pink candle)

4. This is the candle of LOVE (blue/purple candle)

Songs to sing together

Hope is a star, v. 1 (BofP #119)

This little light of mine

We are marching in the light of God (BofP #639)

Lord the light of your love is shining (BofP #376)

Books to read together

Who Is Coming to Our House by Joseph Slate

Waiting by Kevin Henkes

The Man With the Violin by Kathy Stinson

Things to do together

Make an Advent Wreath: An Advent wreath needs just three things: four coloured candles placed around an outer ring (either four blue or four purple candles, or 3 of either blue or purple with one pink candle), a white candle placed in the centre of the ring, and a circle of greens. With these three elements, your wreath can be as simple or complicated as suits your family. For families with young children cover five empty paper towel/toilet paper tubes with coloured paper representing each of the five candles. Glue the bottom ring of each paper tube onto a sturdy paper plate with the four coloured 'candles' in the outer ring, and the white 'candle' in the center. Make 'greens' by cutting out green construction paper leaves or family hand shapes and glue them to the outer ring of the paper plate. Tuck a piece of yellow tissue paper down inside each tube. 'Light' each candle each week by pulling the yellow tissue out of the tube and leaving 'lit' throughout all of Advent.

To make a fresh Advent wreath from greens follow the instructions found here: <http://www.cnob.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Advent-wreath-instructions1.pdf>.

Make a Reverse Advent Calendar: Set out a laundry basket or box on the first day of Advent and place one non-perishable item in the basket each day of Advent. Choose items that would be helpful to others. You could collect canned goods, paper products, dry goods, toys, gift cards etc. At the conclusion of the Advent season pass the basket on to a local food bank, food cooperative or shelter. Check with your selected organization in advance to learn what is most needed by the people they serve.

Plant Some Sprouts: Waiting can be tough on little ones. Watching things change and grow as we are waiting reminds us that things are still happening in this in-between time, and that we are needed to be involved in the action. Sprouts are an easy and nutritious plant to grow in the winter. They will take 5 - 7 days to grow and become healthy food for your or your neighbour's table. Sprouts can be grown simply in a damp paper towel or a mason jar, or with a sprout kit. Follow these links to instructions on how to grow sprouts at your house: <http://www.cityline.ca/video/how-to-grow-sprouts-indoors/> and, http://foodshare.net/custom/uploads/2015/11/Growing_Sprouts_and_Seedlings_2nd_ed_2002.pdf.

can be found here: <https://staff.fnwi.uva.nl/l.dorst/lego/nativity.html>.

Bake Christmas cookies as a family and deliver a box to someone who would be thrilled to receive this unexpected gift.

Unison Prayer

Light of the world, Mary sings for joy as she looks forward to the birth of her very special son. As we prepare this week for the coming of Jesus remind us over and over again of the wonderful glory of the events we wait for and the joy we can share even before they are here. Amen.

Songs to sing together

Hope is a star, v. 3 (BofP #119)

The joy of the Lord is our strength

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy

Joy to the world (BofP #153)

Books to read together

Great Joy by Kate DiCamillo

The Christmas Miracle of Jonathon Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski

The Man With the Violin by Kathy Stinson

Extra Yarn by Mac Barnett

Spark Story Bible "Angels Visit" pg. 196 - 199 (stop the story at the end of Pg 198)

The Children's Bible in 365 Stories "Journey to the Hills" #240, pg 276

Things to do together

Make or bring out your nativity set. This week we hear of the angel visiting Mary, and Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth. Place an angel close to Mary. Is there another woman in your set? Mary might want to go and visit her this week and share with her her good news. Don't place Mary and Joseph in the stable yet; just set the stable in another place with the animals waiting for their arrival in another week. Keep the baby hidden away for now, we're still waiting. Directions for a simple nativity set can be found here: <http://www.catholicicing.com/diy-printable-nativity-for-kids/>, and directions for a lego nativity set

Advent 2 - PEACE

The Peaceable Kingdom

Gathering Response

L: Reach out and welcome one another.

R: **Jesus did it; Now we will do it!**

L: May the peace of Christ be with you,

R: **And also with you!**

(based on Romans 15:7,8)

Scripture Reading

The prophet Isaiah promises a new life coming from Jesse's family. This person will bring about a new kind of kingdom that is revealed by the prophet. In this kingdom everything and everyone will get along. Listen carefully to the types of animals Isaiah promises will live peacefully with other in this new kingdom. You can see a painting of this "Peaceable Kingdom" on the cover of this booklet. What is Isaiah saying to us about the kind of kingdom God has planned? What is Paul telling the church to do now in anticipation of this not-quite-yet kingdom of peace?

Sunday - Isaiah 11:1-3a

Monday - Isaiah 11:3b-5

Tuesday - Isaiah 11:6-9

Wednesday - Romans 15:5-7

Thursday - Matthew 3:1-3

Friday - Matthew 3:4-6,11-12

Saturday - Psalm 72:1-4

Light the first and second candles of Advent

1: This is the candle of HOPE (blue/purple candle)

2: This is the candle of PEACE (blue/purple candle)

Unison Prayer

God of goodness, you never stop amazing us. Your stories of peace make us so happy. Help us to work toward this peaceful kingdom with the world. Amen.

Songs to sing together

Hope is a star, v. 2 (BofP #119)
Peace like a river (down in my soul)
It came upon a midnight clear (BofP #148)
Twas in the moon of wintertime (BofP #144)

Books to read together

Room for Little One: A Christmas Tale by Martin Waddell
God's Dream by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Hello, Hello by Miriam Schlein
The Two Tims by David Elliott
Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena

Things to do together

Sit down with old family photograph albums and photo files and tell stories of the special people in your family tree. How far back do the pictures go? How many 'grands' and 'great grands' can you count? How many other family members can you count? Draw a simple family tree and try to get all of the family members you can remember on your tree. How many generations are on your tree? Read Matthew 1:1-17. Who was Jesse the father of? Are there other names you know in Jesse's family tree? How many generations are named?

Gather animal figures from around your house and place them in 'surprising pairs' under your Christmas tree. Talk about why these pairs of animals have problems getting along. What might help them get along? Talk about why some people have problems getting along at school, work, your neighbourhood, and even church. Think of ways you could encourage people to hear and understand each other better.

Advent 3 - JOY

Bursting With Joy

Gathering Response

L: The wilderness with sing with joy,
R: **The badlands will burst forth with flowers**
L: God's glory is on display.
R: **Our God is awesome and majestic**
(based on Isaiah 35:1-32)

Scripture Reading

Joy is found in each of the passages of scripture we read this week. The joy of justice experienced throughout the land; the joy of a desert brought to life as all of creation breaks forth in praise of the majesty of God; Elizabeth's joy as Mary arrives at her house, knowing that Mary is to be the mother of Jesus; and Mary's response of joy-filled anticipation to the angel's good news. What do you like best about the joy described in each of these passages? How does Jesus bring joy to you? How can you show your joy to the world?

Sunday - Psalm 146:5-10
Monday - Isaiah 35:1-2
Tuesday - Isaiah 35:5-10
Wednesday - James 5:7-10
Thursday - Luke 1:26-33, 38
Friday - Luke 1:39-45
Saturday - Luke 1:46b-55

Light the first, second and third candles of Advent

1: This is the candle of HOPE (blue/purple candle)
2: This is the candle of PEACE (blue/purple candle)
3: This is the candle of JOY (pink candle)