Find traditions that work for your home. Adapt them as your children leave home and grandchild arrive. Here are some ideas:

Bake a **Birthday Cake** for Jesus, light the candles and sing happy birthday!

Use a **Nativity Scene** at home and re-tell the Christmas story

Attend weekly **Worship Services** during the Christmas season and go to church as a family on Christmas Eve.

Use an **Advent Wreath** – take turns lighting the candles, reading from the Bible and praying together each Sunday in Advent. Make this a family highlight.

Read the **Christmas Story** before opening gifts.



Find a service project to be involved in this year. Include family members, as possible. Here are some ideas:

Participate in **“Operation Christmas Child”** by filling a shoe box with gifts for a needy child. If you have young children, let them participate in this activity.

<http://www.samaritanspurse.ca>

Cut back on your gift giving to family and friends and re-direct the money to those in need. Check out these options:

* **Canadian Baptist Ministries – Gift Catalogue** <http://www.cbmin.org/cbm/GiftCatalogue2011>
* **World Vision** [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca)
* **Pioneers** <http://www.pioneers.ca>

 Family Discipleship at Stanley Park Baptist Church

The advent season provides us with an opportunity to step back and look afresh at God’s miraculous redemption plan as it unfolds with the birth of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate his birth, we also look forward with great joy to his second coming! Don’t miss this opportunity to prepare your heart for Him.



**Advent readings**

Make time individually or as a family to read God`s word during this season. Use a bible translation that is easy to understand (for young children we recommend the NIrV). Here are the readings for each Sunday in Advent.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week ofNov 27, 2011 | Week ofDec 4, 2011 | Week ofDec 11, 2011 | Week ofDec 18, 2011 |
| Isaiah 64:1-9 | Isaiah 40:1-11 | Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 | 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 |
| Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 | Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 | Psalm 126 | Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 |
| I Corinthians 1:3-9 | 2 Peter 3:8-15a | I Thessalonians 5:16-24 | Romans 16:25-27 |
| Mark 13:24-37 | Mark 1:1-8 | John 1:6-8, 19-28 | Luke 1:26-38 |
| Christmas Eve: Luke 2:1-20 |

**Prayer Items**

Take a passage of scripture and pray it back to God.

**Try Isaiah 11:1-5, 10**

1Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot—
      yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.
2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
      the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
   the Spirit of counsel and might,
      the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
3 He will delight in obeying the Lord.
      He will not judge by appearance
      nor make a decision based on hearsay.
 4 He will give justice to the poor
      and make fair decisions for the exploited.
   The earth will shake at the force of his word,
      and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.
5 He will wear righteousness like a belt
      and truth like an undergarment.

10 In that day the heir to David’s throne
      will be a banner of salvation to all the world.
   The nations will rally to him,
      and the land where he lives will be a glorious place.

**Learn a Sacred Christmas Carol**

Think about how this carol tells the story of God`s redemptive plan.

**ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID`S CITY**

The author: Cecil F. Alexander 1818-1895

Once in royal David`s city stood a lowly cattle shed,

Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for His bed;

Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,

And His shelter was a stable, and His cradle was a stall;

With the poor, and mean, and lowly, live on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love;

For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav`n above,

And He leads His children on to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,

We shall see Him, but in heaven, set at God`s right hand on high;

When like stars His children crowned all in white shall wait around.



It is important that families eat meals regularly together. This facilitates conversation, provides a setting to talk about what God is doing in your lives and provides time for parents to offer counsel and encouragement to their children.

Plan a **special meal(s) of hospitality** during this season for extended family and friends. Keep the meal simple and consider asking everyone to contribute. Focus on building relationships and sharing God’s goodness. Share some of your traditions with your guests.



Make opportunities to talk about the significance of the Christmas season and the difference Christ’s coming has made in your lives. Here are some conversation starter ideas:

* Why is it important that God is with us?
* What might we do for or give to Jesus this season?
* How would you explain the true meaning of Christmas to someone who doesn’t understand it?
* How do singing Christmas carols help you experience the season more fully?
* Describe a Christmas memory that helped you feel closer to God