



MAKE  
HIM  
ROOM

doxa advent guide

2019

# A Daily Guide for Advent

**Advent.** Despite being good news of great joy, this can be one of the busiest, most stressful, and for some, the darkest seasons of the year. What we wish was a time of joy and peace, is instead filled with the noise and busyness of Christmas activities, the stress of strained relationships, or the heaviness of loss and grief. In the midst of this, God is inviting us to let our hearts and minds be tuned to the good news of Christmas. Our hope is that this guide will help you prepare your hearts for Christmas and create space for God to form you through the glorious story of Advent..

## Using This Guide

Each week is grounded in our central theme: "Make Him Room." Each day, set aside a little time to read the Scripture passage, engage with the reflection and question, and pray. At the end of the week, we will take time to reflect on what God has been showing us. On Fridays, we will engage in a prayer of examen, a tool Christians have used for centuries to ask God to help them see their own hearts more clearly. On Saturdays, we will confess our sin to Him and hear His assurance of pardon for us. Feel free to do this by yourself or with your family.

Don't feel stressed if you miss a day. Just pick up with the next scheduled day and ask the Spirit to use it how He knows is best in your heart and life.

We hope this helps you prepare room in your heart for what God will show you this Christmas.

Merry Christmas from the elders and staff of Doxa Church!

## Advent for the Family

Included at the beginning of each week is the "Advent for the Family" section that may be helpful for families with young kids. Here, you'll find a weekly devotional, recommended readings from Scripture and storybook Bibles, songs, family discussion questions, and prayers to pray together. Parents are invited to use this section to guide your kids through the advent season. You may choose to do this all at once or to spread it out over a few days. Please feel free to use however is helpful for your family.



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FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

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# ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 1

God can do anything, even the impossible. Mary lived according to God's laws and she had no children and was not married, she knew she could not have children until she was married. But God had favor on Mary and chose her to miraculously bring about the birth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit made Mary pregnant so that the baby born would be holy and be called the Son of God. Nothing was impossible with God. Mary was humble and believed that God could do the impossible. To make room for the impossible this advent season, we are to stay humble to see all that God can do.

## READ SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38

Younger Kids – He's Here! (pgs. 176-178) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*

Babies and Toddlers – An Angel Visits Mary (pgs. 266-270) in *The Beginner's Bible*

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### Try the Impossible

Supplies Needed: Wall

Ask each member of the family to stand up next to a wall. You will put your right shoulder against the wall and your right foot against the wall. Without your shoulder or foot moving away from the wall, attempt to lift your left leg (it's impossible).

There are many things in this world that seem impossible for us to do, but God can do the impossible - He can do anything. Take the time to remember and reflect on the seemingly impossible things that God has done throughout Scripture.

## FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where have you seen God do impossible things in you and/or your family's life?
- How do we get in the way of God's work in our life?
- How do we stay humble so that we can see God at work in our life?

## SONG

O Come O Come Emmanuel (by Bethel Music Kids)

[https://youtu.be/rKmmPvGf\\_Q0](https://youtu.be/rKmmPvGf_Q0)

## PRAYER

Spend some time in thankful prayer over what you have seen God do in and through your family's life. Call out and thank specific ways you have seen God do the impossible.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

## God Does More

**READ LUKE 1:26-56** (*46-55 included below*):

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

### REFLECTION

God is graciously present to bring about the miraculous in and through those who want God to be magnified. Preparing room for the miraculous means less of us and more of God. He loves to take unlikely people and situations and bring about what would be impossible for humans. Like Mary. She was of humble means, but God is great and powerful. God had favor on Mary and chose her to miraculously bring about the birth of Jesus. *"He [Jesus] will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David."* When God shows favor on us, He chooses to bring about miraculous work in and through our lives.

*Where is God at work in and around me right now?*

### PRAYER

Father, thank you that your favor is upon me. Where are you calling me to prepare room for you to do your miraculous work in and through my life?

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

## Through Humble Means

### READ LUKE 2:6-7; MATTHEW 5:3-5

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

### REFLECTION

God loves to do great things through humble means. Christ, our savior, came into our world through humble beginnings by virtue of an unwed virgin who gave birth to him in a stable. Jesus continued to model a life of humility and calls us, his brothers and sisters, into that same humility. In Jesus’s first three statements in His Sermon On the Mount, he reminds us that only those who are humble (poor in spirit, those who mourn, and the meek) will receive God’s Kingdom, his comfort, and his provision. Jesus’s focus here in these first three “blessed are” statements are on our being, not our doing. Before he addresses what we are to do, he reminds us who we are; children of God dependent on our good Dad. Only those who understand their own need, sorrow, and dependence are open to receiving all that God longs to give us.

*How does a spirit of humility prepare me for God’s miraculous work?*

### PRAYER

Thank you Father that you are my provider and my provision. You love to do great things through humble means; where do I resist your call to active humility?

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

## Hungering for God

### READ ISAIAH 55:1-3; JOHN 6:35

"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

### REFLECTION

After sharing the amazing news with her cousin Elizabeth, Mary sings that God has filled the hungry with good things. Jesus came as our bread of life; stating that whoever partakes will never go hungry again. Consider the words of C.S. Lewis; "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea." God creates in us a hunger so that after we've had our fill of fooling about we yearn for a deeper satisfaction that only he can provide.

*What do I hunger for?*

### PRAYER

Father, thank you for your grace. You see I am so easily distracted. Use this Advent season to sharpen my hunger for you, your Word, and your will.

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

## An Available Heart

### **READ LUKE 1:38; EPHESIANS 2:8-10**

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

### **REFLECTION**

God invites us to prepare room in our hearts for Him to do the impossible in and through our lives. The way we prepare for God's miraculous work is by becoming available. Observe Mary's proper response to God's invitation, "I am a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to God's word and will." It's out of the overflow of Jesus's grace and mercy that our availability comes. When the bent of our hearts is to say, "yes, I will" then we step into a more fruitful and abundant life.

*Am I available?*

### **PRAYER**

God, how do you want to use me? I long for a heart like Mary's; show me how to reveal your heart to someone today.

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

## Acts of Thankfulness

### READ LUKE 1:46-48; COLOSSIANS 2:6-7

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

### REFLECTION

As she realized how blessed she was, Mary's heart overflowed in a beautiful song of thanksgiving. "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." During Advent we often pause and reflect on what Christ has done, is doing, and will do for us. We acknowledge that in his coming, we the Church, live in him, are rooted in him, and are being built up and established in him. This leads us to respond out of an overflow of what we have received. The scriptures say that our response to such a gift is gratitude which gets expressed as the act of thankfulness.

*Thanksgiving is an action; am I regularly acting upon  
my gratitude for and to God?*

### PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for the specific ways you see me and know me. May my feelings of gratitude overflow as praise and acts of thanksgiving. Make my life a conduit of your miraculous work.

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

## Weekly Prayer of Examen

### READ PSALM 139:1-2, 7

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

### EXAMEN

The Father invites us to make room in our hearts for Him to do the impossible in and through our lives. Where is he calling you to prepare room for him to act? Spend some time reflecting on the themes of this week paying special attention to any areas where you may have felt the Spirit's conviction or kindness, where you felt gratitude or praise, or where you had a new insight or direction. Is there a truth He's asking you to believe about yourself? Is there something He is asking you to stop doing or start doing? Is there an area where He'd like you to dig a little deeper?

Pray as you feel led.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. - Psalm 51:10-12*

# **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7**

## **Confession and Assurance of Pardon**

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Revisit the scripture for the week, noting where the Spirit might be asking you to linger. (Luke 2:6-7, Matt 5:3-5, John 6:35, Isaiah 55:1-3, Luke 1:38, Eph 2:8-10, Luke 1:46-47, Col 2:6-7)

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Psalm 40:8-10

I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord.I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Oh God, my Lord, Father, I confess that I am full of vanity and fear. I often believe I am more, and you are less, and I dismiss the possibility of your miracles in favor of practicalities. I live in scarcity like an orphan in need of self-protection and hoard your precious gifts. I have been proud, slow to receive your mercy, and take your grace and steadfast love for granted. In doing this I have sinned against you and hurt others. Forgive me, Father. Jesus, your faithfulness has brought about my salvation. You proclaim God's deliverance and glory through your Word, your life, your death, and your resurrection. Now, through the gift of grace, your righteousness has become my own. I have been slow to speak of the miraculous work of your salvation. Thank you, Jesus, for your faithfulness in the face of my own faithlessness. Holy Spirit, I cannot save myself. Help me to not hide Jesus's deliverance in my heart, but instead delight to do your will. Thank you for pursuing me with a kindness that leads to repentance. Rescue me each day from self-sufficiency and enable a heart that overflows with joy and hope that is rooted in Jesus. Help me turn from my sin by clinging to the cross and remembering I am secure--hidden in God with Christ. Amen.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Romans 5:1-6: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.



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## **ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 2**

Joseph had plans to marry Mary and start a family, but his plan was interrupted by the unexpected work of the Holy Spirit. He thought Mary had done something wrong and wanted to stop his original plan by breaking up with her. But God had a better plan! Joseph was going to be the adoptive father of Jesus, the Savior of the world! God's plans are always best. We can learn to listen to God's plans by submitting all of our life to Him.

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Mathew 1:18-25

Younger Kids – He's Here! (pgs. 180-182) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*

Babies and Toddlers – Baby Jesus is Born (pgs. 271-276) in *The Beginner's Bible*

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### **Remote Control**

Supplies Needed: A toy that has a remote (or a TV remote will work)

Find something in the house that has a remote control (a remote-controlled car would be best). Ask the kids what the object is currently doing – absolutely nothing. Currently it is in control of itself and it is doing nothing. Now what happens when you take control and use the remote? We are like this object, when we try to control ourselves and make our own plans we are not living to our fullest potential and the way God created us to be. But when we submit to God's control of our life we can trust that He is leading us in the best path for us.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What are some plans that you have had that were not the best for you?
- What areas of your life do you need to submit to God?
- How is the plan to bring Jesus into the world the best plan for us?
- How was Jesus the unexpected King?

### **SONG**

Sent from Above (by Simon Parry) - *ASL Provided*

<https://youtu.be/QM5kzo4gQbs>

### **PRAYER**

Spend the first part in thankfulness for God's great plan to save us from the punishment of sin by sending Jesus to rescue us. Then spend some time praying for current areas in your life that need to be surrendered to God and His plan for your life.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

## God's Plans Are Better

### READ MATTHEW 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

### REFLECTION

As she realized how blessed she was, Mary's heart overflowed in a beautiful song of thanksgiving. "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." During Advent we often pause and reflect on what Christ has done, is doing, and will do for us. We acknowledge that in his coming, we the Church, live in him, are rooted in him, and are being built up and established in him. This leads us to respond out of an overflow of what we have received. The scriptures say that our response to such a gift is gratitude which gets expressed as the act of thankfulness.

*Is there room in my life for God to do the unexpected?*

### PRAYER

Father, thank you that you are actively at work in my life. I pray you would enable me to live a more expectant life; watching for you to show up, intercede, and transform.

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

## God's Plan is Good

### READ JOHN 3:16-17

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

### REFLECTION

Joseph had a plan. He found a girl, got the ring, set the date...and then the Holy Spirit interrupted his plan. Mary became pregnant, and Joseph, the honorable man that he was, intended to protect Mary's reputation by divorcing her quietly. However, God had a different plan in mind. God purposed that Joseph would be the adoptive father to Jesus, the Savior of the world. Joseph listened and acted in faith doing everything God asked of him. In trusting God's plan was better than his own, Joseph fulfilled God's prophetic word and was used to raise the One who would become the Savior of the world.

*Do I believe and trust that God's plans are good?*

### PRAYER

God, thank you that your plans are good. You see where and when I am prone to doubt you and lean on my own understanding. In those moments quicken my heart to remember that I believe and trust in you and then help my unbelief.

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

## Not Our Way

### READ ISAIAH 55:6-9

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### REFLECTION

God has plans that we know nothing about. Amazingly, he chooses to accomplish those plans in and through our lives. Often this will require us to change our plans to line up with his. Part of preparing Him room is preparing our hearts by cultivating a willingness and readiness to realign our plans with God's plans. The way we do this is by daily submitting our hopes, dreams, and future to God.

*Where do I need to align my plans with God's plans?*

### PRAYER

Father, help me to be honest about the plans I make. Are they birthed in fear or greed or in a desire to serve and please you ... or in a combination of conflicting motivations? In faith, help me to submit my plans to you.

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

## Hearing His Voice

### READ JOHN 10:27-28

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

### REFLECTION

Joseph was ready to listen to God's voice when the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Sometimes we forget to listen for God's voice in the midst of our plans. We can regularly go to him, talk to him, and lay our life before him, but still not listen to what he has to say to us. Advent is a fresh invitation from God to hear the voice of our Shepherd. Jesus says he knows us and has given us the safety and security of eternal life. Do we hear his voice? And, when we hear it, do we follow it?

*Am I stopping to listen to you Father?*

### PRAYER

Spirit, thank you that you speak to me. Help me to listen so that I may hear what you are speaking over me and to me. Help me to cultivate a posture of pausing to listen and a readiness to change or redirect based on what I hear.

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

## Obeying His Voice

### **READ MATTHEW 1:24-25; 2:13-15; 2:19-23**

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

### **REFLECTION**

As we follow the advent narrative, we see three times where Joseph, the father of Jesus, not only heard the voice of God, but heard and then obeyed. There is a big difference between listening for God and hearing from God and then "getting up" and acting on what God has said. Sometimes what God asks of us is hard, inconvenient, or confusing. Joseph models a heart that pleases God; a heart of faith that trusts and moves forward without first needing to know all the details or what comes next.

*When am I tempted to ignore what God is asking of me?*

### **PRAYER**

Father, I'm tempted to only act when it makes sense or I can see a way forward. Help grow my capacity to trust in you and obey what I hear.

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

## Weekly Prayer of Examen

### READ PSALM 139:1-2, 7

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

### EXAMEN

The Father invites us to make room in our hearts for Him to do the unexpected in and through our lives. Where is he calling you to prepare room for him to act? Spend some time reflecting on the themes of this week paying special attention to any areas where you may have felt the Spirit's conviction or kindness, where you felt gratitude or praise, or where you had a new insight or direction. Is there a truth he's asking you to believe about yourself? Is there something he is asking you to stop doing or start doing? Is there an area where he'd like you to dig a little deeper?

Pray as you feel led.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. - Psalm 51:10-12*

# SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

## Confession and Assurance of Pardon

### READ SCRIPTURE

Revisit the scripture for the week, noting where the Spirit might be asking you to linger. (Luke 2:6-7, Matt 5:3-5, John 6:35, Isaiah 55:1-3, Luke 1:38, Eph 2:8-10, Luke 1:46-47, Col 2:6-7)

### CALL TO CONFESSION

Matthew 6:25, 32-33

Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Father forgive me for not preparing my heart for your plans. I have been lazy, fearful, and at times willfully disobedient to your call on my life. I have rejected practices of grace and mercy toward myself and others. You always meet my needs, yet I don't trust you will continue to do so. Please forgive my lack of trust and faithfulness, it prevents me from submitting my plans and purposes to you. Jesus, everything about your coming was so unexpected. Help me create room in my life so that I may live a life of expectancy; expecting you to speak, show up, provide, and act. You went to the cross for the very sins I am confessing today; thank you that I am a child of the King with a place in his Kingdom because of your willing sacrifice. Spirit, I pray for the grace to submit to God's call in and through my life. Lead me with power and presence in a life of faith knowing that the Father's plans are not only trustworthy and good, but also take into account every little detail of my life.

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 43:1-3b

But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.



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## **ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 3**

On the night Jesus was born, an angel appeared to the shepherds in the field who were taking care of their sheep. The shepherds were first afraid of the unknown reason for this angel, but the angel let them know that the Savior of the world, Jesus, had been born who would bring joy to the earth! The angel was accompanied by many other angels that sang songs of great praise to God. The shepherds moved from the fear of the unknown into great joy and they went to worship Jesus. Fear leaves no room for worship, but when we come to know Jesus as the savior of the world we prepare room to worship Him.

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:1-20

Younger Kids – The Light of the Whole World (pgs. 184-190) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*  
Babies and Toddlers – Shepherds Visit (pgs. 277-281) in *The Beginner's Bible*

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### **Make Worship Banners**

Supplies Needed: straw/stick, cloth/paper, markers, stickers, anything crafty  
As a family make individual worship banners that you can dance with to different songs. Write at least one word on the banner that represents God's character: love, kind, patient, generous, etc. Tape a straw or stick to one end of the banner to be used as the wand. Use craft supplies to decorate the banners. Have each member of the family explain why they decorate the banner in the way they did and why they chose their word for the banner.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What does it mean to worship God?
- Where and when can we worship God?
- How do we worship God both on the inside and the outside?
- How does worship of God keep out fear?

### **SONG**

Oh What a Glorious Night (by Sidewalk Prophets)

<https://youtu.be/6aGLV5CfoTU>

### **PRAYER**

Spend time in worship to God as a family. Let everyone say at least one attribute of God that they want to praise: love, forgiving, long-suffering, patient, etc.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

## Make Room to Worship

### READ LUKE 2:8-20

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### REFLECTION

When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, they were filled with fear. The angel's response calls them from the fear of the unknown to rejoice in the good news of great joy to all people – "unto you is born this day, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord". There is one who is almighty – who is above everything else we fear – and he is not only Lord, but Savior – He comes to save us from all our fears. When the shepherds realize who this baby really is, they're moved from the fear of the unknown to worship of the known King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All of us live in fear and most of us aren't even aware of it – we live in unknown fear – we aren't aware of what we really worship. However, when the glory of the Lord shines the light of the gospel into our hearts, his perfect light and love casts out fear and leads us into worship.

*Where is fear preventing me from worshipping Jesus?*

### PRAYER

God, please teach me to make room for the awe and wonder of Jesus. Please help me see and submit my fears to you.

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

## Fear and Worship

**READ ISAIAH 2:6-22** (2:8, 17, 20-22 included below)

Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.

And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away.

In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

### REFLECTION

We all experience fear: fear of man, fear of loss, fear of rejection, fear of discomfort, and more. It causes sleepless nights, tightened stomachs, and countless anxieties. It feels like it controls us because in many ways it does. What we fear most reveals what we worship. It's what carries the most weight in our hearts and minds. Isaiah calls this kind of fear what it really is: idolatry. The problem is, fearing anything less than God, the "weightiest" one in the universe, is a downward spiral into greater slavery to our fears. But when we see the glory of God, like the shepherds who encountered the mighty angels that night in the field, His light leads to an awe that drives out fear; awe that makes room for worship.

*What idols do my fears reveal?*

### PRAYER

Lord, I am often controlled by my fear and it brings no peace. Help me see you in your glory and cast out my fear.

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

## God's Glory Shines

### READ ISAIAH 6:1-7

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

### REFLECTION

"I am condemned!" Those were Isaiah's words when he came face to face with God's glory in the temple. All he encountered was the train of God's robe, but it filled the entire temple with His glory and struck Isaiah with a holy fear. Encountering the holy God reveals our wickedness and we know we're condemned. Like Isaiah, we too would say, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips." But God's glory doesn't destroy us. Instead, like with Isaiah, he provided a way for our sin to be atoned for and forgiven. Through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, we're able to encounter the glory of God and walk away transformed. And seeing God for who he really is puts all other fears in their proper place.

*Where am I making space to encounter God's glory?*

### PRAYER

God, help me to see your glory!

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

## God's Salvation

### READ ISAIAH 9:1-7

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

### REFLECTION

The host of angels gave the shepherds the amazing news that a "Savior" had been born that day. This Savior, born in Bethlehem, had not come to save them from their Roman oppressors, but from their greatest enemies: sin, Satan, and death. More than being slaves to the Romans, they were enslaved by the fears flowing from their misplaced worship. This Savior would free them from their fear so they could find their rest in God. Meditate on the words of this Christmas hymn, written by Charles Wesley.

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Am I able to rest in Jesus?*

### PRAYER

Thank you God, for setting me free from my sin and my fear! Please continue to free me from my enslaving fears as I worship you alone.

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

## To Trust & Not Be Afraid

### READ LUKE 2:16-20; ISAIAH 12

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me." Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. "Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

### REFLECTION

After the shepherds visited the run-down stable to find Jesus lying in a manger, they left "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." Their natural response to seeing salvation in the flesh was joyful worship! There's great joy in knowing we're set free from our fear and idolatry by Jesus. When we're grasped by this, our impulse will be worship and trust. God's love poured out into our hearts will displace the fears that once enslaved us and free us to trust in God alone. Isaiah writes, "You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid.'"

*How has God both provided for me and rescued me?*

### PRAYER

Father, let me see your love in the flesh this Advent and stir my heart to worship You.

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

## Weekly Prayer of Examen

### READ PSALM 139:1-2, 7

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

### EXAMEN

The Father invites us to make room in our hearts to worship Him. What idols are crowding your heart right now? What do your fears reveal about your misplaced worship? Spend some time reflecting on the themes of this week paying special attention to any areas where you may have felt the Spirit's conviction or kindness, where you felt gratitude or praise, or where you had a new insight or direction. Is there a truth he's asking you to believe about yourself? Is there something he is asking you to stop doing or start doing? Is there an area where he'd like you to dig a little deeper?

Pray as you feel led.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. - Psalm 51:10-12*

# **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21**

## **Confession and Assurance of Pardon**

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Revisit the scripture for the week, noting where the Spirit might be asking you to linger. (Luke 2:6-22; Isaiah 6:1-7; Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 12)

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Glorious God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

I confess that I have had a small vision of You. I have believed You are weak and unable to satisfy me. I have feared people, seeing them as bigger than You and being controlled by their perception of me. I have lived in fear; fear of rejection, fear of loneliness, fear of discomfort, fear of obscurity. I've underestimated your love for me, diminishing how deep it really is. Rather than worshipping You, I have worshipped lesser things. Like Isaiah, I know I am condemned.

Forgive me, Amen.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Hear the Word of God for you from Psalm 103:8-12:

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."



MAKE

HIM

ROOM

FOR HOPE

advent guide 2019

## **ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 4**

God promised that the savior of the world would come as a baby and people waited a long time for him to be born. Hundreds of years passed and this baby had not been born yet. But God told Simeon that he would meet this baby in his life time, so he waited. One day the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go to the temple. While Simeon was there, Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the temple to dedicate Him to God. The wait was over and Simeon met baby Jesus, the savior of the world! God kept His promise to Simeon and He kept His promise to bring the savior to the world. This season of advent, we can make room for God to do what He has promised and wait with expectancy for Him.

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:22-33

Younger Kids – The King of all Kings (pgs. 192-198) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*  
Babies and Toddlers – Simeon and Anna Meet Baby Jesus (pgs. 282-285) in *The Beginner's Bible*

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### **Waiting for Skittles**

Supplies Needed: big skittle bags (or candy/food they enjoy)

Give each kid two skittles (or an equivalent treat) and tell them that they must wait to eat their skittles. You promise that their reward will be great. Then go on an adventure or do an activity that will really test their ability to wait to eat their treat. At the end, if they have been able to wait, take the skittles from them and give them an entire bag of skittles. God is always faithful to keep His promises and sometimes we have to wait. Just as Simeon waited to see Jesus, so we all wait for our Savior to make all things new.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Why is it hard to wait?
- What are you expecting God to do in your life that you are waiting for?
- How do you keep hope in the waiting?

### **SONG**

Joy to the World (by Bethel Music Kids) - [https://youtu.be/\\_yAfmw4mT4U](https://youtu.be/_yAfmw4mT4U)

### **PRAYER**

As you wait for Christmas, spend time expressing your faith and trust in God because He fulfills His promises.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

## Make Room for Expectancy

### READ LUKE 2:22-33

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

### REFLECTION

We can spend our whole lives looking to see our longings fulfilled, our hopes realized, and our dreams come to fruition. Many of us have been looking to ourselves or to the world to satisfy these longings. We may have been waiting so long we've lost hope. Jesus comes to us in this season to be the fulfilment of what we long for – the hope we've been waiting for. In Him, our longings for life, joy, meaning, and peace find their answer. But this isn't the world's version of hope; a meager wish that may or may not be fulfilled. Biblical hope is "confident expectation" grounded in the faithfulness of our Father who always keeps His promises. We know our hope in him is not misplaced. We can look forward with expectancy and anticipation, knowing Jesus will not let us down.

*Do I expect God to keep his promises or  
do I feel like God has forgotten me?*

### PRAYER

Father, show me how I've lost hope and grow within me a longing and expectancy for Jesus in my life.

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

## Longing and Waiting

### READ LUKE 2:25

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

### REFLECTION

Waiting is central to the advent experience. Kids, and if we're honest adults, long for the sounds and smells (and presents!) of Christmas morning with eager anticipation. What a great picture of the kind of expectancy and waiting Simeon experienced. Simeon was longing for the Messiah, the consolation of Israel, to come. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that God would keep this promise. So, he waited. And...waited. He waited, fully expecting that he would see the Messiah before he died.

Meditate on the words of this Christmas hymn and hear both the longing and the expectancy (Immanuel means "God with us."):

*O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*What am I waiting or longing for?  
Do I see Jesus as the answer to my deepest longings?*

### PRAYER

Jesus, you see that I get distracted by my desires for the wrong things. Help me to wait and long for you.

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

## Hope Fulfilled

### READ LUKE 2:29-32; PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### REFLECTION

Faithful Israelites like Simeon were confidently expecting the coming of the One who would rescue them. And although we don't look forward to the birth of the Messiah like Simeon did, we do look forward to His return and can experience the same expectancy Simeon knew. Just as the hope and expectation of Simeon was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus, the first Advent) so our hope for the return of our King to make all things new will one day be fulfilled. The promises fulfilled at Christmas ground our hope that Jesus' future promise to return will come true. And like Paul we can say, “our citizenship is heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*Do I live in expectation this Advent that Jesus  
will return again to make all things new?*

### PRAYER

Jesus, help me to look for and expect your return to make all things new.

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Merry Christmas! In Jesus, all of our longings find their ultimate fulfillment. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light and God has increased our joy! Take a moment to meditate on these passages of promise and fulfillment.

### **READ ISAIAH 9:2-7, LUKE 2:29-32**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

*Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

- A Christmas Prayer, Robert Louis Stevenson