



FAMILY ADVENT GUIDE 2021

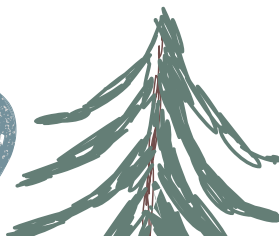
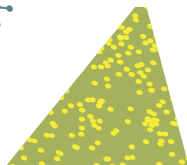
Lifeway™ kids

Merry Christmas from Lifeway Kids!

Hope, love, joy, and peace are a few of the good gifts God has given us. During Advent, we celebrate Jesus coming to earth as a baby, making the way for these gifts to be experienced. Our prayer is that your family can use this guide to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth and the hope and joy He offers.

Each weekly devotion is designed to lead your family to open their Bibles, discuss the Bible passage, pray together, and create special memories that strengthen your hope, joy, love, and peace with God and with others. Make your family's Advent time even more meaningful by using the weekly Family Connection Cards. Go deeper in family conversations and search out additional Scripture verses, or utilize the extra verses throughout the week at daily family prayer times.

Use these devotions, activities, and worship songs to help your family worship Jesus this Christmas. He is the gift we proclaim. Let's celebrate!



Week 1:

HOPE

DISCUSS

What comes to your mind when you think about the word *hope*?

When we think about hope, we might say, "I hope to get a new video game for Christmas" or "I hope it snows this year on Christmas Eve." In those cases, we don't know if what we are hoping for will really happen. We have no control over the outcome. But when the Bible talks about hope, there is a certainty, not because of what we hope for, but because of Who we hope in. The Bible teaches us that we can hope in God.

The Old Testament tells us many of God's promises from prophets (special messengers) who often told about God's promises. There is a special word we use for God's plans and promises that are told to us in the Bible. Do you know what that word is? (Allow time for responses.) Prophecy. God used prophecy, like the verses we are about to read, to share His plans and promises to give people hope. God wanted His people to know that He was in control, He had a plan, and He was with them.

READ

Read Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6.

EXPLAIN

Throughout all of history, God has never left His people hopeless. God promised to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and make a way for us to be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! When we read through the prophecies of the Old Testament and then see how God kept His promises when we read the New Testament, we know we can trust God to keep all of 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.

SING OF HOPE

Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

"The First Noel"

More Bible verses about hope:

Romans 5:2-5; 1 Timothy 4:10; Psalm 33:20-22; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:3

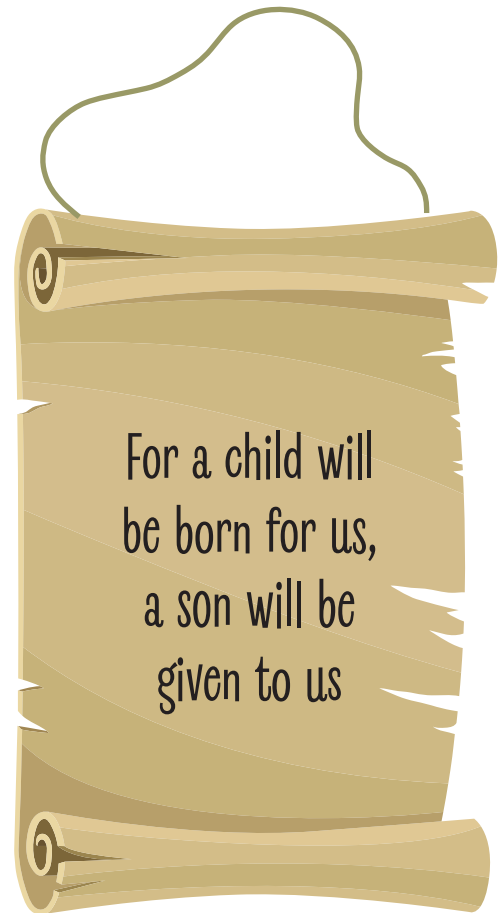
SCROLL ORNAMENT

You will need:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Tan crayon
- Glue
- Pen or marker
- Twine
- Dowel rods (1/8-inch diameter)

Directions:

- Cut paper into a small rectangle, approximately 3 inches wide and 6 inches long. Crumple the paper. Then, smooth it out and rub one side with a tan crayon to “age” the scroll.
- Read Isaiah 9:6. Write the first part of the verse on the scroll. (*For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us*)
- Cut the dowel rods into 3-inch pieces. Glue each short end of the paper strip around the stick. Tie twine to each end of the top stick.
- Hang the ornament in your home to remind your family that God fulfilled His promise when Jesus was born.



DISCUSS

Show your family some modern pictures of Bethlehem. Discuss what Bethlehem may have looked like during the time Jesus was born.

Explain that Bethlehem was a small town, but God planned for it to be a very important place in the story of how He showed His love for people. After about 400 years of silence (between the Book of Malachi and the New Testament), Bethlehem was the place God chose to take the next step in showing His unending love to people.

READ

Read Luke 2:1-7.

EXPLAIN

It was in Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph, Jesus' earthly parents, welcomed Jesus into the world. They had traveled to Bethlehem because the law said that Joseph had to go to his hometown to be counted in a census. First John 4:9 says that "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him." God sent the gift of Jesus into the world to be born in the town of Bethlehem to demonstrate His deep and everlasting love for us.

PRAY

Praise God for sending the gift of love to us through Jesus. Acknowledge that He knows every detail of the story for His people, even the small town where the Savior would be born. Thank Him for this Advent season to reflect and rejoice that love has come to us.

SING OF HOPE

Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

More Bible verses about love:

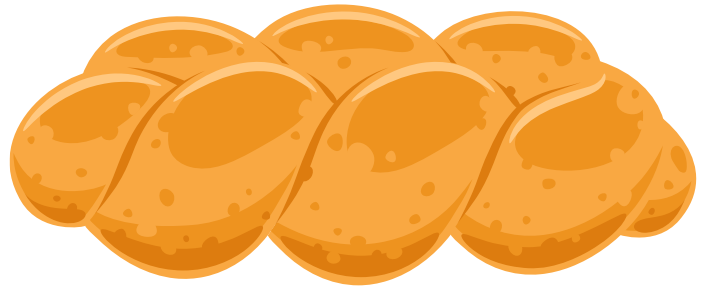
John 3:16-17; John 13:34; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



BAKE BETHLEHEM BREAD

You will need:

- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup and 2 T whole milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup shortening
- 1 package yeast
- Egg wash
- Coarse sea salt



Directions:

- Line a baking sheet with a baking mat or lightly grease and set aside.
- Warm milk to room temperature. Mix sugar, salt, and yeast with milk. Whisk until all lumps are gone and the liquid is smooth.
- Sift flour and pour into a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and pour the yeast mixture into the well. Begin mixing with a wooden spoon until the dough begins to incorporate. Gradually add shortening until it is thoroughly mixed. Knead dough with your hands until it is smooth and firm.
- Remove the dough from the bowl and place on a prepared baking sheet. Cover with a kitchen towel and allow to rise approximately 45 minutes–1 hour.
- After about an hour, cut dough into lemon-sized portions. You should have about 9–10 small portions of dough. Coat each piece of dough with a small amount of shortening to keep the dough moist.
- Cut each piece of dough into two equal pieces and roll the dough with the palms of your hands into two ropes approximately 6 inches long. Press the ends of the two ropes together and braid one on top of the other.
- Starting at one end of your twist, gently roll the dough into a circle. Tuck the ends into the bottom and press gently to mold.
- Cover baking sheets with kitchen towels and allow dough to rise for 3 hours. Brush each roll with egg wash and sprinkle with coarse sea salt. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 15–20 minutes until golden brown.
- Remind your family that *Bethlehem* in Hebrew means “House of Bread.” Share the rolls with a neighbor or friend and pray for that person to experience the love of Jesus this Christmas.

DISCUSS

When was the last time you heard someone tell you something that was exciting? Can you remember the last time someone told you something that was important? Have you ever heard an announcement that made your eyes get really big in surprise?

Today, we are going to read about a really big announcement in the Bible. An announcement is when someone tells something to someone else, usually something that they didn't already know. What kind of announcement do you think we're going to learn about? Something exciting, something important, or something surprising? (Or all three!) Let's read and find out!

READ

Read Luke 2:8-20.

EXPLAIN

What an announcement! This special news didn't come in a way we might expect today, like a text message, email, or letter. No, this important news came directly from an angel from heaven. Can you picture it? Imagine standing outside on a dark night, and suddenly angels appear with exciting news of great joy just for you. How do you think you would feel? The Bible says the shepherds were terrified at first, but their fear quickly turned to joy as they heard the news of the promised Messiah being born.

Did you notice what the Bible said the shepherds did next? They "hurried off" to see Jesus (Luke 2:16). After spending time with Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, the shepherds "reported the message they were told (from the angels) ... and all who heard it were amazed" (Luke 2:17-18). Then they went back to the field "glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard" (Luke 2:20). What an announcement of great joy!

The exciting news of Jesus leads us to respond by joyfully worshiping Him. As we worship Jesus, we will be able to share our excitement about the good news of Jesus with anyone who will listen. What great joy has come into the world!

PRAY

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

SING OF HOPE

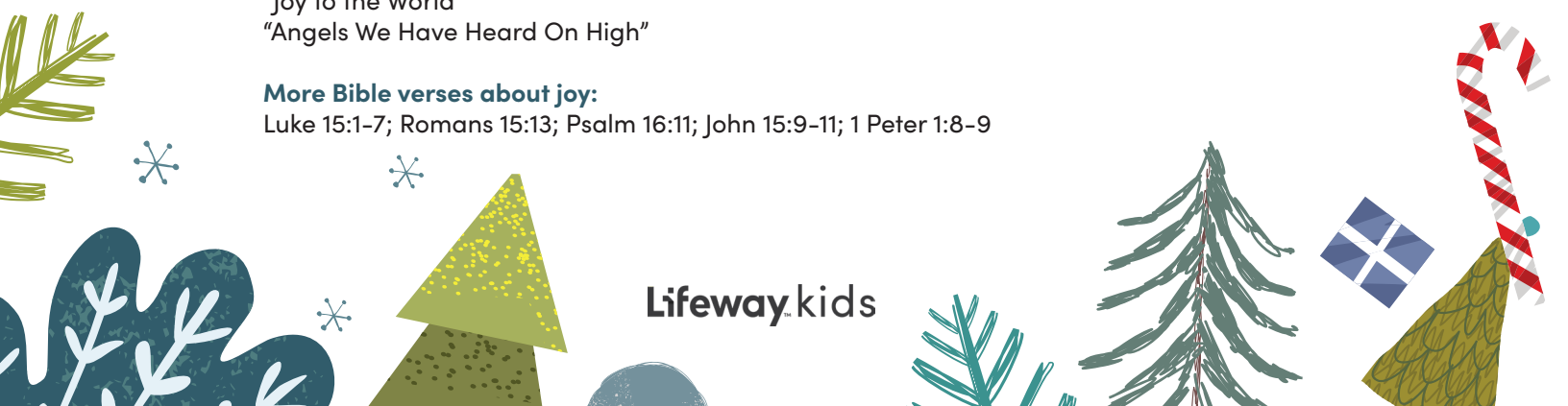
Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"Joy to the World"

"Angels We Have Heard On High"

More Bible verses about joy:

Luke 15:1-7; Romans 15:13; Psalm 16:11; John 15:9-11; 1 Peter 1:8-9



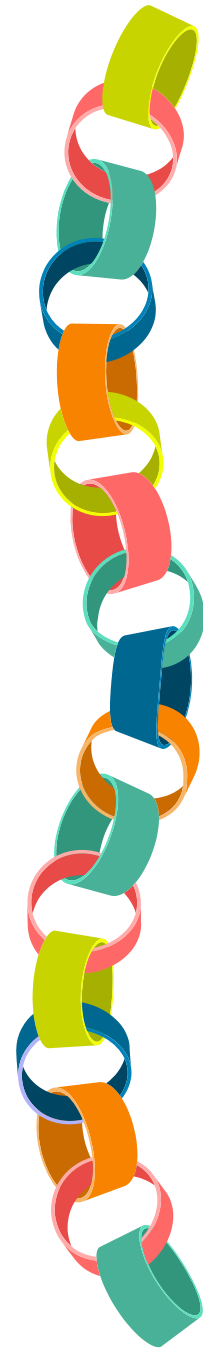
JOY CHAIN

You will need:

- Colorful pieces of construction paper or wrapping paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- Markers

Directions:

- Cut several strips of construction paper or wrapping paper into 1-inch by 8-inch strips.
- Print the name of someone or something that gives you joy. Encourage the youngest family members to draw a picture.
- Attach the strips in a paper chain. Hold the chain as a family and thank God for the things or people listed. Then, hang the chain as garland on your Christmas tree or around your home.



Week 4:

PEACE

DISCUSS

What are some words that come to mind when you think about angels? Where do you think those ideas came from?

Explain that the Bible gives us many examples of angels. Throughout the entire Bible, angels were God's special messengers.

Lead your family to review where they have learned about angels so far during their Advent Bible readings. Remind kids that last week, they read about the host of angels who appeared in the sky and glorified God, saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!" (Luke 2:14).

READ

Read Luke 1:26-33.

EXPLAIN

In the Christmas story, angels played a very special role in announcing the birth of Jesus. When the angel appeared to Mary to tell her she would be Jesus' earthly mother, he told her not to be afraid. He brought a message of peace to Mary. He wanted her to know she was called by God to be the mother of Jesus.

Peace is an important part of Christmas. The Bible verse we studied from week one explained that Jesus would be the Prince of Peace. (See Isaiah 9:6.) Jesus is our peace, and He came to bring us the gift of peace. Because of our sin, the Bible says we are separated from God (Romans 3:23). But God sent Jesus to provide the way for us to be brought back to Him by receiving God's love. Then we will be at peace with Him (Romans 5:1). It was God's love that brought Jesus into the world as a baby. Just like the angels, it is important that we worship Jesus and tell others about His birth and the peace He offers.

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 this Advent season.

SING OF HOPE

Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

More Bible verses about peace:

John 14:27; Isaiah 53:5; Colossians 3:12-15; Philippians 4:4-8

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

You will need:

- Decorative box or basket
- Christmas cards

Directions:

- Gather the Christmas cards your family has received so far this season and put them in a basket (or decorate a box). For the next several weeks, pull out a Christmas card and pray for the person or family who sent it to you. Pray that they will feel the peace and joy of Jesus' coming throughout the year.



DISCUSS

Why do we celebrate Christmas? Is there anything different that we do as Christians to celebrate than people who don't believe or trust in Jesus? (Allow your family to respond and discuss why you have these different celebrations.)

Christmas is a wonderful day for our family! Today is a special day because it is a day that we pause to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Long before Jesus was born, God had a plan to send His Son into the world to rescue us from our sins. The Bible tells us that Jesus came to bring light and life to everyone who trusts in Him.

READ

Read John 1:1-5.

EXPLAIN

We know that darkness and light cannot exist in the same place. Wherever there is light, there cannot be darkness. The Bible sometimes uses the word darkness when talking about people who do not follow Jesus, as in "they are walking in darkness." But Jesus is the light of the world who came to take away the darkness. (See John 8:12, 1 John 1:5.)

This Advent season, we have learned about the prophecies of Jesus' coming that gave hope to God's people. God always keeps His promises. We discovered the place where God first displayed His love to the world—Bethlehem—and the people He chose to fulfill His promise, Mary and Joseph. We know that when the shepherds heard the news of great joy that Jesus was born, they rejoiced and praised God. Then, we discovered how God made the way for true peace to come into the world through Jesus from the message of the angels.

Today, we celebrate the gift of Jesus, the promised Savior God sent for us. Jesus is called Immanuel. Do you remember what that name means? (God with 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 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 gift ever! Today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world, we pray for His light to be seen in our lives as we worship Him.

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.

SING OF HOPE

Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"Silent Night"

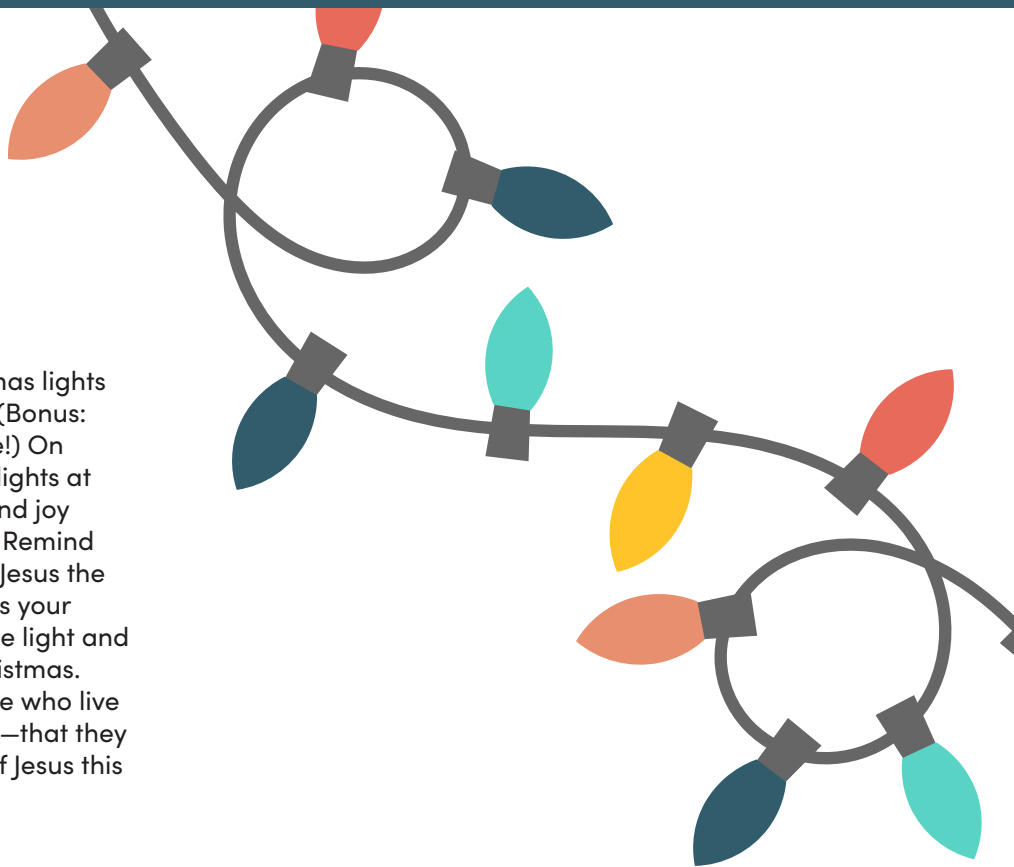
"Joy to the World"

More Bible verses about Jesus:

John 8:12; Matthew 4:16; John 12:46; 2 Corinthians 4:6

THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS

Drive around to look at Christmas lights and listen to Christmas music. (Bonus: Take along some hot chocolate!) On your drive, talk about how the lights at Christmas often bring peace and joy to the people who enjoy them. Remind your family that the Bible calls Jesus the Light of the world. Discuss ways your family can share with others the light and hope that Jesus brings this Christmas. Consider praying for the people who live in some of the homes you pass—that they would know the light and life of Jesus this Christmas.



Family Connection Cards:

Week 1: Hope

Rejoice in hope. Romans 12:12a

DISCUSS

Did everything God said about Jesus' birth come true?
How does Jesus give us hope?
What are some reasons it might be hard to trust and hope in God?

More Bible verses about hope:

Romans 5:2-5; 1 Timothy 4:10; Psalm 33:20-22;
Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:3



Week 2: Love

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

DISCUSS

Why is it important to think about love at Christmastime?
How have we seen God love our family?
Who is someone we can show love to during Christmas?
How?

More Bible verses about love:

John 3:16-17; John 13:34; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39;
1 Corinthians 13:4-7



Week 3: Joy

Sing for joy to God our strength. Psalm 81:1a

DISCUSS

What is something that brings you joy at Christmastime?
How does joy help us worship God?
What can our family do this Christmas to share the big announcement of Jesus with others, like the shepherds did?

More Bible verses about joy:

Luke 15:1-7; Romans 15:13; Psalm 16:11; John 15:9-11;
1 Peter 1:8-9



Week 4: Peace

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. John 14:27a

DISCUSS

What does it mean to have peace?
Why is it important to believe that Jesus gives us peace?
What can we remember is true about Jesus when we feel afraid?

More Bible verses about peace:

Isaiah 53:5; Colossians 3:12-15; Philippians 4:4-8;
John 14:27



Christmas Day: Jesus

I am the light of the world. John 8:12b

DISCUSS

Why is it important that we celebrate the birth of Jesus?
Why does the Bible call Jesus "the light of the world?"
How can our family share the good news about Jesus with others?

More Bible verses about Jesus:

Matthew 4:16; John 12:46; 2 Corinthians 4:6;
John 1:1-5



Merry Christmas from Lifeway Kids!

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