

Family Advent Devotions

2017

(originally created by Mount Hamilton Baptist Church)







Instructions for Parents

This series of devotions is meant to help introduce the season of Advent to children. These devotionals are meant to be interactive. The blue text in italics is for your child to do with you. Have your child repeat the prayer after you each day.



It is very effective to add one piece to a nativity scene with each reading. It can also be helpful to have tabletop advent candles to light each night to accompany the readings.

There are 25 readings for Monday through Saturdays. There are also special devotionals for Advent Sundays to light a candle, as well as a reading. You could do these at the same time or at separate times during the day. I hope you find them a blessing as you teach your children about the love God has for them this Christmas.

December 1

Advent

The word "advent" means "to arrive." During Advent we look forward to Jesus' arrival.

Do you know when we celebrate that Jesus was born?

On Christmas Day.

There are 25 days until we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Can you count to 25?

We call Jesus' birthday "Christmas." Jesus was born in a stable.

Where were you born?

How do you celebrate your birthday?

The gift God sent on Jesus' birthday was Jesus. God sent Jesus to us because he loved us very much. In the Bible it says,

"God loved the world so much that he sent his only son (John 3:16a)"

- What do we look forward to during Advent?
- Where was Jesus born?
- Why did God send Jesus to us?

Dear God, thank you for keeping Jesus safe. Thank you for giving him a family to care for him. Help me to tell people about Jesus too. Amen.

Dear God, Thank you for loving me so much that you sent Jesus. Help me to love others too. Amen.

came and told them that Jesus had been born. The shepherds were frightened of the angel.

Look frightened.

The angel told them not to be afraid, but to go and find the baby and his mother in the stable. Then, many angels appeared and sang Glory to God in the Highest.

Say, "Glory to God!"

The shepherds hurried to the place the angel had told them of. There they saw the baby and told Mary all that they had seen and heard. She was amazed.

Look amazed.

Then the shepherds left and told everyone they could find about the angels and the baby.

Look excited.

Magi came from the east. They had followed a star to the place where Jesus lived with his mother Mary and father Joseph.

Point to the star in the sky.

The Magi brought Jesus expensive gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But they did not go back to see King Herod because they knew he was no good.

After the Magi left, an angel told Joseph that he was to take Jesus and Mary and escape to Egypt. They left right away.

Pretend to ride on a donkey.

God made sure Jesus was safe.

Zechariah Doesn't Believe (Luke 1:5-22)

Zechariah was a priest. He served God in the temple. One day when he was in the temple an angel appeared.

Look frightened.

The angel told Zechariah not to be afraid. The angel said that his wife would have a baby and that he should be named John.

Look surprised.

Zechariah did not believe the angel because he was an old man and his wife was an old woman.

Cross your arms and look like you do not believe.

Because Zechariah did not believe the message from God, the angel told Zechariah that he would not be able to speak until his son was born.

Cover your mouth like you cannot speak.

When Zechariah came out of the temple, the people knew he had seen something because he could not speak.

- What was Zechariah's job?
- What did the angel tell Zechariah?
- Why couldn't Zechariah speak when he came out of the temple?

Dear God, thank you for talking to me. Help me to believe your promises.

December 3

Advent Sunday 1 - Hope

Today we light the Advent candle of Hope.

Light the hope candle.

The candle of hope reminds us of the hope we have at Christmas. During Advent, we look forward to the day when Jesus was born.

Say, "Jesus was born at Christmas."

Jesus gives us hope because he was born to save us from our sins and from death.

Say, "Jesus saves us."

This Advent we will hear a little more each day about how Jesus came to earth.

- What candle did we light today?
- When was Jesus born?
- How does Jesus give us hope?

Dear God, thank you for the hope I have because of Jesus. Amen.

Christmas Eve

Today is Christmas Eve!

Shout, "Merry Christmas!"

Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. What will you do to celebrate today?

Today we also remember others who do not know about Jesus yet. What will you do to share Jesus with them?

Let's read the Christmas story now.

An angel appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a baby. The angel told her that the baby would be from God and would save his people.

Say, "Praise God!"

An angel also appeared to Joseph. The angel told Joseph that Mary would have a baby and that the baby was to be named Jesus.

At that time, Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in a census.

Pretend to ride a donkey.

When they got to Bethlehem, there was no room for them to stay. They found a place in a stable with the animals.

Make animal sounds.

When they were there it was time for Jesus to be born. After he was born, Mary wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger.

Make baby noises.

Shepherds were watching their sheep in the fields when an angel

December 24

Advent Sunday 4- Peace

Today we light the Advent candle of Peace.

Light the peace candle.

The candle of peace reminds us of the peace we have because of Jesus. During Advent, we have peace because Jesus can be part of our lives.

Say, "Jesus gives us peace."

Jesus gives us peace because he brings us back to God.

Say, "Jesus brings us to God."

This Advent, we will hear a little more each day about how Jesus came to earth.

- What candle did we light today?
- Who brings us back to God?
- How did Jesus give us peace?

Dear God, thank you for the peace I have because of Jesus. Amen.

A Baby for Elizabeth (Luke 1:23-25)

Elizabeth was married to Zechariah but she was very sad because they did not have any children.

Look very sad.

After the angel spoke to Zechariah, Elizabeth found out that she was going to have a baby!

Look excited!

Elizabeth tried to stay calm and be very careful until the baby came. But one day her cousin, Mary, visited her. When Elizabeth saw Mary she felt like her baby jumped in her tummy.

Jump like you are excited.

When this happened Elizabeth knew there was something special about Mary. What do you think it was?

Mary was going to have a baby. The baby was Jesus.

- Why was Elizabeth sad?
- How did Elizabeth know there was something special about Mary?
- What was special about Mary?

Dear God, thank you for your promises. I am excited to hear about you. Amen.

December 4

An Angel Visits Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

Mary was a young woman. She lived in a town called Galilee. Where do you live?

Hamilton. (your city/town)

One day an angel named Gabriel came to see Mary. He told her that she was going to have a baby. Mary was surprised.

Look surprised.

Mary asked the angel how she could have a baby when she was not married.

Lift your hands as if asking a question.

The Angel told Mary that God would give her the baby. He said that her baby would be the Son of God.

Mary said to the angel, "I am God's servant."

Say, "I am God's servant."

- Where did Mary live?
- What was the name of the angel?
- What did Mary say to the angel?

Dear God, I am your servant just like Mary. Amen.

December 23

Candy Cane

The candy cane is in the shape of a hook.

Draw a candy cane in the air with your finger.

The candy cane is white with a red stripe around it. The white candy reminds us of how pure Jesus is.

The red stripe reminds us of the punishment he took for us.

The hook shape reminds us of two things. First, it reminds us of a shepherd's crook and that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who takes care of us.

Second, if we turn it upside down it is the same shape as the letter "J" which is the first letter in Jesus' name.

- What colour reminds us that Jesus is pure?
- What colour reminds us that Jesus was punished for the wrong things we do?
- What does the shape of the candy cane remind us of?

Dear God, thank you for giving us things like the candy cane to remind us of Jesus. Amen.

December 22

The Reason for Jesus (John 3:16-21)

God loved the world so much that he sent his only son, Jesus, to us.

Say, "Thank you for Jesus."

Everyone does things that are wrong. When we do wrong we are disobeying God. When we disobey God, we cannot be with him anymore.

Make a sad face.

Jesus is the only one who can help us be with God again. Jesus is the only one who can save us.

Say, "Thank you for Jesus."

God sent Jesus to us at Christmas so that we could all be with God too.

God loves us so much and wants us to accept the gift of Jesus.

- Why did God send Jesus?
- Why can't we be with God?
- Who can help us to be with God again?

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus so that I can be with you again. I accept the gift of Jesus in my life. Amen.

December 5

An Angel Visits Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)

Joseph was suppose to marry Mary. He was upset when he heard she was going to have a baby.

Look upset.

He decided that he would not marry her. Then he had a dream.

Lay your head on your hands as if you are sleeping.

In Joseph's dream he saw an angel. The angel told him that he should marry Mary. The angel told him to name the baby Jesus and that Jesus would save his people.

Say, "Jesus will save his people."

When Joseph woke up, he did what God told him to do. He married Mary and took care of their family.

- Who was supposed to marry Mary?
- What did the angel tell Joseph to name the baby?
- Did Joseph obey what God told him to do?

Dear God, thank you for taking care of Jesus even before he was born. Thank you for making sure I have people to take care of me too. Amen.

December 6

John the Baptist is Born (Luke 1:57-66)

It was time for Elizabeth to have her baby. All her neighbours and relatives were excited for her.

Look excited.

She had a baby boy. She said that his name should be John.

Say, "His name is John."

The other people said that she should name him something else. They asked the father, Zechariah, what to call the baby. Zechariah could not speak because he did not believe God. He wrote, "His name is John."

Pretend to write.

As soon as Zechariah wrote that, he could speak again! He sang a song about the things John would do. Everyone was amazed and wondered who John would grow up to be.

- Did Elizabeth have a girl or a boy baby?
- What did they name the baby?
- What happened when Zechariah wrote that the baby should be called John?

Dear God, thank you for giving us good things. Help me to tell others about you just like John. Amen.

December 21

Family of God (Mark 3:31-35)

At Christmastime families try to spend time together. What do you do with your family at Christmas?

Give gifts? Christmas tree? Family dinner?

When we follow God, we have two families. We have the family we live with. Who is in your family?

Mom, dad, brother, sister, grandma, dog. etc.

We also have the "Family of God."

Say, "Family of God."

The family of God is everyone who obeys God. Who do you know in the family of God?

Sunday school teacher, friend from church, etc.

- Who do we spend time with at Christmas?
- What two families do you have?
- How do we know if someone is part of the Family of God?

Dear God, thank you for letting me be part of your family. Help me to obey you. Amen.

December 20

Escape to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-18)

After the Magi had left, an angel told Joseph to take Jesus and Mary and escape to Egypt. The angel warned Joseph to stay there because Herod was going to search for Jesus to kill him.

Make a shocked face.

Joseph got up. He took Jesus and Mary during the night and left for Egypt.

Pretend to walk on a journey.

When Herod realized that the Magi had tricked him, he ordered that all the boys in Bethlehem who were two years old and under be killed.

Make a horrified face.

But Jesus escaped to Egypt with Joseph and his mother, Mary.

- Who told Joseph to take his family to Egypt?
- Why did they have to escape?
- When did they leave - at night time or during the day?

Dear God, thank you for rescuing Jesus from Herod. Help me to obey you right away just like Joseph did. Amen.

December 7

A Census is Called (Luke 2:1-3)

How many people are in the room with you now?

Count them.

It is easy to count the number of people in a room, but it is hard to count the number of people in a city or country. To do that we have a census.

Say, "A census counts the people."

Just before Jesus was born, Caesar Augustus decided to have a census.

Say, "To count the people."

All the people had to go to the place where they were born.

Say, "To count the people."

Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because Joseph was from there.

- What does a census count?
- Why did everyone have to go to the place they were from?
- Where did Mary and Joseph have to go?

Dear God, thank you for counting me. I praise you because you always know where I am. Amen.

December 8

A trip to Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-5)

Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted in the census.

Pretend you are riding on a donkey.

They had to travel for several days before they got to Bethlehem.

This was scary for Mary because it was almost time for baby Jesus to be born.

Looks scared.

She was very tired from all the traveling.

Look tired.

- Where did Mary and Joseph have to go?
- Why did they have to go there?
- Was Bethlehem close to them or far away?

Dear God, thank you for taking care of Mary and Joseph on their trip to Bethlehem. Please take care of everyone who will travel this Christmas. Amen.

December 19

Giving Gifts (Matthew 2:11)

At Christmas we often give gifts to our family and friends. When Jesus was born he was a gift to us from God to bless us and to save us.

Say, "Jesus was a gift."

We give gifts to show people that we love them and to remind them of the gift of Jesus.

Hug someone to show you love them.

This Christmas when you open your gifts, remember to thank God for the gift of Jesus.

- What do we give at Christmas?
- What gift did God give us at Christmas?
- What should we remember when we open our gifts at Christmas?

Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus at Christmas. Help me to remember him when I open gifts this year. Amen.

December 18

Magi Bring Gifts (Matthew 2:10-12)

The Magi kept traveling until they saw that the star they were following stopped over the place where baby Jesus was.

Bounce along as if on your camel like a Magi.

When they saw the star had stopped, they were filled with joy.

Make a joyful face.

When they came into the house, they saw Jesus with his mother, Mary. The Magi bowed down and worshiped him.

Bow down to worship Jesus like the Magi.

The Magi gave him treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Then they returned to their homes. They did not stop to see King Herod because God warned them that Herod wanted to hurt Jesus.

- Where did the Magi find Jesus?
- What did the Magi do when they found Jesus?
- What did the Magi give to Jesus?

Dear God, thank you for calling Magi from far away to worship Jesus. I will try to give Jesus my best gifts too. Amen.

December 9

No Room in the Inn (Luke 2:7)

There was a census in the land. This means that everyone had to go to the place their family was from to be counted.

So many people were traveling that it was hard to find a place to stay.

Say, "Is there room here?"

Mary and Joseph were looking for a place to stay in Bethlehem, but there was no room in the inn.

Say, "Oh no!"

They ended up staying in the stable with the animal for the night.

Say, "Peeeheww!"

- Why were there no places to stay?
- What town were Mary and Joseph in?
- Where did they end up staying for the night?

Dear God, thank you for giving me a place to stay? Amen.

December 10

Advent Sunday 2 - Love

Today we light the Advent candle of Love.

Light the love candle.

The candle of love reminds us of the love we have at Christmas. During Advent, we look forward to see how much God loves us.

Say, "God loves us."

Jesus gives us love because he shows us how to love God and love others.

Say, "Jesus shows us how to love."

This Advent, we will hear a little more each day about how Jesus came to earth.

- What candle did we light today?
- How did God show us love?
- Who does Jesus show us how to love?

Dear God, thank you for the love we have because of Jesus. Amen.

Magi See Herod (Matthew 2:1-9)

After a long journey, the Magi arrived in Jerusalem where King Herod lived. They knew that he was not the new king they were looking for.

Say, "Where is the new king?"

Herod was angry because he didn't want someone else to be king.

Make an angry face.

Herod called all the smartest priests and teachers together and asked them where the king was to be born. They told him he would be born in Bethlehem.

Then Herod called the Magi and told them to go and find the baby king. Herod asked them to come back and tell them where the baby king was after they found him.

After that, the Magi kept searching for the new king.

Say, "Bye Bye Magi!"

- Who did the Magi ask for directions?
- Who did Herod ask to tell him where the baby king would be born?
- What did Herod ask the Magi to do after they found the baby?

Dear God, thank you for leading the right people to the new baby. Amen.

December 17

Advent Sunday 3 - Joy

Today we light the Advent Candle of Joy.

Light the joy candle.

The candle of joy reminds us of the joy we have at Christmas. During Advent, celebrate because Jesus was born.

Say, "Hurray! Jesus is born!"

Jesus gives us joy because he was born to show us how to live.

Say, "Jesus lives!"

This Advent, we will hear a little more each day about how Jesus came to earth.

- What candle did we light today?
- Why do we celebrate at Advent?
- How does Jesus give us joy?

Dear God, thank you for the joy we have because of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus is Born (Luke 2:6-7)

While Mary and Joseph were staying in the stable the time came for the baby to be born.

Mary wrapped him tightly in a blanket and placed him in the manger.

Joseph named the baby Jesus, just as the angel had told him to.

Say, "Welcome, Baby Jesus."

Jesus was born to save people.

- Where was the baby born?
- What did Joseph name the baby?
- Why was Jesus born?

Dear God, thank you for being born. Thank you for loving us so much. Amen.

December 11

Shepherds in the Field (Luke 2:8)

Around Bethlehem there were many flocks of sheep.

Say, "Baa baa."

Even at night, shepherds had to stay in the fields with the sheep.
They kept the sheep safe from getting lost and from wolves.

Howl like a wolf.

Sometimes we call God the Good Shepherd. We call God a shepherd because he looks after us just the way shepherds look after sheep. He keeps us safe from danger.

- Who looks after the sheep?
- Why did they have to stay in the fields even at night?
- Why do we call God the shepherd sometimes?

Dear God, thank you for being like a shepherd and keeping us safe from danger. Amen.

December 16

Magi Follow the Star (Matthew 2:1-2)

The Star of David was so bright in the sky that it could be seen by people who were far away.

Some wise men called Magi saw the star in the east.

Sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.

They knew all about stars. They knew that this new star meant that a king was born.

They followed the star to look for the baby.

Pretend to ride a camel.

It was a long journey.

- What was shining in the east?
- Who were the Magi?
- What did they think the star would lead them to?

Dear God, thank you for calling people from other places to see Jesus. Help me to share Jesus with everyone. Amen.

December 15

Star of David (Matthew 2:2,7,9)

When Jesus was born, a new star appeared in the sky. It meant that a king would be born. How many stars do you see in the sky at night?

The new star was brighter than all the other stars in the sky.

Put your hands beside your face like a bright star.

The star shone in the sky over the place where Jesus would be born. The star used its light to point to Jesus.

Can you point like a star?

We put stars on Christmas trees to remember the Star of David that showed the way to Jesus.

- What do we call the new star?
- Where did the new star shine?
- Why do we put stars on our Christmas trees?

Dear God, thank you for showing us the way to find Jesus. Amen.

December 12

Angels and the Shepherds (Luke 2:8-15)

One night when the shepherds were in the field with the sheep they saw an angel. The angel was shining with the glory of God. The shepherds were frightened.

Make a frightened face.

The angel told them not to be afraid. The angel said that he was bringing good news of great joy to the shepherds.

Make an excited face.

The angel said that today in Bethlehem a baby had been born who would save his people. The angel told the shepherds they would find the baby in a manger.

Suddenly, many more angels appeared in the sky. They were singing to God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to those on earth."

Say, "Glory to God!"

After the angels left, the shepherds set out to find the baby the angels had told them about.

- What were the shepherds doing when the angels came?
- What did the first angel tell them?
- What did the shepherds decide to do after the angels left?

Dear God, thank you for telling us about your son. We praise you because he came to save us all. Amen.

December 13

Shepherds Worship (Luke 2:16-20)

After the angels visited the shepherds they hurried to find the baby.
The shepherds found Mary, Joseph and the baby in the stable.

Say, "Look! Here he is!"

When the shepherds found them, they worshiped the baby Jesus.
They told Mary and Joseph what the angel had told them.

Mary remembered all these things and thought about them.

Make a thinking face.

Then they went and told everyone what they had seen and heard.

Say, "Glory to God in the highest!"

- Where did the shepherds find Jesus?
- What did the shepherds do when they found Jesus?
- Who did they tell about what happened?

Dear God, glory to God in the highest. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us. Amen.

December 14

Carolling (Luke 2:20)

At Christmastime, groups of people walk from house to house singing songs. They sing songs about the birth of Jesus.

Sing Away in a Manger

We call this carolling. When Jesus was born, the shepherds went and told everyone what they had seen and heard. We go carolling at Christmas to tell everyone about the birth of Jesus.

Say, "Jesus is born!"

There are many different songs that we can sing when we carolling. Sometimes people carry candles or glowsticks with them to shine light.

- Why do we go carolling at Christmastime?
- Can you think of a song that tells about Jesus' birth?
- Are you going carolling with your family and friends this Christmas?

Dear God, glory to God in the highest. Thank you for giving us songs to tell everyone about how much you love all of us. Amen.