



UPC Advent Devotions



Week Three – December 12-18



“Advent” is the beginning of the liturgical year in the Christian church. It’s the season of waiting and expectation in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the God-Man.

There are four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day. Each week you’ll get a fresh set of devotions to help you focus on Jesus through this busy time of year. Use the devotions in family worship, with your Life Group, or in your personal time with God. Consider getting an Advent wreath and lighting the appropriate candles each day.

The book of Hebrews will be our backdrop this Christmas. It’s a letter written to people just like us, with doubts, fears, and discouragements like our own. The message of the book is – don’t drift away from Jesus.

May these Advent devotions help you keep your focus on Jesus, “the apostle and high priest whom we confess” (Hebrews 3:1).



Monday: Read Hebrews 3:1-6

The people to whom Hebrews was written were suffering persecution. Scholars believe they were mostly Jewish Christians living in or near Rome. Nero was the leader of the Roman Empire at the time. He was a brutal man. The believers felt pressured to let go of their newfound faith in Jesus and return to the religion of their past. They were criticized as radicals and troublemakers. The writer of Hebrews said, “Fix your thoughts on Jesus” (vs. 1). “Hold on to your courage” (vs. 6). Share with your family, group, or a friend about a time when you needed to hold on to Jesus and not let go. Spend a moment in prayer thanking Jesus that he didn’t let go of you.



Tuesday: Read Micah 5:1-5a

The prophet Micah predicted the place of Messiah’s birth – the town of Bethlehem. Think how honored the little town of Bethlehem was to play host to the newborn King! Why do you think God picked the small village of Bethlehem as the birthplace of Christ, rather than a larger city like Jerusalem or Rome? Why didn’t God find a more comfortable place for Mary and the baby Jesus to stay? For an activity today, get out a manger scene and study it for a while. Talk about the humble circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ (the lowly stable, the poor shepherds, the smelly animals, etc.). Contrast that with what you know about your birthplace.



Wednesday: Read Hebrews 3:7-11

Today’s passage takes you back many years to Numbers 13-14. Those chapters of the Old Testament tell about the time the people of Israel decided they didn’t want to go up into the

Promised Land as God had commanded. They were scared of the “giants” that supposedly lived there. Despite how God had taken care of them in the past, the Israelites hardened their hearts against him and refused to believe his promises. As a result, the Israelites spent the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. Most of the grownups died and never saw the Promised Land. What do you think it means to “harden your heart”? Are you living in fear about anything? Tell about some of the ways God has taken care of you in the past, and put your faith in him to do so in the future.



Thursday: Read Isaiah 11:1-9

Do you find it hard to wait? One of the many things we often have to wait for in life is justice. Life is not always fair. Some people who cheat, lie, and steal are very successful, while others who try to obey the rules go through many troubles. It is hard to understand why God sometimes lets his people suffer and wicked people prosper. But today’s reading reminds us that a day is coming when God will judge the world with perfect justice. What will become then of those who disobey God? Who is the “shoot” of verse 1? For an activity, share examples of unfairness you have observed or experienced at work, school, or elsewhere. Thank God in prayer for the justice that will come.



Friday: Read Hebrews 3:12-19

The writer of Hebrews says that we should “encourage one another daily” (vs. 13). Why was it important for the Christians who received the book of Hebrews to encourage each other? Has someone encouraged you lately? How? For today’s activity, bake some Christmas cookies (or something similar) and take them to a person or family who needs a sweet taste of God’s love.