

LifeWay<sup>®</sup>  
**Kids**

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*Family Advent Guide*





# *Merry Christmas from* **LifeWay Kids**

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Hope, love, joy, and peace are a few of the good gifts God has given to 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 week is divided into sections to guide your family time. Start out by opening your Bibles together as a family and reading the suggested verses. Then use the Discuss section to lead your family to talk about the passages. Pray together as a family. If time allows, have each family member participate in the Family Activity, then sing a Christmas carol together. The Further Reading verses are provided for family reading throughout the following week.

Use these devotions, activities, and worship songs to help your family rest in the hope, love, peace, and joy that only Jesus can bring. He is the gift we proclaim. Let's celebrate!



# Week 1

## HOPE from Prophecy

### READ

Open your Bible to Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 and read these verses aloud.

For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6* CSB®

### DISCUSS

The Old Testament contains many words from prophets 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? Prophecy. God used prophecy, like Isaiah 9:6, to share His plans and promises to give people hope. He wanted them to know that He was in control, He had a plan, and He was with them.

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 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, and we have no control over the outcome. But when the Bible talks about hope, there is a certainty for the outcome. There is confidence in the outcome because God is in control, has revealed His intention, and has the power to make it happen. Hebrews 1:2-3 shows us that God kept His promise to send a Savior.

When we read through the prophecies of the Old Testament and see how God kept His promises, we know we can trust Him to keep all of His promises, including His promise of Jesus' second coming. 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.

# Week 1 HOPE from Prophecy

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### Trim the Tree

#### Items Needed:

- Green poster board
- Thin tinsel garland or yarn
- Hole punch
- Pen or writing utensil

1. Gather a piece of green poster board and cut it into the shape of Christmas tree (as shown).

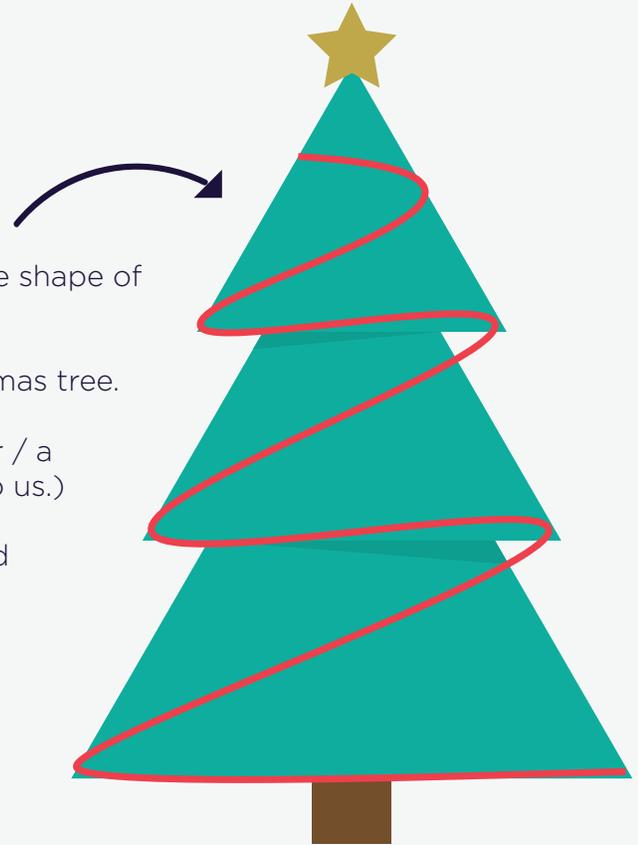
2. Punch holes at the tips of each “branch” on the Christmas tree.

3. Write portions of Isaiah 9:6 at each punched hole. (For / a child / will be / born / for us, / a son / will be / given / to us.)

4. Secure one end of the tinsel garland to the determined starting point. Make sure the garland is long enough to crisscross the tree at each word or phrase of the verse.

5. Lead young children to thread the garland from word (or phrase) to word (or phrase) to complete the verse.

Option: For older kids, create two trees and allow kids to race to see who finishes first.



## 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”

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

## FURTHER BIBLE READING

Genesis 3:14-15; Isaiah 53:4-6; Jeremiah 33:14; Micah 5:2; Hebrews 1:1-3



## Week 2

# LOVE in Bethlehem

### READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:1-7 and read these verses aloud.

Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

*Luke 2:7* CSB®

### DISCUSS

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 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 unfailing love to people.

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. God had promised many years before to show His love through a certain family from Bethlehem. Joseph was from the family of King David. (See Matthew 1:6-16). God also had promised that the Savior would be born of a virgin, so it was important that Mary and Joseph were not married when Mary became pregnant.

The town where Jesus was born, His mother, and His earthly father are all important parts of the story of Jesus' birth. Each part of the story of Jesus' birth was an example of God's love to the world. 1 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 . . ." God sent the gift of Jesus into the world to the town of Bethlehem to demonstrate His deep and everlasting love for us.

### PRAY

Praise God for sending the gift of love through Jesus to us. 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.



# Week 2

## LOVE in Bethlehem

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### Graham Cracker Nativity

Items Needed:

- Graham crackers
- Icing
- Animal crackers
- Bear-shaped crackers
- Shredded coconut
- Paper plates
- Plastic knives

1. Use icing and graham crackers to create a Nativity scene.
2. Add animal crackers to represent animals that were present and shredded coconut for the manger.
3. Use bear-shaped crackers to represent Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and the shepherds.
4. Remind your family that Jesus came to the earth to share His love with people.

### **SING OF LOVE**

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”
- “Away in a Manger”

### **FURTHER BIBLE READING**

Isaiah 7:14; Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 2:11; Matthew 2:1-6



# Week 3

## JOY of Shepherds

### READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:8-20 and read these verses aloud.

But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

*Luke 2:10–11* CSB®

### DISCUSS

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

The Bible says that “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 “returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard” (Luke 2:20). What great joy! The promised Savior had come.

The 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.



# Week 3

## JOY of Shepherds

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Joy to the World

Items Needed:

- Black construction paper
- Chalk
- Cotton balls
- Gold sequins
- Glue

1. Create a scene from today's Bible reading. Glue cotton balls to black paper to represent sheep and gold sequins for stars in the sky.
2. Draw the shepherds and angels with chalk.
3. Write JOY at the top of the scene.
4. Remind your family that Jesus' birth was good news of great joy!

### **SING FOR JOY**

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

“Joy to the World”

“The First Noel”

### **FURTHER BIBLE READING**

Psalm 23; John 10:11-15; Psalm 100:2; Romans 15:32; Philippians 4:4-5



# Week 4 PEACE from Angels

## READ

Open your Bible to Luke 1:26–38 and read these verses aloud.

Then the angel told her: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.”

*Luke 1:30–33 CSB®*

## DISCUSS

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, angels were God’s special messengers. 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 to not 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.

Last week, we 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)

Jesus came to bring us the gift of peace. Because of our sin, the Bible says we are separated from God (see Romans 3:23). God sent Jesus to provide the way for us to receive God’s love and be at peace with Him. (See Romans 5:1.) The Bible says that 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.



# Week 4 PEACE *from Angels*

## **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

### **Gift Wrap Me!**

Gather Christmas wrapping paper, bows, ribbons, and tape. Choose one or more family members to be gift wrapped. Set a time limit for wrapping the family member and judge the best wrapped family member. Remind your family that giving and receiving gifts is fun, but God gave us the best gift of all! God gave us the gift of Jesus. Jesus was born as a baby, lived a sinless life, died for our sins, and rose again. Jesus gives us the gift of salvation and eternal life when we trust in Him.

## **SING FOR JOY**

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”

## **FURTHER BIBLE READING**

Luke 1:26–38; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:8–20; Philippians 4:4–8; John 14:27



# JESUS *the Christ*

## READ

Open your Bible to Luke 2:11-14 and read these verses aloud.

“Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.” Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!

*Luke 2:11-14* CSB®

## DISCUSS

This Advent season, we have learned about the prophecies of Jesus giving hope to God’s people, believing God always keeps His promises. We discovered the scene where God first displayed His love to the world—Bethlehem, Mary, and Joseph as fulfillment of God’s promises. 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? (Allow answers.) 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 “God with us.” (See Matt. 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!

## 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.



# JESUS *the Christ*

## **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

### **The Light of the World**

Give each family member a candle and set a few more around the room. Turn off all the lights, and begin lighting candles one by one. Consider using battery-operated candles for the youngest family members. Read aloud John 8:12. Explain that Jesus is the Light of the world. He came to remove the darkness. Jesus is so bright that He removes all darkness. (See 1 John 1:5). 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.

## **SING HIS PRAISE**

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”

## **FURTHER BIBLE READING**

Genesis 3:15; John 3:16; 1 John 1:5; Luke 2:11-14; Galatians 4:4-5



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