



ADVENT
DEVOTIONALS
FOR
FAMILY WORSHIP

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WEEK FOUR: THE PURPOSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read John 3:16-17

FAMILY TEACHING: John 3:16 is the most famous verse in the Bible. It is a beautiful verse that reminds us of God's love for us and the eternal life that awaits all who believe in Jesus.

This verse is part of a conversation that Jesus had with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, and a teacher of the law. He came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus said he knew Jesus came from God. Jesus then taught Nicodemus about the kingdom of God and what it means to be born again. It is in this conversation that Jesus revealed the purpose of his first Advent. Why was Jesus born? Why did he come? In John 3:16 we learn that Jesus was sent by God the Father to demonstrate the love God has for the world. Even in our sin, God loves us and has made a way for us to have eternal life with him (Romans 5:8).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: Why did God send His Son into the world? According to verse 18, what do we need to do in order to be saved? Read Romans 5:8. Why did Jesus die on the cross?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

GOOD NEWS GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL PEOPLE

The word Advent means "Coming," and these Advent Family Devotions celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: his first Advent, his birth, his incarnation. For centuries before his birth, God's people waited with great hope, expectation, and anticipation. Today, we wait with the same hope for the second Advent of Jesus Christ who will come again one day. As we wait, we encourage our families with God's Gospel of hope, proclaiming that Jesus Christ came to seek and save and to rescue us from our sins. Each Week of Advent includes Family Time in the Bible, Family Teaching, Family Discussion, and Family Prayer.

WEEK ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Luke 1:5-25

FAMILY TEACHING: Luke begins his gospel with the story of a miraculous pregnancy, Elizabeth's, that would bring forth a son with an important ministry: John the Baptist preparing the way for the Messiah (v. 17; see Malachi 3:1). Gabriel the angel proclaimed this "Good News" (v. 19) to Zechariah the priest, Elizabeth's husband.

However, Zechariah's heart was not ready to receive this news and he did not believe. It was not until after the birth of John the Baptist that we see Zechariah filled with the Spirit, rejoicing over the coming redemption and rescue from sins that would come through Jesus Christ.

FAMILY DISCUSSION: Why do you think it was hard for Zechariah to believe what Gabriel said? Why did Gabriel call this announcement "Good News"?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK FOUR: THE PURPOSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read 1 Timothy 1:12-15

FAMILY TEACHING: Paul is writing this letter to Timothy. Although Timothy's mother and grandmother disciplined him (2 Timothy 1:5) and taught him the Scriptures from childhood (2 Tim. 3:15), Paul also disciplined Timothy.

Paul recounts his testimony, writing about his old way of life when he was dead in sin and persecuting the church. Paul then celebrates the grace of the Lord that saved him through faith in Jesus. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). This salvation is the purpose of Jesus's first Advent. This is why he came. Jesus "came into the world to save sinners" (v. 15).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: What was Paul's life like before he was saved? What was your life like before you were saved? Why did Jesus come into the world? How has Jesus changed your life? Paul often shared his testimony as he does here. Take some time and share your testimony with your family.

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK FOUR: THE PURPOSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Luke 19:1-10

FAMILY TEACHING: Jesus entered Jericho, the last major city He visited before He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Luke introduces us to a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector.

It's a beautiful thing that this tax collector wanted to see Jesus, but in verse 5, we see the beauty of the Gospel as Jesus sought Zacchaeus and called him to come down. Just as we need Jesus in our homes today, Jesus said, "I must stay at your house today." Once Jesus was in his home, Zacchaeus repented and Jesus proclaimed, "Salvation has come to this house." Then, Jesus reveals the purpose of His Advent; why he came: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

FAMILY DISCUSSION: How can we bring Jesus into our hearts and homes? How does Jesus rescue the lost? Has salvation come to our house? Do you believe that Jesus came to seek you?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK ONE: THE ANNOUCEMENT

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Luke 1:26-38

FAMILY TEACHING: This passage begins in the 6th month of Elizabeth's pregnancy as the angel Gabriel goes to the small village of Nazareth to deliver a message to Mary, a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph. Gabriel tells Mary that she will give birth to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 35), for "Nothing is impossible for God" (v. 37).

Gabriel also tells us about the one to be born: the Son will be named Jesus. In the Hebrew, Jesus is translated as "Yeshua, " meaning, "Yahweh Saves." Matthew 1:21 tells us that Jesus came to "save his people from their sins." He is our Savior. He came to save us from our sins. This is Good News of Great Joy for All People.

FAMILY DISCUSSION: What else did Gabriel tell Mary about the one to be born? How would you describe Jesus? How does He Rescue us?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

GOOD NEWS GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL PEOPLE

LUKE 1

One is Coming who is named Jesus (v. 31)

One is Coming who is Great (v. 32)

One is Coming who is the Son of the Most High (v. 32)

One is Coming who will be King Forever (v. 32-33)

One is Coming because of the Power of the Holy Spirit and because Nothing is Impossible with God (v. 34-38)

WEEK FOUR: THE PURPOSE

We have already seen the Who, What, When, Where & How of the birth of Christ: Who (Jesus, Immanuel, the Son of God); What (birth of the Messiah, the Incarnation, the First Advent); When (about 2000 years ago); Where (Bethlehem, City of David); How (Virgin birth, miracle of God).

For this final week of Advent, our Family Devotions will focus on the "Why." Why did God send His Son? What was the Purpose of the birth of Jesus Christ, the First Advent of our Savior. Encourage your family with these verses and spend time in worship together, praising Jesus for all He has done in your lives. Let's praise Him for GOOD NEWS of GREAT JOY for ALL PEOPLE!



WEEK THREE: THE RESPONSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Matthew 2:13-23

FAMILY TEACHING: This passage shows God the Father protecting His Son while fulfilling many Old Testament prophecies, for God is faithful. We also see Herod's response to the birth of Jesus. First, Herod was "troubled" by the news of Jesus's birth (v. 3). Now we see that Herod aims to "destroy" Jesus (v. 13). As Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt, Herod "became furious" and he had all the male children in Bethlehem (who were two years old and younger) killed. This is heartbreaking, leading to weeping throughout the land. It's also a reminder of the very darkness that needs the light of Jesus and the very sin that needs the forgiveness of Jesus. Finally, we see that not everyone worships Jesus. Herod's response was not worship. It was anger, violence, and jealousy.

FAMILY DISCUSSION: What prophecies did God fulfill in this passage? What promises has God kept in our lives? Do people today still reject Jesus like Herod did?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Matthew 1:18-25

FAMILY TEACHING: The announcements continue as an angel of the Lord announces the birth of Jesus to Joseph. Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph. This passage emphasizes the miraculous nature of Mary's pregnancy: "before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (v. 18).

Joseph is a man who demonstrates bold faith and bold obedience. He trusted that Mary's pregnancy was a miracle from God and that her baby would be Immanuel, meaning, "God with us" (v. 23). The angel also told Joseph that the baby would be named "Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (v. 21). This is Good News of Great Joy for All People.

FAMILY DISCUSSION: What questions do you think Joseph would have had for the angel? How does the birth of Jesus remind us that God is with us? Why do we need Jesus to come and save us from our sins? How can we be saved from our sins? (Romans 10:9)

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

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THE ADVENT CALENDAR

Many families use Advent Calendars to help count down the days until Christmas. Kids especially seem to enjoy the Advent Calendars that allow them to open up a window of the calendar and eat a piece of chocolate every day, counting down the 25 days until Christmas. One author wrote on the history of this tradition: "The tradition of Advent calendars is believed to have started in the mid-19th century, when German Protestants made chalk marks on doors or lit candles to count the days leading up to Christmas. The first printed Advent calendar was produced in the early 1900s by a German named Gerald Lang. When Lang was a child his mother put 24 cookies in a box and allowed him to eat one of them every day during the Advent period. Lang used this as the model for his own Advent calendar in 1908."

Joe Carter, "Nine Things You Should Know About Christmas Traditions."

WEEK THREE: THE RESPONSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Matthew 2:7-12

FAMILY TEACHING: It is likely that Jesus was about two years old by the time the wise men arrived at his home. When the wise men reached his home, they " rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

What an example for us today! Oh that our family would find our greatest joy in Jesus!

The wise men gave gifts to Jesus and they fell down and worshiped him. The Bible is clear that we are to only worship God alone (Luke 4:8) and yet it was appropriate for the wise men to worship Jesus. Why? This is the appropriate response because Jesus is fully God and fully man. We see many people worship Jesus in the Bible (Matt. 14:33; 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: Why should we worship Jesus? What gifts can we give to Jesus? What keeps us from rejoicing over His birth?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK THREE: THE RESPONSE

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Matthew 2:1-6

FAMILY TEACHING: This passage introduces us to Herod the king, or Herod the Great, the King of the Jews who ruled Israel and Judah ruthlessly. We also meet wise men from the east in search of Jesus. This fulfilled a prophecy from the Old Testament (see Isaiah 60:3, 6). Some commentators believe the wise men traveled 800 miles from Babylon, traveling more than 40 days to get to Jesus.

The wise men refer to Jesus as the "King of the Jews." Herod is troubled by this, for he is supposed to be the king of the Jews. The wise men, however, do not hide their intentions. They tell Herod that they have traveled this far in order to worship Jesus (v. 2).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: How can we seek Jesus today? Why are some people today still troubled by the idea of Jesus being their King? In verse two, what did the wise men say they were going to do when they found Jesus? How can we worship Jesus today?

FAMILY PRAYER: As we follow the example of the wise men and seek to worship Jesus, ask your family to share praises and lift these up in prayer.

WEEK TWO: THE BIRTH

This week, your family will reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ. God kept His promises and He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins. Since the word 'Advent' means 'Coming,' the birth of Jesus is His first Advent. His birth is also referred to as 'The Incarnation,' meaning, 'In-fleshment,' for the eternal Son of God took on flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US, AND
WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY,
GLORY AS OF THE ONLY SON
FROM THE FATHER, FULL OF
GRACE AND TRUTH.

WEEK TWO: THE BIRTH

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Luke 2:1-7

FAMILY TEACHING: The national census brought Joseph to his hometown of Bethlehem to be registered with Mary. God's people had been waiting for a ruler and a shepherd who would be born in Bethlehem. They had been waiting for more than 700 years, ever since God promised to send a ruler and shepherd who would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2-4; Matthew 2:1-6).

The Son of God was born as a man in a stable in a small village and wrapped in strips of cloths by his young mother. He rested in a manger, an animal's feeding trough. We see here the overwhelming humility of Jesus Christ and the overwhelming love of the Father (John 3:16).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: In what ways do we see God's love for us in the birth of Jesus? What was the purpose for His birth? Why is it good news?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

WEEK THREE: THE RESPONSE

This week, your family will read the story of the wise men who visited Jesus after His birth. We will take special note of the different responses to Jesus. Herod was troubled and aimed to destroy Jesus (Matt. 2:13). The wise men, on the other hand, "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" & fell down to worship Jesus. They gave Him gifts & gave us an example to follow as we respond too.

Everyone who encounters Jesus responds to Jesus one way or another. Some respond in faith while others reject Him. The Puritans of the 16th and 17th centuries had a saying: "The same sun that hardens the clay melts the ice." The Gospel will either penetrate your heart or harden your heart. At the birth of Jesus Christ, we see many different responses. The Shepherds ran to Jesus and glorified God for all they had seen (Luke 2:16-20). Simeon rejoiced (Luke 2:26-32) and Anna gave thanks (Luke 2:38). As you lead your family in devotions this week, pray for their response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

FAMILY PRAISE

Throughout your times of Family Worship this Advent season, you have already enjoyed Family Time in the Word of God, Family Teaching of the Word, Family Discussion, and Family Prayer. We also encourage you to cultivate moments of Family Praise through Worship Music. Whether you have someone in your home that can play a hymn on an instrument or lead in the singing or if you take advantage of a worship playlist on Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, or YouTube music, these are a few songs that focus on the birth of Jesus Christ. Add these to your Family Worship playlist this Advent.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus; The First Noel; The Weary World Rejoices; O Come All Ye Faithful; O Holy Night; Joy to the World

WEEK TWO: THE BIRTH

FAMILY TIME IN THE WORD: Read Luke 2:8-21

FAMILY TEACHING: Shepherds are introduced here. When we meet these shepherds, they are doing what shepherds do—they are out in the field in the middle of the night, keeping watch over their flock—they are taking care of their sheep—feeding them, protecting them. And then, the Advent of Christ, the Coming of Jesus, the Birth of the Son of God, interrupts their lives. God interrupts their lives and they will never be the same again.

The angel proclaimed "**Good News of Great Joy**" to these shepherds. The word used for "Good News" is "Gospel." This birth is Good News because the one who is born is the Savior (v. 11) who will save us from our sins. They go to Bethlehem, they find Jesus, and they return glorifying God and praising God for all they had heard and seen. When you encounter Jesus, it transforms your life. And when you encounter Jesus, you tell others.

FAMILY DISCUSSION: How can we tell others about Jesus?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.

GOOD NEWS GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL PEOPLE

Why is this Good News of Great Joy for All People? Because it's not just a baby, it's not just a Son, it is a Savior! And not just a Savior, but a Savior who Saves us from our sins. And we need a Savior. It's good news because we are sinners. It's good news because we can't overcome our own sin. It's good news because there is no one else who can forgive our sins or save us from our sins!

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

WEEK TWO: THE BIRTH

FAMILY TEACHING OF THE WORD: Read Luke 2:22-33

FAMILY TEACHING: After the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph did this to obey God's law that we read in Exodus 13:12 and Leviticus 12:8. While they were in Jerusalem, they met a man named Simeon. Simeon was a righteous man who had spent his life waiting for the Advent of the Messiah. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah, the Christ, before he died. Upon seeing Jesus, Simeon rejoiced that his eyes had seen the salvation of God for all peoples. Simeon knew that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Christ that Simeon had been waiting for and Jesus came to bring light to all nations (v. 32).

FAMILY DISCUSSION: Should we rejoice like Simeon over the birth of Jesus? How does His birth bring Salvation? Why does our world need the light of the Lord? Do you believe Jesus saves?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask each member of your family to share a prayer request and then lead in prayer.