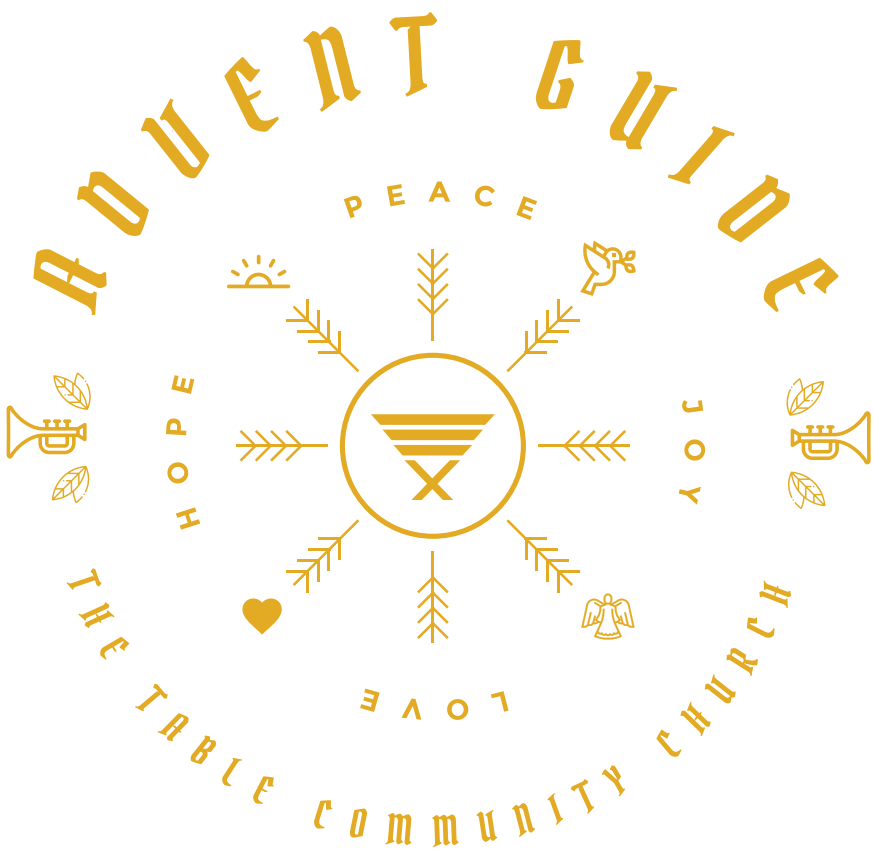
ADVENT GUIDE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE
HOPE
THE TABLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Dear Table Family,
There are so many things that we love about Christmas. Family, presents (both giving and receiving), food, music, and decorations are just some of what makes Christmas special. But as we enter into what is often a jam-packed season of events, don't forget what Christmas is really about. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus.

This Christmas season, we want to encourage you and your family to spend time reflecting on the significance of the birth of Jesus. In this booklet, you will find a daily devotional, activities, and other helpful resources that will allow you to focus on the four themes of the Advent: hope, peace, joy, and love. Each week, you will see how these themes show up in the lives of the main characters of the Christmas story, and how they should impact our lives too.

We do hope that you enjoy your time working through the *Advent Guide.*

What is Advent?

Advent simply means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. But this term is usually only associated with the arrival of Jesus, the most important person who ever lived. His arrival was a world-changing event.

In the church, the Advent season includes the four weeks that lead up to Christmas and helps us to remember the significance of his birth while also reminding us to look forward to his return. There aren't any rules for how Advent is celebrated, but themes of hope, peace, joy, and love are often associated with the this season.

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Christmas 29

HOPE

WEEK 1

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Hope Defined

Please open your Bible and read together Romans 15:8-13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.[1]

Christmas is a season filled with hope. Children hope that they will find exactly what they want under the tree on Christmas morning. Adults may be glad that another year is coming to an end and hoping that the next year is better. Having hope is a good thing. God certainly wants us to have hope.

Do you know the definition of hope? In many instances, it simply means wishful thinking. Those kids who hope to find what they want under the tree are just thinking optimistically. Those adults who hope that next year is better are thinking optimistically. But, the Bible defines hope differently. Hope, in the Bible, is defined as the eager expectation of something better. It's not just wishful thinking. It is the assurance that something better is coming, and you can't wait for it to get here.

The birth of Jesus provided all humanity with hope. His arrival on the planet ushered in something better, and his death and resurrection help us to understand that there is something far greater coming for us when this life ends.

How has Jesus given you hope?

Family Activity

Write encouraging and hopeful phrases on index cards and leave them under the windshield wiper on random cars, put them in your neighbors' mailboxes, or put them in different kids' desks or lockers at school.

[1]*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ro 15:13.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Mary

Please open your Bible and read together Luke 1:26-33

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.[2]

Can you imagine what Mary must have been thinking when Gabriel showed up to tell her that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah? She was just a teenage girl. At that point in her life, she hoped for a good marriage with Joseph. She hoped that one day she would have children. But the news that she was to be the mother of the Savior turned her world upside down.

Despite her fears and the many uncertainties that she faced, she believed Gabriel's message, and she trusted God. She had faith because she had hope (that eager expectation of something greater) that her son, Jesus, would one day change the world.

How does hope motivate you to live differently?

Family Activity

Take turns sharing what you had to do this year that was really hard but you had hope that God would help you through it.

[2]*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Lk 1:30–31.*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Joseph

Please open your Bible and read together Matthew 1:18-25

24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife[3]

Joseph was faced with an incredibly daunting task. He was the earthly father of God's son. When Mary first told him that she was pregnant, he didn't know what to do. He wasn't sure whether to believe her, and even if he did, where did that leave him? Was he a part of God's plan too? Just when he had finally made the painful decision to divorce Mary quietly, an angel showed up to him too. He was told to take Mary as his wife and call the name of her son Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins.

That message given to Joseph is a message that brings hope. By faith in what Jesus did when he died on the cross our sins are forgiven, and we enter a life-changing relationship with God that lasts forever. Though, while we are on this earth, we still fight against sin and struggle to live by faith, we have hope (the eager expectation of something greater) that one day our struggle with sin will be over and we will enjoy eternal life in the presence of Jesus.

Do you believe that Jesus saved you from your sin?

Family Activity

Write "Jesus came to save us from our sins" on the bathroom mirror, on a piece of paper and tape it to the back of the front door, or anywhere that you and your family can see it as a reminder of what this season is all about.

[3] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Mt 1:24.*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

The Shepherds

Please open your Bible and read together Luke 2:8-14

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.[4]

Being a shepherd could be a hopeless existence. They worked long hours often in isolation with their only flocks and herds to keep them company. No matter how hard they worked, the best they could hope for was to make ends meet for their families. Shepherds were often the overlooked part of society. But for some reason, God really cared about shepherds.

Many famous faith heroes were shepherds. Moses spent forty years as a shepherd before he led the people of Israel out of Egypt. David, Israel's greatest king, got his start as a shepherd. And, God chose shepherds as the first to be told about the birth of his son.

When those shepherds received the good news of great joy for all people and when they went and saw Jesus in the manger, that changed their outlook on life. They went from hopeless to filled with hope because they met the Messiah.

How does having hope change your outlook on life?

Family Activity

Write a kind note to a family member and place it where they would find it, reminding them to have hope in God.

[4]The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Lk 2:10.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Wisemen

Please open your Bible and read together Matthew 2:1-12

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.[5]

One group who is often associated with the Christmas story is the wisemen. We place their figurines in our nativity sets like they were there the night Jesus was born, even though they actually went to visit Jesus in a house and not a barn. It was potentially several months after Jesus' birth when they finally got a chance to meet him. These wisemen or Magi were likely astronomers who were waiting for the coming of the Hebrew Messiah. Based on their understanding of Numbers 24:17, they believed that his birth would be associated with some type of astrological sign. So, when they saw a new star appear, they followed it. It led them right to Jesus.

The wisemen are different than all the others who were involved in the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Angels visited both Mary and Joseph to let them know what was going to take place. Angels appeared in the night sky to announce to the shepherds that Jesus had been born. The wisemen only had a star. No one told them to look for it or assured them of its importance, but when they saw it, they followed. They followed because they had hope (the eager expectation of something greater).

How does having hope impact your willingness to follow Jesus?

Family Activity

On Sunday, be sure to pick up a tag from the Angel Tree. Go shopping together as a family, wrap their presents together, and pray over the individual or family that they would receive hope from Jesus this year.

[5]*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Mt 2:11.*

PEACE

WEEK 2

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

Peace Defined

Please open your Bible and read together John 14:25-31

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.[6]

We typically define peace as the absence of something. It is the absence of conflict or war, but this isn't exactly the peace that Jesus was talking about. The peace of Jesus was what the Israelites referred to as Shalom. Shalom isn't the absence of something, but what you can have despite something. Shalom is associated with completeness, soundness, wellbeing, or harmony. It is a grounding that someone can have even though the world around them could be in upheaval. That is the peace that Jesus promised to give us.

People sometimes wrongly believe that following Jesus makes life easy. But, he didn't say that. In fact, he said the opposite. He said in this world we will have trouble, but, at the same time, he did say that we could have peace.

We can have that grounding or harmony because of the presence of the Spirit who guides us when we don't know what to do and comforts us when we are hurting. So, during the busyness of this Christmas season, we hope that you can experience peace.

How have you experienced peace that comes from God? How?

Family Activity

Grab some sidewalk chalk and leave kind messages about Jesus' peace on sidewalks around your neighborhood and community.

[6]*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Jn 14:27.*

PEACE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

Mary

Please open your Bible and read together Galatians 5:22-24

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,[7]

We know God is at work in our lives, in part, because we experience peace. But, it is hard to find that peace when your life has been turned upside down.

Mary must have been a nervous wreck when she told Joseph that she was pregnant. She had no idea what his reaction would be. She didn't know how the news would affect their upcoming marriage. Would he even believe that an angel appeared to her and that she was giving birth to the son of God?

The Bible doesn't record how that conversation went. You have to believe it went as well as she could have expected. But even as those first few words came out of her mouth, she had peace. Somehow, she knew that regardless of the outcome she would be ok. God gave her peace. She would need that same peace many times during her life as she let Jesus go to begin his ministry. She would really need that peace again when she witnessed his death. But, God continued to grant her peace.

Can you share a time when you had peace during a time of uncertainty?

Family Activity

Choose a family with young kids and offer to babysit for free for a couple hours during the day or night, giving them some time of peace.

[7]*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ga 5:22.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5

Joseph

Please open your Bible and read together Colossians 3:15-17

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.[8]

Because we have peace with God that comes through faith in Jesus, we should experience more peace in our lives and in our relationships with others. Jesus is the reason that we have peace.

Joseph likely had many sleepless nights as he tried to figure out what to do when he learned that Mary was pregnant. He didn't want to hurt her. He really wanted to believe her story even though it seemed farfetched. When he finally decided what to do, that's when he had the dream.

Christians sometimes talk about having peace about a decision to determine God's will. Typically, that means a person feels good about a decision because the variables are taken care of. But, the peace that Jesus offers means that I know I will be ok despite the uncertainties that are sure to come. Joseph may not have said that he had peace about any decision related to Mary, but even if he did, he stepped into that relationship with her having many more questions than he had answers.

Have you ever experienced a time when you made a decision despite unanswered questions?

Family Activity

If you get into a conflict with someone this week, make peace right away by forgiving one another and resolving the conflict.

[8] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Col 3:15.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

Shepherds

Please open your Bible and read together Philippians 4:6-7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.[9]

Something crazy happens to us when we share with God the things that are troubling us. He gives us peace. When we share the things that are weighing on us, God takes the load. And even without our problem being solved completely, we come to realize that we will be ok. God's got this.

A shepherd's life could be viewed as a peaceful existence. They were often alone in a field with no one else around. At night it would be especially peaceful, at least until a predator would come to kill your sheep. The night Jesus was born may have been one of those peaceful nights too, until the angel showed up in a blinding light and scared them to death. But that night they heard angels sing "peace on earth."

You wonder how that message stuck with those shepherds. As they faced trouble in the future did the way in which they handle it change? Did they know they would be ok, despite the trouble or uncertainties that they faced because they knew Jesus came to give them peace?

Has there been a time in your life when you felt peace after you shared your burdens with God in prayer?

Family Activity

Discuss with your children what it might look like to give up some of their gifts and to donate that money instead. Together as a family, choose a charity or a family-in-need to gift the money to.

[9] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Php 4:7.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7

Wisemen

Please open your Bible and read together Ephesians 2:14-22

For he himself is our peace,[10]

Not only are we able to have peace with God because of what Jesus has done, but we are also supposed to have peace with others, even those who are different. Prior to Jesus, there was always a separation that existed. The Jews were on the inside and everyone else was on the outside. There were ways for those on the outside to be a part of what God was doing, but even then, they still felt like outsiders. Because of Jesus everyone has equal access to God, which brings all people together.

The wisemen were the outsiders in the story of Jesus' birth. Afterall, they were the ones who showed up late to the party. While there isn't universal agreement on their identity, most believe they weren't Jewish. They were on the outside, but they were welcomed in. They understood who Jesus was, and then went to worship the newborn king who came to bring peace.

Isn't it interesting that even in the story of Jesus birth we see different people with different backgrounds meeting Jesus? The shepherds were Jewish, but they were part of the mass in the middle of first century Judaism. The wisemen were a part of the elite, but from a religious perspective, they were on the outside looking in. Because of Jesus, all people can have peace with God, and we should experience peace with one another.

How has your faith brought you together with someone that is not like you?

Family Activity

Make thank you cards for your bus driver, mailman, and garbage truck drivers.

[10] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Eph 2:14.*

JOY

WEEK 3

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10

Joy Defined

Please open your Bible and read together Philippians 4:4-5

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.[11]

The word “joy” or “joyfully” is used over 200 times in the Bible and the verb “rejoice” is used nearly another 200 times. The Bible is clear: We are to have joy. But what does that mean? Joy could be generally defined as being in a state of happiness or wellbeing, but the joy that we are to have is not dependent on the circumstances of our lives being good. We are to have joy when we face trials and hard times as well as rejoicing in the good times.

The angels that announced the birth of Jesus said they were announcing a message that would result in great joy for all people because the savior had been born. The knowledge that you have been rescued from your sin is something that you can rejoice in regardless of the circumstances of your life. So, remember, even in the most difficult times, you have a Savior. Because of this, you can rejoice.

How does it make you feel knowing that a Savior has been born to you?

Family Activity

On the next trash day, walk your neighbor’s garbage cans back to their house.

[11] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Php 4:4.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Mary

Please open your Bible and read together Luke 1:46-56

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,[12]

Do you know what Mary did after she found out that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah? She rejoiced! She rejoiced because she recognized God's favor on her in calling her to this task. But, her joy was more than just in what he did for her. She rejoiced because of the character of God. She knew that God was merciful and strong, and a helper to those who are weak. She praised God because he was a keeper of his promises.

The knowledge of God that Mary had was so important in her story. Knowing God's character allowed her to say "yes" to what God called her to do despite her fears and the uncertainty that it brought. Knowing God's character sustained her in times when she wondered if Jesus really knew what he was doing. It was that knowledge that comforted her, even when she watched him die.

Knowing God's character is so important for our joy factor. Knowing God's power, grace, and love helps us to know he is still in control and looking out for our best when we don't understand what is happening. God's character helps us to rejoice.

What is one characteristic of God that you appreciate the most?

Family Activity

Display the characteristic that you had chosen about God this week to your family and friends.

[12] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Lk 1:47.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

Joseph

Please open your Bible and read together Psalm 16:7-11

You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore[13]

Where does joy really come from? People try to find happiness in their accomplishments or enjoyment in a hobby. Many people take pride in their families. Those are all good things and can all be gifts from God, but our joy is supposed to come from being in a relationship with God. It is knowing and experiencing God's work in our lives that brings us joy.

We read very little about Joseph in the Bible. We know he was at Jesus' birth, and he is included in the few stories that come from Jesus' childhood. But once Jesus became an adult and started his ministry, we never read about him again. Most believe that Joseph died before Jesus began his ministry, so Joseph never heard him teach and never saw him perform a miracle. But, Joseph knew the identity of his son. Can you imagine the joy of Joseph as he saw Jesus grow and mature? I am sure that every day brought him so much joy, joy like every father should get from his children.

We receive joy from being in the presence of God, but he delights in our presence with him, too. He welcomes us into his presence with open arms like a good father does to his children. In the presence of the Father is where our joy is to be found.

Do you experience joy in God's presence?

Family Activity

Send a kind text or leave a voicemail for someone you haven't spoken to in awhile.

[13] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ps 16:11.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13

The Shepherds

Please open your Bible and read together Psalm 33:1-3

Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.[14]

Joy and praise are often connected in the Psalms. When we find joy in knowing God and experiencing the goodness of God, that joy should result in our praise, which is the declaration of the greatness of God.

As you have learned already in this study, there wasn't really anything special about shepherds. They were just regular and, often, overlooked people. But, for some reason the shepherds were chosen to be the first to find out about the birth of the Messiah. After the angels disappeared from the night sky, the shepherds looked at each other and said, "Let us see this thing the Lord has made known to us." So, they went and saw the newborn Jesus laying in the manger.

Do you know what the shepherds did after they visited Jesus? Luke 2 tells us that they went away praising God for all that they had seen and heard and what had been told to them. The joy that they felt at the news that the Messiah had been born overflowed in them, and they praised God.

Understanding what Jesus has done for us should cause us to praise God, too. The joy that we have as a result of understanding our salvation should cause us to declare the greatness of God at every possible moment.

How have you experienced the connection between joy and praise?

Family Activity

Offer to do dishes or take out the trash without being asked, giving your family members joy.

[14] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ps 33:1.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

Wisemen

Please open your Bible and read together Psalm 67:1-4

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.[15]

When the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, they said it was a message of great joy for all people. "All people" wasn't just all of the people from one nation, either. The news of the birth of the Messiah was good news that would bring great joy to all people on earth.

You may not associate joy with the wisemen. You may picture them as being very regal and distinguished. They likely followed proper protocol as they entered the presence of the new king, but they also had joy. In some sense these wisemen were scientists. They had been studying the stars for years believing that there was going to be some type of astrological phenomenon that would indicate the birth of this new king. Night after night they looked hoping to see something unique. Then, finally, they saw it. It was there, and they were filled with joy. Can you imagine the party they had that night because of the joy of discovery that they had experienced?

Describe the joy that you felt when you first came to faith in Jesus.

Family Activity

Donate your toys and clothes that you don't use anymore. Or if you feel lead to, donate the ones you do use and love the most, praying that whoever finds it, will be filled with God's joy.

[15] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ps 67:4.*

LOVE

WEEK 4

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17

Love Defined

Please open your Bible and read together 1 John 4:7-12

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.[16]

The final theme of the advent is love. While the story of the birth of Jesus is a story of hope, peace, and joy, at its foundation it is a story of love. The reason that Jesus came to earth was because of love. The reason that Jesus endured what he did was because of love. The Father sent the son because of love. And it wasn't our love for God; it was his love for us that caused the Father to send the Son to be the propitiation or atoning sacrifice for our sin.

That act of God helps us to define what love really is. It is more than a feeling of compassion toward someone. It is more than a feeling of attraction to someone. Love is a decision to act for someone. It is a decision to act in the interest of someone else seeking to meet their needs if you are able. This is what the Father did for us when he sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. God chose to act for our benefit and sacrificed his son so that we could have eternal life. This is love. Not that we love God, but that he loves us.

Define love in your own words.

Family Activity

Out of love, do another family member's chore in secret.

[16] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Jn 4:10.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Mary

Please open your Bible and read together John 3:16-17

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."[17]

God's love for the world caused him to send his one and only son to be the sacrifice for our sin, but the Father loved his son, too. In fact, Jesus said himself, in John 10, that as the Father loved him, he was loving his disciples. You know it had to be incredibly painful for the Father to watch Jesus die, but in his infinite knowledge, he knew what was happening.

That same thing couldn't be said of Mary. Mary was told that she was giving birth to the Messiah, but she couldn't have known that one day she would watch him die. Mary loved Jesus just like any mother loves her children. She wanted the best for Jesus, but loving Jesus meant letting him go. Loving Jesus meant entrusting him to the Father even when that meant watching him die.

God loves you so much that he sent his son, so that if you believe in him you will not perish but have eternal life.

What were the circumstances of your life when you made the decision to trust Christ as your Savior?

Family Activity

Invite a friend or a family to The Table's Christmas Eve church service.

[17] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Jn 3:16.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Joseph

Please open your Bible and read together Romans 8:35-39

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.[18]

Because we read so little about Joseph's life in the Bible, we can only speculate on what his relationship with Jesus was like. I do think it is safe to say that Joseph loved his son, and Jesus loved his earthly father. Likely, they shared many of the same father/son moments as other families. Jesus' life was profoundly shaped by Joseph.

The relationship that a loving Father has with a child helps us to understand the love that God, the Father, has for us. He is a good Father who desires to give us good things. There are times when we face trials and difficulties, but no matter what comes, nothing will separate us from his love. Because of his love for us, we are conquerors.

How do you know God loves you?

Family Activity

Tell each one of your family members one thing you love about them.

[18] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ro 8:37.*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

Shepherds

Please open your Bible and read together John 15:1-11

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.[19]

In John 15, Jesus instructs us to abide or remain in his love. Why? Because life would be hard, and we have a job to do.

The shepherds may have been the first to understand the job of Jesus' followers. Have you ever wondered how long they stayed at the manger? On one hand, you would think they wouldn't stay longer than just a few minutes. Jesus had just been born. The last thing that mother and baby needed were strange men hanging out for a couple of hours. But, on the other hand, this was the Savior of the world. You would think they would want to be there forever. We don't know how long they stayed, but we do know what they did when they left. They told everyone what they had experienced.

For the shepherds, this was a natural reaction to the incredible events that took place that night. No one told them to do it. They simply went and described to everyone what took place that night. What the shepherds did would later be explicitly commanded to Jesus' followers: We are to go and tell everyone about Jesus.

Just because this is what we are supposed to do, doesn't mean that it will be easy. That is why we need to abide in or remain in Jesus' love. When things are hard, we know his love for us is always there.

What do you do to remember Jesus' love for you?

Family Activity

In a Christmas card, share with someone that you think needs to know or be reminded that Jesus loves them.

[19] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Jn 15:9.*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

Wisemen

Please open your Bible and read together 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.[20]

The Wisemen brought three gifts to Jesus: gold, which represents kingship; frankincense which represents deity; and myrrh which represents death. These three gifts were given by the Wisemen because they wanted to honor this new born king. Likely, they were used to preserve the life of the one who would one day freely lay it down.

After the visit of the Magi, King Herod went looking for this new king. No one was going to take his throne. Joseph packed up his young family and they fled as refugees to Egypt. Many believe that they were able to make a new life for themselves there by selling or trading the gifts that the Wisemen had brought. The wisemen wanted to honor the king. A father wanted to protect his family. A savior one day would lay down his life.

That is love. Love is acting for the betterment of someone else even when the cost is great.

How has your life been shaped by the fact that you have received God's love?

Family Activity

Take some time to pray together, thanking God for sending Jesus because of His love for us.

[19] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Co 13:13.*

CHRISTMAS

Please open your Bible and read together 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.[20]

Some 2,000 years ago, a baby's birth changed the world. Angels were dispatched to announce the good news to shepherds who were in a field nearby. Wisemen followed a star thousands of miles to come and see him. An earthly Father welcomed his son into the world, and a mother treasured everything in her heart. This baby was the King, the Messiah, the Savior. He brought hope and peace. He created joy, and everything he did, he did because of his love.

Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection made it possible for all of us to brought into God's family. When Jesus died on the cross, he took upon himself our sin. When we trust him as our Savior, his righteousness is given to us. That is what allows us to have a relationship with God.

Because of Jesus, we have hope that there is something better coming.

Because of Jesus, we have peace that sometimes doesn't make sense.

Because of Jesus, we have joy knowing that we are loved.

Because of Jesus, our lives are forever changed. A baby's birth changed the world, and, hopefully, he has changed your life.

[20] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 2 Co 5:21.*

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