

FAMILY ADVENT DEVOTIONS

For Unto Us a Child is Born!

Advent is a great time for us to prepare for Jesus' birth. Since Advent means *coming*, it is the season for remembering Jesus' birth, looking forward to celebrating his coming to earth as our Savior, learning to live our lives by his example, and looking forward to Jesus' coming again.

Celebrating Advent with your family gives us the ability to create our own family traditions, helps us to understand the true meaning of Christmas, allows us to spend more time with our family members, creates a time to do family projects, gives us a chance to share our faith with each other, and gives us a time to focus on reaching out to those in our community who are in need.

The following are devotions and activities for our families that have children from birth through 5th grade. Gather around an advent wreath, light the candle(s), read the scripture lesson and talk about the story, pray the prayer and do the activity together.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT:

**The first week of Advent is for anticipation
and longing for Jesus' coming.**

[Light one purple or blue candle]



Sunday, November 27, 2011

Reading: John 1: 1-5

God created everything, nothing was created except through God. Jesus was the Light that shined through the darkness.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for creating our world for us. Thank you for your son Jesus, who is the Light of the world. Amen.

Activity:

Using Playdoh, create things that God made for us in our world. Let each person share their creation.

Monday, November 28, 2011

Reading: Luke 3:23-38

The ancestors of Jesus were God, Adam... Noah.... Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah... Boaz, Obed, Jesse, ... (everyone is a descendant of Adam)

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for loving us and sending your Son to us. Thank you for the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Boaz, Jesse, and David. Help us to learn from their achievements and mistakes. Thank you for giving us family members that love and care about us. Amen

Activity:

Make a family tree using pictures of all of your relatives. Begin with your immediate family and then add grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

Reading: 1Samuel 16: 1-13

In this story Samuel is disappointed in Saul. Samuel is also afraid that Saul, in a fit of anger, will have him killed. God has a plan. Samuel is to anoint one of Jesse's sons. David is the king chosen by God... not the Jewish people.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the story about David being chosen as king. Thank you for showing us that even children can help by being leaders in our world. Thank you for making us your children through baptism. Thank you for your Son. Amen.

Activity:

Draw a picture of Samuel anointing David and the king of Israel.

Wednesday November 30, 2011

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Israel had been in captivity many times because of their disobedience to God. God had traveled with them out of Egypt as a pillar of fire. Now Isaiah is referring to Jesus as a great light ... the Light of the World.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for your Son. Thank you for Jesus being the Light of the World. Amen.

Activity:

Create a candle for the center piece of your dining room table. Take a white pillar candle and decorate it with sequins and ribbons. Light it at each meal and talk about how the light shines in the darkness of the room. Remind your children that the light of the candle reminds us of God's love for us. 'God loved us and sent his Son.'

Thursday, December 1, 2011**Reading: Isaiah 11:1-5**

Isaiah talks about a green shoot coming out of the stump of Jesse. The shoot will turn into a budding branch. He says that Jesus won't judge by appearances or hearsay. Jesus will judge with justice and mercy.

Prayer:

Dear God, Please help us to remember to treat others with love and respect. Help us to follow your example each day. Amen.

Activity:

Plan to help serve a meal in our homeless shelter. Contact Dr. Karen Adkins' office to set up a time. Plan to play games or read books to the children in the shelter while you are there.

Friday, December 2, 2011**Reading: Isaiah 11: 6-9**

When the prophet Isaiah was telling about the coming of Jesus he said the following things: 'Wolves and sheep will live together in peace and leopards will lie down with the young goats.' Isaiah was talking about how Jesus would bring peace to all people.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to remember that when we are afraid or in trouble, you will give us your peace when we ask. Amen.

Activity:

Draw a picture of leopards with young goats and wolves with sheep.

Saturday, December 3, 2011

Reading: 40:1-7

Isaiah is getting us ready for preparing for Jesus' arrival. He tells us that we are to make the road straight and smooth. The time has come to put everything in order. God's Son is coming and everyone will see Him.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us as we prepare our hearts and lives for the birth of your Son, Jesus. Help us to love as you have taught us to love, Help us to treat others the way you have taught us. Thank you for the gift of your Son. Help us to share His birth just as the shepherds did. Amen.

Activity:

Take out your nativity set and get the stable ready for Mary and Joseph to arrive when there is no room in the inn.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

**The second week of Advent is for preparing
our hearts for Jesus.**

[Light two purple or blue candles]



Sunday, December 4, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 5 - 22

While Zachariah was going about his priestly duties in the Temple the angel Gabriel appears to him and tells him that he has a message from God. When Gabriel tells Zachariah that he and Elizabeth are going to have a child Zachariah laughs and questions the angel saying... "Do you expect me to believe this? My wife and I are old."

Gabriel says to Zachariah... "I am Gabriel, the sentinel of God, sent especially to bring you this glad news. But because you won't believe me, you'll be unable to say a word until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken will come true on time—God's time."

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to remember that all things are possible with you. Help us to learn from the story of Zachariah and Gabriel. Amen.

Activity:

Make a poster that says: All Things Are Possible With God!

Talk about the poster and what it means. Remember that there was another story similar to this one in the Old Testament. The story of Abraham and Sarah and their son Isaac.

Monday, December 5, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 23-25

Elizabeth soon learns that she is going to have a baby that will prepare the way for Jesus. She basically hides from the public for five months enjoying her pregnancy that she thought could never be.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for gifts that are unexpected. Thank you for loving us and for supplying our needs. Amen.

Activity:

Make a special gift or card for someone in your family. Give this gift or card to them when they least expect it.

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 26-38

When Elizabeth is six months pregnant, the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her of God's plan for her life. The angel also tells Mary that her cousin Elizabeth is going to have a baby. Mary willingly follows and accepts God's plan for her.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to be willing to serve you the way that Mary did, trusting that you would keep her in your care. Help us to have servant's hearts toward each other. Amen.

Activity:

Adopt an older person who has no family members living near them to dinner. Create special treats and placemats to make them feel part of your family. Let them know that you are excited about them being in your house as a guest.

Wednesday, December 7, 2011

Reading: Luke 1 : 39-56

Mary goes to visit Elizabeth and tell her what Gabriel said to her.

Much to her surprise, Elizabeth tells her that she knows that she is going to have the Savior of the world. Mary stays for three months before she returns to Nazareth.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to follow Mary's example by taking time to be still and know that you are God. Help us to appreciate the fact that you have loved us and that you sent your Son to us. Amen.

Activity:

Make a 'Thank You' card for God. Be sure to thank Him for His love and for the gift of His Son. Thank Him for making us in His image.

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 57 - 66

At the end of Elizabeth's pregnancy she has a son, just like the angel told Zachariah. Their friends and family kept calling the child Zachariah, after his father, but Elizabeth tells them that his name is to be John. The family argues with Elizabeth telling her that there was no one in the family that had that name. Zachariah asks for a tablet to write on. He writes "His name is to be called John." The minute Zachariah acknowledges the angels message from God he is able to speak again. Everyone realized that God had His hand in John's birth.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to be still and know that you are God. Help us to know that all things are possible with you. Amen

Activity:

Make a cartoon of Zachariah writing on the tablet. Have the speech bubble say... "His name is to John."

Friday, December 9, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 67 - 79

Zachariah begins to prophesy. He tells of the prophets who preached of the Messiah's coming. He tells of God's mercy. He tells of God's promise to Abraham. Then, Zachariah calls John the "Prophet of the Most High." Zachariah says that John will present the offer of salvation to God's people.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to always remember the stories of the prophets

and your promise to Abraham. Help us to remember the stories of David and how you called a young shepherd boy to be King of Israel. Amen.

Activity:

Make sugar cookies that are cut in the shape of stars and crowns. Talk about God's promise to make Abraham the father of nations and how God called David as a young boy to be King.

Saturday, December 10, 2011

Reading: Luke 1: 80

The scripture says that John grew up healthy and spirited, and that he lived in the desert until it was time for him to tell people about Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to tell others of Jesus and God's love for us. Amen.

Activity:

Sing "This Little Light of Mine." Make a special Christmas card for an older Church member. Make sure that you have on the card ... "God loved us and sent His Son."

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

The third week of Advent we rejoice.

[Light two purple or blue candles, and one rose colored candle; or light three purple or blue candles.]



Sunday, December 11, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 1 - 3

A census is ordered by Caesar Augustus and everyone has to be accounted for.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for making me one of your children. Amen

Activity:

Have your children go into their room and make a list of all their possessions. Explain that the Jewish people were considered property of the Romans.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 4 -5

The reading tells us that Joseph takes Mary and they go from Nazareth to Bethlehem because Joseph was descended from David. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Messiah.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to remember your love as we prepare our hearts for your coming. Amen

Activity:

Make a scroll. Have your children pretend to be the soldier who went from town to town announcing the census. Make a fun snack using a tortilla to make scroll sandwiches. Use the fillings of your choice.

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 6 -7

While Joseph and Mary are in Bethlehem it becomes time for Jesus to be born. He is born in a stable and laid in a manger because no one had any room in the inn.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for Jesus coming to earth as a baby. Thank you for helping him to be a child just like me. Amen

Activity:

Have your Family dress up and act out Mary and Joseph going from door to door to find a place to spend the night. They need to say, "Is there any room in the inn?" as they knock on each door in your house.

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 8 - 10

There are shepherds with their sheep in the fields and hillsides of Bethlehem. They are going about their normal routine of setting up the night watches when they are surprised by an angel. The angel tells them not to be afraid.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to know that you keep us safe. Thank you for sending your Son and loving us. Amen

Activity:

Make shepherd's hooks out of Pillsbury bread sticks. Shape them into hooks and sprinkle them with cinnamon and sugar. Bake as directed and then as you eat the hooks, talk about how you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angel.

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 11 - 12

The angel tells the shepherds that this is an announcement for everyone. A Savior has just been born in David's town. He is Master and Messiah. Look for a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the angel that told the shepherds that Jesus came for everyone. Amen

Activity:

Make a poster saying that Jesus came for everyone. Display the poster where you see it everyday through Christmas.

Friday, December 16, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 13 - 14

The angel is joined by a host of angels that from a choir. They sing... "Glory to God in the heavenly heights, peace to all men and women who please him."

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the music of the angelic choir. Thank you for the music about your birth. Amen

Activity:

As you listen to Christmas Carols make angel sugar cookies. Decorate them with sprinkles that shine, and talk about how we can be God's messengers.

Saturday, December 17, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 15 - 16

As the angelic choir goes away the shepherds trust the message that God sent to them and decide to go and find the baby Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to be as trusting as the shepherds were. Help us

always to depend on your words to us. Amen

Activity:

Sometimes it is hard for children to understand that Jesus was not wrapped in a blanket like they have. The cloths that Jesus was wrapped in were strips of cloth. Using toilet paper wrap a doll so that they can understand what the shepherds saw when they came to see Jesus for the first time.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

The fourth week of Advent is to celebrate God's love for us.

[Light three purple or blue and one rose colored candle, and add a white candle to the center of the wreath]



Sunday, December 18, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 17

The shepherds left running to find this baby who is the Savior of the world.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to be as excited about your birth as the shepherds were. Amen

Activity:

Draw a picture of the shepherds running to see the baby Jesus. Put the picture on your refrigerator. Talk about the shepherd's excitement each time you get something out of the refrigerator.

Monday, December 19, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 18

Seeing the baby was believing. The shepherds were so excited that they shared their news with anyone who would listen.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to share the good news of your birth with everyone that we meet. Help us to show everyone your love for us. Amen.

Activity:

Make place cards for your Christmas guests that say, "Jesus is born!" Make them festive and let the children help you set the table

for dinner using the place cards that you all have made.

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 19

Mary, being the young mother of Jesus wanted to remember everything that was happening. The scripture says that “Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself.”

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for mothers who love us. Thank you for all the memories of us that they keep in their hearts. Amen

Activity:

Talk to your children about the fond memories that you have had since they have been born. Show them pictures and talk about the pictures.

Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Reading: Matthew 1:18-21

Joseph was upset when he found out that Mary was going to have a baby before they were married. But the angel told Joseph the baby was a special gift from God to the world and that he needed to help Mary take care of Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for fathers that protect and care for us. Amen

Activity:

Play with play-doh and create your own crèche.

Thursday, December 22, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 20

As the shepherds leave, they run and tell everyone by praising God for everything that they had seen and heard. They knew that everything was just like the angels said it would be.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help us to always share your Son's love for us with all that we meet. Thank you for the gift of your Son. Amen

Activity:

Have your children place Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in your

crèche. Talk about God's love for all of us.

Friday, December 23, 2011

Reading: Luke 2: 25-32

Simeon was the first person to understand that Jesus was born to forgive us, save us, and show us how to be God's children.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the best gift in the world, your Son. Amen

Activity:

Place the shepherds in your crèche. Talk about why the shepherds were so excited to hear the news of Jesus' birth.

Saturday, December 24, 2011

**Come to the Family Christmas Eve
Worship Service at 5 p.m.**

Light the white candle on Christmas Day.

