



ADVENT

challenge



Advent means 'arrival'. In this case, our practice of Advent is about reflecting on the most important arrival this world has ever seen - that of Jesus Christ. For four weeks, we will join Christ-followers from around the world in celebrating the impact of the birth of a baby born two thousand years ago. The readings and challenges that follow are a guide designed to help you encounter the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth and join in the anticipation of His second advent, when He will return to reunite the Heavens and the Earth for all time.

Family Activity

If completing the Advent Challenge with children, the Saturday activity of each week is especially designed for you. To complete the activity, you'll need to prepare a little bit. Wrap four simple boxes with these items inside:

Week 1: A paper with the word 'Hope', a smaller wrapped present that your family will enjoy, mittens

Week 2: A paper with the word 'Peace', white and yellow paper, a black marker, glue

Week 3: A paper with the word 'Love', paper, markers or crayons

Week 4: A paper with the word 'Joy', a bluetooth speaker

As a family, you will see how God's gifts culminated in and came from the best gift of all, the birth of Jesus.

Take it Further

We heavily recommend *Worship in the Word Christmas* (by Shane and Shane) which can be found on RightNow Media. If you don't currently have an account, register for a free one at ccw.church/rightnow-media.

The Advent Challenge has been adapted from :

Youversion: ***Advent Reflections*** by the BibleProject

Lifeway ***2023 Family Advent Guide***

DAY ONE: DECEMBER 3RD

Read: Romans 15:13

Act: Watch *Hope Advent Word Study* at bibleproject.com.

Reflect: When you consider the word 'hope' what comes to mind?

DAY TWO: DECEMBER 4TH

Read: Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 - 7

Act: Family Activity (see below)

Reflect: What do the names that Jesus is given in these passages mean? What are some other titles you would give to Jesus?

DAY THREE: DECEMBER 5TH

Read: Psalm 39:1 - 7

Reflect: What have you placed your hope in outside of God? How have you seen those hopes fall short?

DAY FOUR: DECEMBER 6TH

Read: Hebrews 10:23

Act: Write an encouragement card to another person in which you share one of God's promises.

Reflect: What does it mean to you that God always keeps His word?

DAY FIVE: DECEMBER 7TH

Read: Micah 7:6 - 8

Act: Jump on RightNow Media and watch the video titled *Advent 1 - Hope*.

Reflect: What challenges are you facing right now that you need to seek God's hope in?

DAY SIX: DECEMBER 8TH

Read: 1 Peter 1:3 - 5, 3:15

Act: Share the hope that you have in Jesus with someone else today.

Reflect: How can you express your hope in praise to God throughout the day?

DAY SEVEN: DECEMBER 9TH

Read: Romans 8:22 - 30; Revelation 22:12 - 13

Act: 'Maranatha' is a Greek word that means 'come quickly'. The final promise of Jesus is that He is doing just that: returning to this earth soon. Take some time to prayerfully bring these words before God: 'Maranatha, come quickly Lord Jesus!'

Reflect: What would it look like for you to have a hope in the return of Jesus to this earth?



Family Activity Mitten Unwrapping



Place a present your family will enjoy inside a box and wrap it. Gather a pair of mittens and a timer. If you have preteens, use cooking mittens to increase the challenge.

Explain that each family member will have 10 seconds to attempt to unwrap the package while wearing the mittens. At the end of time, the next family member gets a chance. The game continues until the package is completely unwrapped. After the game, talk about what it was like to wait and hope you would be the one to open the present.

DAY EIGHT: DECEMBER 10TH

Read: Numbers 6:24 - 26

Act: Watch *Peace Advent Word Study* at bibleproject.com.

Reflect: What comes to mind when you think of the word 'peace'?

DAY NINE: DECEMBER 11TH

Read: Luke 1:28 - 33; John 14:27

Act: Family Activity (see below)

Reflect: How can God bring peace to us in the midst of our fears?

DAY TEN: DECEMBER 12TH

Read: Matthew 5:9

Reflect: What does it mean to be a 'Peace-maker'? Who do you know that models peacemaking?

DAY ELEVEN: DECEMBER 13TH

Read: Philippians 4:4 - 9

Reflect: Which of the instructions from Paul could be a life-changing habit in your relationship with other people?

DAY TWELVE: DECEMBER 14TH

Read: Colossians 1:19 - 23

Act: Jump on RightNow Media and watch the video titled *Advent 2 - Peace*.

Reflect: How did God go about making peace with a broken world?

DAY THIRTEEN: DECEMBER 15TH

Read: 1 Peter 3:9 - 11

Act: Do a brief inventory of the relationships in your life. List those you need to seek peace with in this season.

Reflect: Who do you need to seek peace and reconciliation with?

DAY FOURTEEN: DECEMBER 16TH

Read: Colossians 3:15; Romans 5:13

Act: Take some time to pray for God's peace to come upon this world. Find a map or globe and pray God's peace over specific locations where you know that there is brokenness, war, and violence (e.g. Israel, Palestine, Myanmar, Ukraine).

Reflect: How might you go about bringing God's Kingdom of peace into this world?



Family Activity Sign of Peace



The dove is a sign of peace. Trace each family member's hand on heavyweight white paper. Cut out each handprint. Draw a small black dot at the top middle portion of the thumb on the cut-out handprint. Cut a small triangle of yellow paper and glue to the thumb near the eye to be the dove's beak. Write the words of John 14:27 on the dove. Be sure to write each person's name and age on their handprint. Use ornament hangers to hang your dove family on your Christmas tree as a sign of the peace that Jesus gives.

DAY FIFTEEN: DECEMBER 17TH

Read: 1 John 4:19

Act: Watch *Love Advent Word Study* at bibleproject.com.

Reflect: When have you experienced sacrificial love in your life?

DAY SIXTEEN: DECEMBER 18TH

Read: Luke 2:1 - 7

Act: Family Activity (see below)

Reflect: When is a time that you have experienced a lack of love? What do you think that Joseph and Mary were feeling on the day of Jesus' birth?

DAY SEVENTEEN: DECEMBER 19TH

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4 - 9; John 13:34 - 35

Action: Find a doorframe in your house and write the words 'God is love' on it as a constant reminder.

Reflect: What reminders do you have in your life to love deeply?

DAY EIGHTEEN: DECEMBER 20TH

Read: John 15:9 - 15

Reflect: How is knowing and believing God's love for us a process? What have been the hurdles for you along the way?

DAY NINETEEN: DECEMBER 21ST

Read: Romans 8:31 - 39

Act: Jump on RightNow Media and watch the video titled *Advent 3 - Love*.

Reflect: How have you seen God's love overcoming obstacles in your own life?

DAY TWENTY: DECEMBER 22ND

Read: 1 John 4:7 - 12

Reflect: What is the relationship between love and obedience? Where are you failing to show Jesus' love by a lack of obedience?

DAY TWENTYONE: DECEMBER 23RD

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 7

Act: In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul gives a beautiful picture of love. Take time to write verses 4 - 7 on a notecard, replacing the word 'love' with your name (e.g. 'Josh is patient, Josh is kind').

Reflect: Which trait of love do you need to grow in this Christmas season?



Family Activity Cards of Love



Since God shows us eternal love, we should show this love to others as well. Christmas is the perfect time to show God's love to others in your community. Help your child think of a few people that you could deliver cards to this Christmas season. It could be people you know, or it could be the folks at your local retirement home or homeless shelter.

On the front of each card help your child write out John 3:16. On the inside encourage your child to draw a picture or write a note such as "God loves you. Merry Christmas!" (If your child is a pre-reader, have them trace letters using colorful crayons.) Deliver the cards as a family.

DAY TWENTYTWO: DECEMBER 24TH

Read: Philippians 4:4

Act: Watch *Joy Advent Word Study* at bibleproject.com.

Reflect: When have you experienced overwhelming joy?

DAY TWENTYTHREE: DECEMBER 25TH

Read: Luke 2:8 - 20

Act: Family Activity (see below)

Reflect: How would you express your joy if you were one of the shepherds on that first Christmas?

DAY TWENTYFOUR: DECEMBER 26TH

Read: Psalm 19:7 - 11; Genesis 3:1 - 7

Reflect: What temporary pleasures have you chosen over the perfect joy that God offers?

DAY TWENTYFIVE: DECEMBER 27TH

Read: Matthew 5:11 - 12; Hebrews 12:1 - 3

Reflect: How can joy be sustained even in the midst of pain and threatening circumstances?

DAY TWENTYSIX: DECEMBER 28TH

Read: 1 Peter 1:3 - 9

Reflect: How have you seen the redemptive promise of Jesus in your own life?

DAY TWENTYSEVEN: DECEMBER 29TH

Read: Psalm 145

Act: Jump on RightNow Media and watch the video titled *Advent 4 - Joy*.

Reflect: How can you share the joy that you have been given?

DAY TWENTYEIGHT: DECEMBER 30TH

Read: Isaiah 51:11; Isaiah 49:13; Psalm 118:24

Act: Write a thank you note to God listing the blessings that you have experienced this advent season. Hang this note in a place that you will see it daily (e.g. your fridge, bathroom mirror) as a reminder to choose joy.

Reflect: What are five blessings that you have experienced today?



Family Activity
Choosing Joy



Worshiping together is a special experience for any family. Take some time and worship today as you sing, reflecting on how we can joyfully worship today just as the angels did!

Reading the Christmas story is always a highlight of the day! Have a family member read the Christmas story (Luke 2:1-2:20) while the rest of the family acts it out. Assign each family member to a role: Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the shepherds, and the angels. You can double up on roles, or even have little sheep if your family is large. Add costumes if you're feeling daring. A blanket around Mary's head, a baby doll as Jesus, use whatever you have. Celebrate together when Jesus is born!