



# THE GREAT ADVENTure

*Family Devotions for the Season of Advent*

*Hamilton Street Baptist Church*

*Advent 2010*

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Advent is a time of preparation as we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth. Doing a daily Advent devotion with your family is a great way to keep Christ at the center of our thoughts during the busy Christmas season.

**Advent calendar:** Your child received a simple Advent calendar during the children's message on the first Sunday in Advent. If you did not get one, there are some available in the foyer at church. Advent calendars of many types are available in the stores, or you can make your own - a countdown chain is an easy Advent calendar that your child can help create. The calendar helps us mark the days until Christmas. You can use the calendar in conjunction with these devotions, or you can do the Advent calendar in the morning, and the devotion in the evening.

**Advent wreath and candles:** You do not need to have an Advent wreath or candles to do the devotions. The candles in the wreath each symbolize a theme that marks each week of Advent. Lighting the candles is an act that helps us remember; and as the light grows each week as we draw closer to Christmas, it symbolically represents the growing anticipation of the birth of Christ, culminating in the lighting of the central Christ Candle on Christmas Eve.

While there are different traditions involving different colors of Advent candles, you can use any color or type of candle you wish. It may give special meaning to your family devotion time if you light the candle(s) for the appropriate week of Advent each night as you do your devotion. If you have very small children and do not

wish to use actual candles, you can make construction paper candles or use the coloring sheet that is provided on the next page, and color in a candle each Sunday of Advent.

These devotions should not take very long, but spending this time together each day of the Advent season will be a blessing to both you and your children as you focus on the Biblical story of Christmas and prepare your hearts to celebrate Christ's arrival on earth to fulfill God's ultimate plan for us.

A Bible verse, discussion topic, and simple prayer are provided for each day. Each week has a theme song that you may wish to sing together as a family to open or close your devotional time each day. Invite your children to pray and participate in the reading and discussion at a level that is appropriate for their age. On certain days, optional crafts or activities are suggested to complement the devotion.

If you have a nativity scene set up in your home, let your children act out the parts of the Christmas story using the figures from the nativity. Some families place the Christ child in the manger only on Christmas - the figure is kept hidden until then. Some also have the wise men located in a different part of the house, and they move those pieces closer to the stable each day leading up to Christmas.



First week of Advent – the Prophet's Candle

Light the first candle in your Advent wreath this week.

Theme song: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

**Sunday, November 28**

**Verse:** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."  
(Isaiah 7:14)

**Discussion:** This morning at church, we lit the Prophet's candle. A Prophet is someone who told others what God was going to do. There are many places in the Bible that told about - or prophesied - the birth of Jesus Christ.

Why does this verse from Isaiah say that Jesus will be called "Immanuel" when we know Him as Jesus? What do you think "Immanuel" means?

(For parents: Immanuel (Emmanuel) literally means "God with us.")

How is Jesus "God with us"?

**Activity:** Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" together as a family, or listen to a recording of it. Talk about what the words of the song mean and why we sing this at Christmas.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we are so grateful that you came to earth to be our Immanuel - God with us. As we begin the celebration of Christmas, help us remember that it is not about the presents, the busyness, or even the time with family that is most important, but it is that You came as part of God's perfect plan. Amen.

Monday, November 29

**Verse:** "For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

**Discussion:** What are some of the names that this verse tells us that Jesus will be called? What are some other names that we use for God or for Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord, we praise you that even though things seem scary sometimes here on earth, we know you have given us Jesus to be ruler over all - the King of Kings! Long before Jesus or any of us was born, You had this plan in place. Thank you for sending Your Son at Christmas to be the Savior of the world! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday, November 30

**Verse:** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believe in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

**Discussion:** When we celebrate Christmas, we often say that we are celebrating Jesus' birthday. What makes Jesus' birthday such a special birthday?

Why did Jesus come to earth as a baby, live as a man, and die on the cross? Who did Jesus come for?

Jesus was born to be Immanuel, God with us, on Earth – but He wasn't just born to be born. He was born so that He could live, teach others about God, and then take our sins upon Him and die on the cross, to be raised again – all so that we (you, me, and every person on Earth) might be able to know Him and have eternal life.

Note to parents: If your child has not accepted Christ as his or her savior, this is a great opportunity to offer the opportunity to do so – but don't pressure him or her.

**Prayer:** God, we thank you that on Christmas we get to celebrate the birthday of Your son, Jesus. We know that His birthday is special, because without Jesus, we could not live forever with You in heaven. Thank you for giving us Your son, and for the most important birthday of all. Amen.

Wednesday, December 1

**Verse:** "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:17-18)

**Discussion:** God is talking to Abraham in these verses. Do you know who the descendant of Abraham is that this verse refers to? I'll give you a hint: there is only ONE person who can bless all the nations of the earth. That's right, it's Jesus! Abraham's obedience to God was part of God's big plan that led to Christmas, the day Jesus was born. There were 42 generations between Abraham and Jesus - that's a long time, but they are part of the same family. When we follow Jesus as our savior, we become part of God's family, too.

Can we help bless the nations? How do we do that? (Topics for discussion - prayer, missionaries, serving God, telling other people about Jesus).

**Prayer:** Lord, it is amazing that You have given us a way to be part of Your family! Thank you for Jesus' family who followed You and helped prepare the way for Him to come to us. We pray right now for all of the missionaries who are helping to share Your love and blessing with all the people of the earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thursday, December 2

**verse:** "You who bring good news to Zion,  
go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with a shout,  
lift it up, do not be afraid;  
say to the towns of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.

He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;

he gently leads those that have young." (Isaiah 40:9-11)

**Discussion:** One of the Christmas songs we sing is called "Go Tell it on the Mountain". What do these verses tell us to shout from the mountain? How is Jesus like a shepherd?

**Prayer:** Lord, we are so glad that Christmas is a time when there are so many ways we can share the good news of Your son with the world! Help us remember to share that news through our actions as we prepare for Christmas - whether it is being patient in busy crowds or in the simple ways we share Your love every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday, December 3

**Verse:** "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." (Luke 1:76-79)

**Discussion:** This verse is a prophecy about John the Baptist. What does it tell us that he was going to do? John the Baptist was preparing for Jesus. If we are preparing our hearts for Jesus during Advent, what are some things you can do to prepare your heart? How do we get ready for Jesus while we are getting ready for Christmas?

**Prayer:** God, at Christmas we sing "Let every heart prepare Him room". Help us prepare our hearts for the love and forgiveness of Christ as we get ready for Christmas. If there are things in our hearts that need forgiveness, we give those to You now. Help us to share Jesus with the world, so that others can know about forgiveness, salvation, and God's tender mercy, just as John the Baptist did when he helped prepare the way for Jesus so long ago. Amen.

**Saturday, December 4**

**Verse:** "I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;  
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known  
through all generations.

I will declare that your love stands firm forever,  
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.  
You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,  
I have sworn to David my servant,  
'I will establish your line forever  
and make your throne firm through all generations.'" (Psalm  
89-14)

**Discussion:** The Psalm for today talks about God's promise to His people. When God sent us Jesus, He was keeping His promise! Is it hard to keep a promise? How do you feel when someone breaks a promise? What about when someone keeps an important promise?

**Prayer:** God, thank you! Thank you for keeping Your promise to Your people. Thank you that Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of Your promise and that He reigns forever! Help us to remember that promises are serious and to keep our own promises, just like You do for us. In Jesus' name, Amen!

**Activity:** Together, think of a new Advent or Christmas tradition for your family to start. Then do it!



*Second week of Advent – the Bethlehem Candle*

*Light the first and second candles in your Advent wreath this week.*

*Theme song: "O, Little Town of Bethlehem"*

**Sunday, December 5**

**Verse:** "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)

**Discussion:** This verse prophesies where Jesus will be born. What else do you know about where Jesus was born? What do you think Bethlehem was like 2000 years ago? Where were you born?

Bethlehem 2000 years ago was much smaller than it is today. Jesus was born in a stable – a dirty, probably smelly place, not like the hospitals most of us were born in!

Does it surprise you that the Son of God was born in such humble circumstances? Why do you think God chose to have Jesus born in a small town to a poor family, instead of in a big city, with rich rulers as parents?

**Prayer:** Lord, we thank You that we don't have to come from fancy or important places for You to love us and use us. Thank You for preparing a place for Jesus to be born in, just as You have prepared a place for us. We praise You for all You have done! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, December 6

**Verse:** In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:26-35)

**Discussion:** Wow! Can you imagine being Mary and being told you were going to be the mom of the son of God? How do you think she felt? How do you think her life might have changed after this news? Have you ever had news that changed your life?

**Prayer:** God, we're so glad that You call even ordinary people to do great things for You! Thank you for Mary's willing heart. Help our hearts to be willing to serve You so that You can be glorified! Amen.

Tuesday, December 7

**Verse:** This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. (Matthew 1:18-23)

**Discussion:** How do you think Joseph felt after the angel spoke to him? Is it sometimes hard to do the right thing? Discuss.

**Prayer:** Let your children lead the prayer tonight!

Wednesday, December 8

**Verse:** "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child." (Luke 2:1-5)

**Discussion:** This Sunday at church we lit the Bethlehem candle. This candle represents where Jesus was born and the journey Mary and Joseph took to get there. Mary and Joseph made a difficult trip to Bethlehem and were also on a spiritual journey of faith, as they followed God even when it was hard. Is there anything you'd like to do that would be a next step in your journey of faith?

**Prayer:** Jesus, we know that sometimes it is not easy to follow You. We thank you that Mary and Joseph were faithful even following when it got hard. Help us to have the strength to take the next step when the going gets tough. Thank you for guiding our path.  
Amen.

Thursday, December 9

**Verse:** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:6-7)

**Discussion:** There was no place prepared for Jesus to be born, so he was born in a stable. Does your family do anything special to prepare for special guests? What would you do to prepare for Jesus if you knew He was coming? Would you do something differently than you do for other guests?

**Prayer:** Lord, as we anxiously wait for Christmas, I pray You would help us prepare our hearts for You. While we are busy getting our homes ready for the holidays, help us clean up the messes in our hearts as well. Amen.



Friday, December 10

**Verse:** "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:5-9)

**Discussion:** Just like God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus and Bethlehem to be the place where Jesus was born, God has also chosen you! He wants everyone to believe in Jesus so that we can live with Him forever. When children are adopted into a family, they are chosen by their parents to be in their family forever. When we follow God, it is like being adopted into God's family! We chose to follow him, but He also chooses to forgive us and love us. What an amazing gift it is to be chosen by God! He also chooses people to serve Him in special ways. He chose Mary and Joseph to take care of Jesus. Is there a way you feel like God might be asking you to serve Him? What are some praises you have for God?

**Prayer:** God, we praise You for all the great things You have done! We praise You for sending us Jesus. We praise You for the many blessings in our lives! As we look forward to Christmas, let us be thankful that You have chosen us to be part of Your family. Thank you for the families we have here, too. We pray that when You choose us to serve You in special ways, we will say "yes!" Amen.

**Saturday, December 11**

**Verse:** “‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:

The LORD Our Righteous Savior.” (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

**Discussion:** In the Bible, there are lots of images, or word pictures, used to describe something. When this passage talks about a “righteous Branch sprout from David’s line” it is actually talking about a person. Do you remember when we talked about Abraham’s descendants last week? One of those descendants was David. And one of David’s descendants was ... Jesus! Jesus is the righteous Branch. The name “Jesus” means “Savior” – just as the verse says.

Can you think of other times in the Bible where word pictures are used? Do you know the meaning of your name?

**Prayer:** Lord, we are amazed when we see all of the places in the Bible where it shows part of Your plan for Jesus’ birth! From His name to where He was born, it is all there for us to read. Thank you for your perfect plan. Help us to follow Your plan for our own lives. Amen.



### Third week of Advent – the Shepherd's Candle

Light the first, second, and third candles in your Advent wreath this week.

Theme song: "While By My Sheep I watched At Night" or "We Three Kings" (Not familiar with "While by My Sheep?" – check out Veggie Tales!)

## Sunday, December 12

**Verse:** "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.<sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.<sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.<sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:8-12)

**Discussion:** Shepherds in a field were the first people to hear the news of Jesus' birth. This morning at church, we lit the Shepherd's Candle. Imagine you are a poor shepherd, and on a cold night, an angel appeared to you! How would you feel? Excited? Afraid?

Do you think it is important that the first people to hear the news and to come worship the newborn King were not rich people, famous people, or rulers?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we thank You that You were born for everyone, including me. We are so glad for the miracle of Your birth, and that even shepherds got to rejoice and worship! We also remember that being born for everyone also means You died for everyone, too. Thank You, Lord! Amen.

Monday, December 13

**Verse:** "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." (Luke 2:16-20)

**Discussion:** Something important happened after the shepherds went to see Jesus. What do you think that was? They praised God, yes; but they did something else as well. The shepherds told other people about Jesus! Have you ever told someone about Jesus? Talk about what that was like. Were you excited or nervous? The shepherds were so amazed; they couldn't help but share the good news of the newborn savior! Think of someone you would like to tell about Jesus. At Christmas, it's easy to talk about what Christmas is about – maybe you have a friend you can tell this week!

**Prayer:** God, we thank You for the reminder the shepherds give us – to share the excitement of our savior with people! We all have friends or family who don't know about Jesus. Help us find ways to tell others about You. Amen.

Tuesday, December 14

**Verse:** "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:14-15)

**Discussion:** We know that God first shared the good news of Jesus' birth with shepherds in the field. Why does Jesus call Himself the "good shepherd" in this verse from John? What does it mean to be one of his sheep?

Jesus knows and cares about each one of us. No matter what happens, He will always be there to look after us. He laid down His life by dying on the cross for each one of His sheep. The Bible tells us that "we like sheep have gone astray". This means that just a like a sheep that gets lost, we sometimes lose our way and sin. But even when that happens, Jesus is there for us, ready to rescue us from our sin.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we are so glad that there is nothing we can do and no place we can go that will take us away from Your loving care and forgiveness. We confess that sometimes we go astray, just like sheep do. Thank you for giving us a Good Shepherd to guide us and rescue us. Amen.

Wednesday, December 15

**Verse:** "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

(Matthew 25:35-40)

**Discussion and activity:** One Advent tradition is to make a bed for the Baby Jesus by doing kind things for others. Your family can do that, too! Use a small box or basket for the bed and strips of paper for straw. For each kind thing one of you does for friends and family, you place one piece of straw in the bed.

By Christmas Eve, hopefully you will fill the manger for Jesus because of your kindness to others! Discuss ideas of things you can do to help others as a way of showing God's love.

(December 15, continued)

**Prayer:** Lord, help us remember that when we help others, we are serving You. At Christmas, help us keep in mind ways we can help others. We know that for some, Christmas can be a lonely or sad time of year. Bring those people to our minds, and help us reach out to them to make their days brighter and their Christmas merry. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Thursday, December 16

**Verse:** "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.

"When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.'" (Matthew 2:1-6)

**Discussion:** Why do you think King Herod was so worried when he heard about Jesus? We know that Jesus was the King of Kings - but that meant more than being a king on earth like King Herod. If you were Herod and heard about Jesus, what would you have done? We'll learn more about him tomorrow!

**Activity:** A fun craft you can eat! To represent the star the Magi saw, put yellow frosting on two graham crackers and stick them together in the shape of a star. Decorate your star with three candies

or marshmallows to represent the three Magi. Then enjoy your symbolic snack!

**Prayer:** Father, we know that You placed the star in the sky that helped guide the wise men to worship Jesus. Thank you for their faithfulness in following that star. Help us to be faithful as we follow Jesus every day of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Friday, December 17

**Verse:** "Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

"After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route." (Matthew 2:7-12)

**Discussion:** After Jesus was born, the shepherds weren't the only ones to go and worship Him. The Magi, or "wise men" as you might know them, had heard about Jesus and saw the star. They had a long way to walk though, and Jesus probably wasn't even a baby anymore by the time they arrived- he might have been two years old! The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. If you were to give Jesus a gift for Christmas, what would it be? Have everyone in your family talk about what gift they might give Jesus. You could even

write them on paper ornaments and hang them on your Christmas tree as a reminder.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, at Christmas, it's so easy to think about presents. Tonight, let us think about the gift You gave us in Jesus, and help us to give Him our hearts, our love, and our faithfulness, this Christmas and always. Amen.

Write your gift to Jesus on the ornament below.



**Saturday, December 18**

**Verse:** "Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth

and thick darkness is over the peoples,

but the LORD rises upon you

and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light,

and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (Isaiah 60:1-3)

**Discussion:** Jesus came to be the light of the world. At Christmas, there are lots of things we do that represent the light of Christ, like lighting these Advent candles. There is a tradition that says that the lights on our Christmas trees, (people used candles for before there was electricity), represent the light of Christ that came into the world when He was born. What are some other things that we use at Christmas that represent Christ? Are there any special ornaments on your tree? What about your nativity scene?

**Prayer:** Jesus, we know that even in the darkest of nights, Your light can shine. You are the light of the world! Help us to be lights for You in a dark world. In this season of Advent, help others to see Your light shining in the midst of all the hustle, bustle, and things that might distract us from You. In Your Holy name, Amen.



*Fourth week of Advent – the Angel’s Candle*

*Light all four candles in your Advent wreath this week. If your wreath has a Christ candle, save it for Christmas Eve.*

*Theme song: “Angels We Have Heard On High”*

**Sunday, December 19**

**Verse:** "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'" (Luke 2:  
13-14)

**Discussion:** This morning, we lit the Angel's Candle at church in the Advent wreath. There are lots of angels in the Christmas story - angels spoke to Mary, to Joseph, and angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. The angel candle represents God's love as He shared the good news of the savior's birth with the world.

How would you announce the birth of Jesus to the world? Would you shout from the rooftops or send out a printed announcement and invitation? Talk with your family about ways you could share the news about Jesus.

**Prayer:** Lord, there are so many miracles we see surrounding the birth of Jesus. Thank you for the amazing way You shared the news with the Shepherds, and for Your Word that shares it with us. Let us go out and share the good news with others! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, December 20

**Verse:** "A voice of one calling:

'In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;

the rough ground shall become level,

the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isaiah 40:3-5)

**Discussion:** It's almost Christmas – in just a few days, we will be rejoicing as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ! Are you prepared? What else do you need to do to make your heart ready for Christmas?

Today would be a good day to do a special family activity to help keep focused on Christ as Christmas draws near. You could bake a birthday cake and sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. You could watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and listen when Linus tells Charlie Brown about the true meaning of Christmas. Or you could go Christmas caroling, and share Christ's love with your neighbors!

**Prayer:** Let your children pray for Christ to be shared with their friends and neighbors.

Tuesday, December 21

**Verse:** "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:9-14)

**Discussion:** What beautiful verses that tell us about Jesus coming into the world. Do you think it was surprising to people that the Messiah, the Savior, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords came to earth as a baby? The Light of the World looked just like you or me when we were babies - tiny and helpless. Some recognized Him and worshiped Him, but many did not. He came for all, though - and all we have to do is believe!

**Prayer:** God, sometimes you surprise us in how you work! What an amazing gift You gave to us when You sent us Your son, as a little baby, who grew into a man, who died for us. We believe, Lord! Thank You for Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, December 22

**Verse:** "Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things;  
his right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.

The LORD has made his salvation known  
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

He has remembered his love  
and his faithfulness to Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God." (Psalm 98:1-3)

**Discussion:** Jesus' birth, life, death on the cross, and resurrection are all ways that God has "made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations." When Jesus was born to be our savior, it meant that God was faithful to what He had promised. This psalm talks about singing a song to the Lord. Tonight, sing a Christmas song together to praise the Lord for sending us His son!

**Prayer:** Make your song your prayer tonight. Whatever song you choose, really think about the words that you sing. Some Christmas songs that make great prayers are "Joy to the World" and "O, Holy Night". Pick your family favorite!

Thursday, December 23

From now until Christmas, we are going to read through the Christmas story from beginning to end. We have talked about many of these verses before, but now let's listen to them again as we begin our Christmas celebrations over the next couple of days.

For your discussions on these days, allow children to share their favorite parts of the Christmas story and to ask any questions they may have. Pray together as a family as you feel led.

**Verse:** This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: "His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means "God with us").

"When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." (Matthew 1:18-24)

**Activity and prayer:** If your family received Christmas cards this year, take a moment to pray for the people who sent them. Pray for their families, their health, and that they might know Christ if they do not already.



Friday, December 24

If you have a fifth candle in your Advent wreath, tonight light that candle, the Christ Candle. The wreath is at its brightest now as the light of Christ shines into the world at the celebration of His birth. You may wish to dim the lights in the room as you light the candles this evening, so that it is the light of Christ that is emphasized.

**Verse:** "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." (Luke 2:1-7)

**Activity:** End your Advent devotional time tonight by softly singing together "Silent Night".

Saturday, December 25

Merry Christmas! May you be blessed this day as you celebrate the birth of our savior with your family! Keep Christ at the center of your hearts and homes on this day.

**verse:** "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'

"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said

to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." (Luke 2:8-20)

Have a most Merry and Blessed Christmas!

