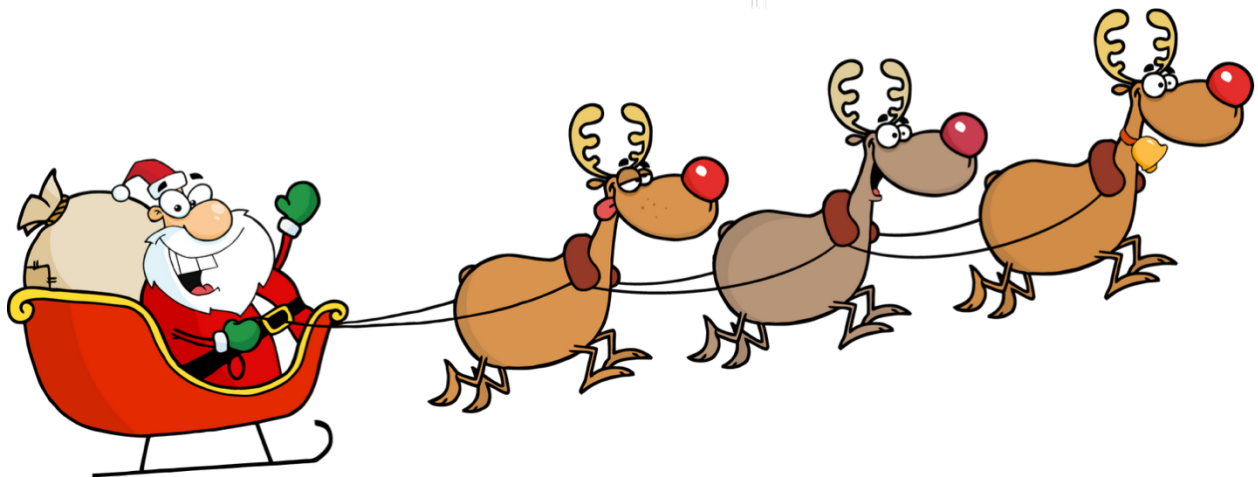




Family Fun Christmas!



MERRY CHRISTMAS

from



Hope, peace, joy, and love are a few of the good gifts God has given to us. On Christmas Day, we celebrate Jesus' coming to earth as a baby and bringing with Him these gifts for us. Our prayer is that your family can use this guide to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth and the hope, peace, joy, and love He offers.

Each week is divided into sections to guide your family time. Start out by opening your Bibles together as a family and reading the suggested verses. Then use the Explain section to lead your family to talk about the passages. Pray together as a family. If time allows, have each family member participate in the Have Fun Together family activity. The Further Bible Reading verses are provided for family reading throughout the week.

Use these devotions and activities to help your family rest in the hope, peace, joy, and love that only Jesus can bring. He is the gift we celebrate.



READ

Open your Bibles to Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 and read these verses aloud.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6 ESV

EXPLAIN

Who is coming? Jesus! That's right, Jesus is coming. God told a man named Isaiah that Jesus was coming, and we know that God is in control of all things and He always keeps His promises. When Isaiah said that Jesus was coming, no one knew exactly who He was or how long it would be before He came to Earth. But Isaiah used words like Wonderful, Mighty, Everlasting, and Prince of Peace to describe Him so everyone knew He was going to be awesome. This gave the people a great hope; not the "I hope I get a Malibu Barbie for Christmas" kind of hope, but rather the kind of hope that helps us all to know that God loves us, He has a great plan for us, and we can believe in God's promises for the future.

Everyone was super excited to hear that Jesus was coming. Isaiah told everyone to be on the lookout for Jesus and they all had a great hope to see Him. Once God's people knew that Jesus was coming, they waited and looked for Him all the time, and they had to wait a very long time before Jesus came. Everyone was glad when He was finally born.

When we read through the prophecies of the Old Testament and see how God kept His promises, we know we can trust God to keep all His promises. Jesus promised that He would return one day and we would be with Him forever (John 14:1–3). We live in hope today as we eagerly await Jesus' return to make all things new.

PRAY

Thank God for sharing His plans and promises in the Bible to give us hope. Praise God for sending Jesus to be with us. Thank Him for the gift of hope through Jesus this Christmas.

Week
1

Hope from Prophecy



HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Have you ever wanted an advent wreath for your children, but were worried about the flames? Here's a simple and fun Advent wreath craft that will help explain the season of waiting that comes before Christmas Day.

Read through the instructions below and for this first week of Advent, help your children to create the Advent wreath and their first Advent Candle, the Candle of Hope. When the wreath and the candle are complete, follow up with the suggested Scripture reading and say a prayer together.

1st Candle – (purple) **The Candle of Hope** – We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. (**Romans 15:12-13**)

FURTHER BIBLE READING

Genesis 3:14-15; Isaiah 53:4-6; Jeremiah 33:14; Micah 5:2; Hebrews 1:1-3



Week
2

Peace of Angels



READ

Open your Bible to Luke 1:26-38 and read these verses aloud.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Luke 1:30-33 ESV

EXPLAIN

Is it ever hard to obey God? He gives instructions too, and His are the most important for us to follow. In the Gospel lesson today, there was a woman named Mary. She had a special visit from an angel! The angel told her that she was going to have a baby, and that the baby would be God's own Son. Mary was a bit startled and she was also a little confused. How could this be? How would God become a human? And how would she be the one to give birth to Him?

But do you know what Mary did? She agreed! She said "OK" to God's announcement and told the angel she would do what God wanted her to do. And God's word came true – Mary became pregnant with Jesus, and she got to be His mom! He was God in human flesh, and she got to take care of Him and raise Him. God used her in amazing ways, and all she had to do was agree with His plan. She believed, and God worked in her. When she believed God's promise, she had His peace, knowing that God's plan is always the best plan and it's always a good idea to obey.

You know, the same can be true of us. God can do great big miracles in our lives if we just trust and obey. When we do, we have His peace and we know amazing things will happen in our lives!

PRAY

Thank God for the gift of peace. Praise Him for sending Jesus so that we can have peace with God when we trust in Him. Ask God to use your family to point others to the peace of God.

Week
2

Peace of Angels



HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Read through the instructions below and for this second week of Advent, help your children to create their second Advent Candle, the Candle of Peace. When the project is complete, follow up with the suggested Scripture reading and say a prayer together.

2nd Candle – (purple) **The Candle of Peace** – The angels announced the good news of a Saviour, and He would bring us the gift of peace with God! (**Luke 2:14**)

FURTHER BIBLE READING

Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:8-20; Philippians 4:4-8; John 14:27



Week
3

Joy of the Shepherds



READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:8-20 and read these verses aloud.

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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11 ESV

EXPLAIN

God didn't want to keep the birth of His Son a secret. No way! He wanted to share the good news of Jesus coming with the whole world. But God didn't send a baby announcement in the mail. He didn't put it on Facebook either. When God wanted to announce the birth of Jesus, He sent angels to tell people and invite them to come and see the baby. You might think that God would want to tell the richest, most powerful people in town that their long-awaited Savior was finally here. But that's not who He chose to tell first. What kind of people did the angel appear to? That's right, shepherds. Being a shepherd wasn't fun or glamorous. In fact, it was a dirty job that not everyone wanted to do. But God knows that everyone is important to Him, even shepherds. The angel told those shepherds that the birth of Jesus was "good news of great joy."

The shepherds answered God's invitation to come and see the baby Jesus. Not only did they go to see Him, but they also told everyone about what they had seen. The shepherds knew that it was good news that Jesus had been born, and they wanted to share it with their friends! Finally, the shepherds returned to their sheep, and they sang praises to God as they went!

The news that the angels shared with the shepherds is for us too! God invites us to come and meet His Son Jesus. The angel told the shepherds that Jesus was a Savior for all people. The invitation is to come to Jesus because it is through Jesus that we can know God!

PRAY

Praise God for sending Jesus into the world. Ask for His help to share this joyful news with others this Christmas season.

Week
3

Joy of the Shepherds



HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Read through the instructions below and for this third week of Advent, help your children to create their third Advent Candle, the Candle of Joy. When the project is complete, follow up with the suggested Scripture reading and say a prayer together.

3rd Candle – (pink) **The Candle of Joy** – The angels sang a message of JOY! (**Luke 2:7-15**)

FURTHER BIBLE READING

Psalms 23; John 10:11-15; Psalm 100:2; Romans 15:32; Philippians 4:4-5



Week
4

Love in Bethlehem



READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:1-7 and read these verses aloud.

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 ESV

EXPLAIN

The people of Bethlehem knew that their town was special. God had promised that His Savior would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). And they knew that when God makes a promise, He keeps His promise. His promises may take longer than we expect but God is faithful and will do what He said He would do. So when Mary was expecting to deliver her baby, she and Joseph made the long, hard journey to Bethlehem because that is where God intended Jesus to be born, and God is in control of all things.

While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born, just as God had planned. The Bible tells us that there was no room for them in the inn. Did God forget to provide a place for Jesus to be born? No way! He didn't want Jesus to be born in a fancy hotel, anyway. But even though there was no room for Him in the inn, hopefully there is room for Him in our hearts.

That night, Jesus was born and laid in a manger. A manger is a feeding trough; a place where animals ate their food. The King of the entire universe was born in a lowly stable. Why? Because God is in control of all things, and He wanted to show the world how much He loves us. First John 4:9 says, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him."

PRAY

Praise God for sending the gift of love through Jesus to us. Acknowledge that He knows every detail of our lives and that He is in control of all things. Thank Him for the Advent season so that we can reflect and rejoice that the love of God has come to us.

Week
4

Love in Bethlehem



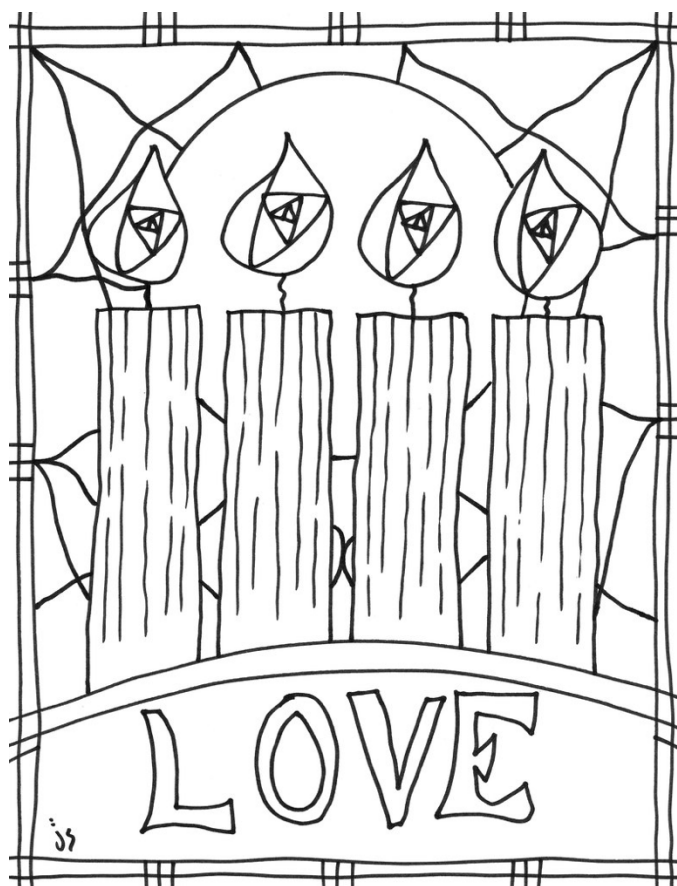
HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Read through the instructions below and for this fourth week of Advent, help your children to create their fourth Advent Candle, the Candle of Love. When the project is complete, follow up with the suggested Scripture reading and say a prayer together.

4th Candle – (purple) **The Candle of Love** – God kept His promise of a Saviour who would be born in Bethlehem. When Jesus was born, God showed the world how much He loves us (**John 3:16**).

FURTHER BIBLE READING

Isaiah 7:14; Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 2:11; Matthew 2:1-6





Christmas
Day!

Jesus!



READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:11-14 and read these verses aloud.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:11-14 ESV

EXPLAIN

This Advent season we have learned about the prophecies of Jesus' coming that gave hope to God's people. God is in control of all things, and He always keeps His promises. We learned about the peace that God provided to Mary as she decided to obey God and trust Him. That peace is available for us, as well, as we trust and obey also. We know that when the shepherds heard the news of great joy that Jesus was born, they rejoiced and praised God. Finally, we discovered the place where God first displayed His love to the world—Bethlehem. In all of this, we discovered how God made the way for true hope, peace, joy, and love to come into the world through Jesus.

Today, we celebrate the gift of Jesus, the promised Savior God sent for us. At the perfect time, in the perfect way, and because God loves us, He sent His Son Jesus to be born into the world. God the Creator became Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:21–23). Jesus was born as a baby. He grew up and lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be called children of God. This is the best Christmas gift ever!

PRAY

Thank Jesus for coming to be the Light of the world. Praise Him for coming to be the greatest gift for everyone who trusts in Him as Savior.

Christmas
Day!

Jesus!



HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Read through the instructions below and help your children to create their fifth and final Advent Candle, the Christ Candle. When the project is complete, follow up with the suggested Scripture reading and say a prayer together.

5th Candle – (white) **The Christ Candle** – The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for His death, His death was for our birth! (**John 1:29**)

FURTHER BIBLE READING

Genesis 3:15; John 3:16; 1 John 1:5; Luke 2:11-14; Galatians 4:4-5



ADVENT WREATH CHILDREN'S CRAFT



Have you ever wanted an advent wreath for your children, but were worried about the flames? Here's a simple and fun advent wreath craft that will help explain the season of waiting that comes before Christmas Day.

What You Will Need

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Paint

1 Paper Towel Roll

4 Toilet Paper Rolls

Scissors

Letter Stickers

Yellow & Orange Tissue Paper Green Construction Paper

A Square Piece of Cardboard Paint Brushes/Sponges

Hot Glue Gun

*Adapted from www.eggloentertainment.com/advent-wreath-childrens-craft/



Creating Your Advent Wreath

First cut the piece of cardboard into a small circle. Make sure all of the candles can fit. Let your child paint it green. While that is drying trace their hand on the sheets of construction paper, and cut out their handprints, and let them glue their prints in a circular motion.





The circle should be fully covered with their handprints.

Next cut off about 1/3 of the paper towel roll and have your child paint it white with the paint and brushes/sponge.

Then paint 3 of the toilet paper rolls purple and one of them pink. Once they dry place the sticker letters on them to show what the candles represent.





Glue the candles to the base of the wreath with a low heat hot glue gun.



Now it's time to add the "flame" to your candles. Take your orange and yellow tissue paper and cut it into 8x6 rectangles.

Stack a different color every other sheet to give it a pretty "flame" effect and rotate each sheet at different angles.



Place the tissue paper into the candles with the edges facing up and fold them in so they are not sticking out from the top of the candle. Each week pop the tissue out of the top of the candle to “light” it in celebration of advent. Light the candles in the following order each week:

1. Hope
2. Peace
3. Joy
4. Love
5. Christ (Light on Christmas Eve at sunset)



Each week you should also say a prayer or read from the corresponding Scripture with your child to celebrate the anticipation of Jesus' return.



FIRST SOUTHERN