

Advent
AT SCIRCEE

The Story of Hope

- Light the first candle on your Advent wreath.
- **Ask:** Why do we light candles for Advent?
- **Response:** The candles shine brightly, lighting even the darkest places. It reminds us that Jesus came as THE light in our dark world.



Read: Romans 15:12-13



Reflect:

The season of Advent would never have been needed if sin hadn't entered the world through Adam and Eve. There wouldn't have been any destruction and death; no separation from God. But that is not the story of this world. Sin came because Adam and Eve decided their way was better than God's way. They were separated from God, with no way of being good enough to cover their sin. God could have abandoned His creation. But He is rich in mercy and love. Instead of turning His back on us, God set into motion a plan to restore His relationship with people, anchoring us to a hope only He can give. It all begins with hope. Having joy and peace no matter what is only possible with the hope God can give us. It isn't a hope based on our actions and strength. It is only found in God and His promise to love and save us. Those prophecies and promises gave hope to the children of God in the Old Testament just like they can for us now. The "root of Jesse" did come. Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God and live daily with the hope of eternity.

- Why did God send Jesus to the world?
- How does Jesus give us hope?
- In what ways can we let the light of Jesus shine through us this Advent season?

Pray:

Have a family member say a prayer to thank God for His goodness and faithfulness in sending Jesus so we can have hope.

Family Activities:

- Create or set up a nativity scene to use throughout the Advent season. Consider setting up just the stable and animals this first week. Add pieces each week to continue teaching the story of Christmas throughout the season.
- Create or set up an Advent wreath to use each week.

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The Story of Joy

- Light the first and second candles of your Advent wreath.
- **Ask:** Why do we light the second candle?
- **Response:** We light the second candle to remind us that the coming of Jesus brought joy to those who believed. He still brings joy to all who believe in Him.



Read: Luke 1:26-38, 46-47

Reflect:

The angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary, announcing that she would be Jesus' mother. This would have been a big surprise to her. Mary wasn't married, and she had a different plan for her life. Gabriel reminded Mary that nothing was impossible with God. She could have been overwhelmed and upset by Gabriel's news. Instead, she chose to respond with a song of joy. Nothing takes God by surprise. We can trust that God has a plan for our lives. He wants to write our story. Our job is to follow Him and discover the joy that comes from believing in Jesus and following God's plan for us.

- What do you think Mary would have thought about Gabriel's message?
- How would you respond to getting a message from God through an angel?
- How do you feel when your plans don't happen like you want?
- How can we remember to have joy, even when our plans change?

Pray:

Have a family member say a prayer thanking God for having a plan to save us. Thank Him for having a good plan for our lives, just like He did for Mary. Ask Him to help you find your joy in Him, because His plans are always good.

Family Activities:

- Continue making or setting up your nativity scene.
- Make a treat to take to a neighbor so you can share the joy of Christmas.
- Write Christmas cards and letters to send to people in your community who are homebound.



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The Story of Love

- Light the first three candles on your Advent wreath.
- **Ask:** Why do we light the third candle?
- **Response:** We light the third candle to remind us that God proved His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus, to be born in a manger, live, and die so He could save us from our sins.



Read: Luke 2:1-7



Reflect:

Jesus' birth must have seemed crazy to Mary and Joseph. Not only was Mary expecting a baby that an angel said would save the world, but she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem for a census while she was pregnant. When they arrived, there was no place for them to stay except the shelter where the animals were kept. As scary as this may have been, it was exactly how God planned for Jesus to come. His unfailing love for people led God to write His own Son into the story of history, sending Jesus to be the payment for our sins. The manger is proof of God's love because He sent Jesus to save us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8) He is not waiting for you to be good enough to love or to get your act together. He loves you now, and forever.

- What do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they finally arrived in Bethlehem and there was no place to stay?
- How can we see God's love for us in the story of Jesus' birth?
- How does it make you feel to know that God loves you so much that He sent Jesus?
- How can we show God's love to others?

Pray:

Have a family member say a prayer to thank God for showing His love by sending Jesus. Ask for His help to remember that God's love, shown through the gift of Jesus, is the true meaning of Christmas.

Family Activities:

- Continue setting up your nativity scene. Spend time talking about the stable. What would it have been like for Mary and Joseph there that night?
- Sing "Away in a Manger" together.
- Build a nativity scene with legos or blocks.
- Look for ways to share God's love during the season by providing for people in need

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The Story of Peace

- Light the first four candles on your Advent wreath.
- **Ask:** Why do we light the fourth candle for Advent?
- **Response:** We light the fourth candle to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He made it possible for us to have peace with God. That peace makes it possible for us to live in peace with others.



Read: Isaiah 9:6-7

Reflect:

As God's people were about to head into exile because of their disobedience, God delivered to them a message through the prophet Isaiah. Someday a savior would come to make all things right. The story of God's people wouldn't always be struggle and suffering. Someday they would have peace. So they waited and waited. After over 400 years of waiting, it may have felt like God had forgotten His promise to His people. But God never forgets His promises! This Christmas Eve, we celebrate that God sent Jesus to change the story of the world, fulfilling His promises and making a way to rescue His people once and for all. He came to be our "Prince of Peace", making peace between us and God. When we live in peace with God, we are able to make peace with others.. And when life is hard, we can live in peace knowing Jesus will come again and bring complete peace and harmony to earth. There will be a day when everything will be good again. While we wait for that day, we get to share the peace of Jesus with the people around us.

- What do you think it was like for God's people to wait over 400 years for Jesus to come?
- What does it mean to have peace?
- How can we have peace knowing God loves us and sent Jesus?

Pray:

Have a family member say a prayer to thank God for the peace that comes when we put our faith in Him. Ask Him to help us live for Him and live in peace with those around us.

Family Activities:

- Continue setting up your nativity scene.
- Take time to pray for people around our world that are impacted by war, like Ukraine and Israel. Pray that God would bring peace to their hearts and bring peace to their land.
- Create Cinnamon or Salt Dough Ornaments to hang on your tree.

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The Story of Jesus

- Light all five candles on your Advent wreath.
- **Ask:** Why do we light the fifth candle?
- **Response:** The fifth candle reminds us that the wait is over. Jesus Christ, the Messiah is born!
- **Take a moment to remember together what you've learned about God's faithfulness through Advent.**



Read: Luke 2:8-20

Reflect:

After Jesus was born, the first people to find out were shepherds in a field tending to their sheep. The angel, along with an angel choir, proclaimed good news of great joy for ALL people. The Savior had come! The shepherds rushed to see the baby. They spent the rest of the night telling everyone about the baby named Jesus. God had done what He promised. Jesus had come to rescue people from their sin. Christmas is a great time to celebrate that our Savior has come. Jesus lived, died, and rose again, so that everyone who believes in Him can have life forever with God. Jesus wants all people to know, love, trust, and follow Him. And Jesus promised that one day He will make all things new, and we will worship Him forever because He alone is worthy of all our praise.

- What did the angel proclaim to the shepherds?
- What did the shepherds do after they met baby Jesus?
- Why is the news of Jesus' birth such good news?
- How did He show His love for us?

Family Activities:

- Complete the nativity scene by adding baby Jesus.
- Have a birthday party for Jesus on Christmas Day. Spend time making and decorating a cake as a reminder that we have a great reason to celebrate this Christmas.
- Draw what it might have looked like in Bethlehem on that night long ago.
- Go out at night and look at the stars. Talk about what it might have been like to see a sky full of angels singing praises to God.
- Share what your favorite part of the Christmas season has been. What is something you learned about Jesus?

