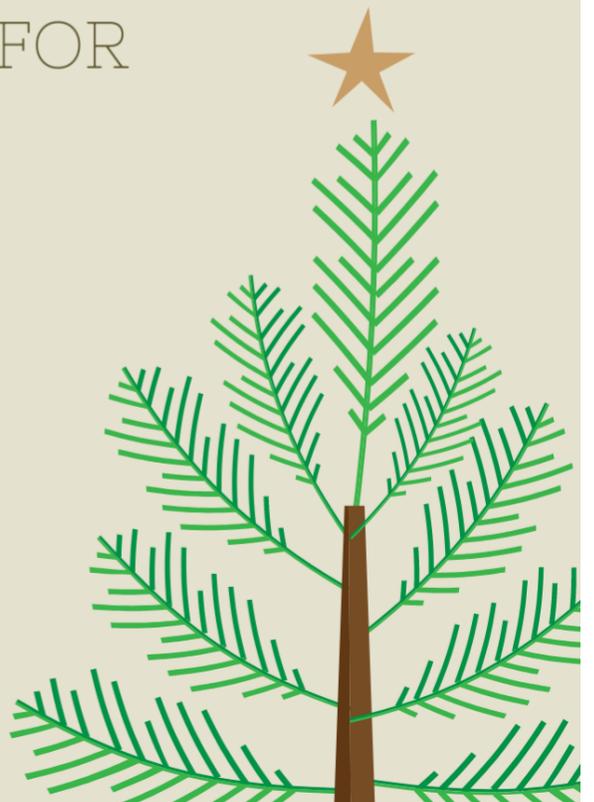


GOD

WITH

US

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS FOR
ADVENT 2020



Introduction and Instructions

Parent,

The theme PCPC is using for Advent is *Immanuel*, or God With Us. Our hope is that each element in this packet re-enforces this wonderful reality that God is with us! In this document you will find a Scripture reading that corresponds to the PCPC Prayer Guide, a family devotional, and instructions for family activities (craft, questions, activity, and prayer) for Advent 2020. Sunday's are not included, so that allows for a day of rest or catch-up for your family. There is freedom in going in a different direction on each of these elements, maybe you switch out the craft elements or you have to elevate a piece for your child. Our goal is to give you a place to start! Below you will see icons that relate to each element with a little more explanation of how to do it. We hope this time is enriching for your family, and that God uses this time and you to shepherd your child's heart to see God's love for them.

Grace and peace,
PCPC Kids Ministry

Icon	Explanation
	Craft: Most of the crafts involve things that you probably have on hand: paint & paintbrush, crayons, playdough, and sidewalk chalk. Feel free to substitute the craft elements each Sunday, elevate or lower the craft instructions based on your child. Allow your child to imagine the scene; try not to intervene or correct how they draw things or what colors they use.
	Follow-up Question: In the follow-up questions, which can be used during or after craft time, should help the child explore the story further. The goal should be to invoke imagination to better understand or seek understanding of the biblical text.
	Family Activity: This is an additional component to engage your child through motion and play. While the craft exercise can be independent, the family activity should use parents and siblings. There is freedom to expand the idea to capture more of the story!
	Family Prayer: Whether you use all the component in sequence, or only use some, our ministry believes this one is the most vital. Prayer as a family creates a rhythm for your kids no matter the age and signifies it as an essential part to knowing God and growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ. The family prayer is taken from the PCPC Prayer guide.

WEEK 1

November 30

Read: Genesis 3:1-15

“Where are you?” The first question in the Bible, and it is not posed by Adam or Eve but God. Of course, the All-Knowing God knows where Adam and Eve are hiding but the question is for the reader. “Where are you?” Not your physical location, although for Adam and Eve that clued us in that something was wrong, but spiritually. While still in the Garden, Adam and Eve were miles if not galaxies away. Sin was introduced into the world through Adam and Eve’s disobedience. But God, in the midst of our first parents’ sin, still enters the Garden. This is a foreshadowing of events to come: Jesus Christ, God’s Son, enters our world, full of sin, to rescue us. God comes to be with us, so we no longer need to hide from Him, but we can be hid in Him (Col. 3:3-4).



Craft

- Materials: watercolors, paper
- Instructions: Use watercolors to draw the Garden of Eden. Allow kids to paint what they think it would look like (trees, animals, landscape). Discuss how God made Creation good, but sin entered the world and ruined it.



Follow-Up Question

- Do you think it would be possible to hide from God? Is it scary that God knows everything? Even what you’re thinking?
- Do you believe God loves you? No matter what you do or say? If God knows everything about you, and loves you no matter what you say or do, what do you think about that? Is it Good News?



Family Activity

Play hide-and-seek with your family. Either indoors or outdoors. For babies and crawlers, try peek-a-boo. At the end of the game, gather the family together for a big hug. Parents say these words over your children. “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:37-39).



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 1

Isaiah 9:2-17

Walking in the dark is an incredibly scary, not to mention dangerous, thing. Perhaps you've done this in the middle of the night to go use the restroom or to get a drink of water. You can sense the darkness surrounding you, and as you blindly feel around to make sure you don't hit something, you are ready to find a light switch, so the trial is over. As Isaiah writes this passage, Israel is walking in darkness and ready for the light to appear! But sadly, it will take many more years for that light to come; Israel never saw the great light. The Great Light would be a son given to Israel for their rescue. He would be a Wonderful Counselor, a Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Jesus comes as that Son, Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace. While it may seem like darkness surrounds us, we can take comfort in knowing that the Light – Jesus Christ – has come, and as John reminds us, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).



Craft

- Materials: crayons, paper
- Instructions: Fold the paper in half, creating two sections. Have your child on one side draw things that create light (flashlight, candle, headlights, etc.) and on the other side have them color darkness or nighttime. Discuss with them how each thing they draw can shine light in the darkness, but that Jesus is the light of the world and darkness cannot overcome Him.



Follow-up Question

- How do you think Israel reacted when they heard Isaiah's words? Happy or sad? Relief or anger?
- Read Isaiah 9:6 again. Break down each title given to Jesus. Talk about what everlasting, mighty, wonderful and peace mean during this season of Advent.



Family Activity

- At nighttime, have each person in your family grab a light of some sort (flashlight, candle, or nightlight). Sit in your living with all the lights off and have one person read the passage above (Isaiah 9:2-17).



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 2

Read Isaiah 11:1-9

A wolf and a lamb living together? A leopard and a young goat lying down together? A cow and a bear eating together? A young baby playing with a snake? These sound so strange! What could possibly make these animals live together peacefully? They will be in the presence of God on his holy mountain! Now all of this sounds strange, but it is direction God is taking the world. How? Well, it is through the coming of a king! Isaiah describes this king as a shoot, or a small plant, coming out of a huge stump. A stump is a tree that has been cut down, and most of the time we can guess the tree is dead. But God does impossible things. During Isaiah's time, the Israelites thought they were doomed. God had judged them for their sin and was punishing them. But the punishment was not the end, God was going to send a Righteous King to rule. This King would obey God and would lead God's people, and all creation, to know and love God.



Craft

- Materials: playdough
- Instructions: Read the passage again with your kids. Have them make the different objects (stump, shoot, wolf, lion, lamb, etc.) with the playdough.



Follow-Up Question

- What do you think it would be like to see a cow and bear to eat together?
- Think about two things that might be opposite of each other. Could you imagine them living at peace with one another?



Family activity

Go for a walk around your neighborhood, or if the weather is bad around your home. Have your child point out things that are opposite or unlikely pairs (lion, lamb) if they see them. Discuss how they are opposites. If you do not see any, ask your child to name the different things they see in Creation. How could those things bring God glory?



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 3

Read Micah 5:2-4

In the kingdom of God, some things might not make sense such as the dead come to life, or like in our story, the littlest rule over the greatest. Micah writes about Bethlehem Ephrathah, so small it's not even included among the clans of Judah. And yet, from this small little clan will come a great ruler. This great ruler is promised to rule over all of Israel. He will be the kind of ruler that is like a shepherd. A shepherd guides the sheep, protects them, and leads them to pastures to eat and rest (Psalm 23), or as Micah tells us the sheep will "live securely." This Great, Promised Shepherd will come, and his name is Jesus! Jesus, our Shepherd, came to be with us, and will one day return to gather his people together.



Craft

- Materials: sidewalk chalk
- Instructions: Go outside in your driveway or sidewalk with your sidewalk chalk. Read over the passage one time and then have your child draw a shepherd with a flock. If you have older kids, have them write out verse four (either part or the whole).



Follow-up Question

- Why does God use the smallest things to accomplish things? What makes that important? (Reference back to the previous day with Isaiah 11:1)
- What does “dwell securely” or “live safely” mean to you?



Family Activity

Go on a walk as a family, and have your children point out large trees. If you see an oak tree, go over and look at the acorn, or if it's a pecan tree, locate a pecan on the ground. Share with your child how the tiny seed, when planted, then grows up to be a mighty tree. Parallel this with Micah 5 and how God grows great things out of small things. Jesus our Great Rescuer comes as a baby at Christmas!



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 4

Read Isaiah 53

Despised? Rejected? Not esteemed? Stricken? Who would want to enter a situation where a person had to experience these things? I don't think I would, would you? This passage is known as the Suffering Servant and is usually read around Easter to describe Christ's death and crucifixion. But among these crucial words, one particular verse stands out: “by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous.” While the Crucifixion gets much attention for its redemptive work, the Incarnation is critical to understand and ponder on the wonder of God becoming Man. Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, promised long ago, comes to make many sons and daughters righteous.



Craft

- Materials: watercolors, paper
- Instructions: Take a sheet of paper (8.5x11) and fold it in half. On one side have your child paint a picture of Christ's birth, and on the other half have your child paint the Crucifixion (could be detailed or as simple as a cross and the tomb). Share with your

child how both the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus are significant parts of God's plan to rescue us.



Follow-Up Question

- What does it feel like to be left out? Bullied or picked on? Told you are not wanted? Why does Jesus go through all of this and more according to our passage above?



Family Activity

During this season of Advent there are many people who are hurting (stricken), left out or hated (despised), and perhaps unloved. Think about ways or things to donate to a local charity that helps the homeless and hurting. Coats, toiletries, clothing, canned food items are much needed for homeless shelters and other organizations. Consider collecting items and making a family trip to a place that could help the homeless, orphan, or those hurting.



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 5

Read Malachi 4

Christmas is regarded as a happy, joyous time, mostly. But the Bible also speaks to it as a time of judgement. Judgment? In the middle of presents, eggnog, and parties? "Sort of sad to talk of judgement when we are supposed to be happy that Jesus is born," you might say. But with the coming of God's Promised One, Jesus, not only is deliverance coming but also judgement. Not everyone would accept God's Promised One. If we look back and see the various ways in which God delivered His people before, they were ridiculed and chose not to trust God to save them so why would they just the Messiah. However, Jesus's arrival is not the expected way in which God decides to judge. A baby as a judge? Well that baby grows up eventually, so in the meantime God is offering season for those who do evil to repent and turn aside from their evil ways. As we participate in the season of Advent, while we have time to turn away sin and rejoice in righteousness, we should remember that the Savior comes not

only to rescue but to judge. Judgement comes by the way in which we respond to His Word (John 12:47-48). Judgement is not a dreary idea for the righteous though! As verse 2 tells us, “You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”



Craft

- Materials: sidewalk chalk
- Instructions: Go outside to your driveway or sidewalk. An adult or older sibling should read Malachi 4:2. Draw calves or cows jumping up and down. Allow younger children to draw cows how they would like. Talk about how Jesus’ coming is joyful for believers.



Follow-up Question

- What makes you joyful or happy about this time of year (Advent/Christmas)? Does anything make you sad or angry?



Family Activity

Go outside, or clear a place in your home, and have your family skip or jump (like the calf in verse 2). Every time you skip or jump, have a person share what makes the happy or joyful about Advent and/or Christmas.



Family Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WEEK 2

December 7

Read Genesis 12:1-3,7 & Galatians 3:15-16

Have you ever gone camping? What if God told your mom and dad that you were to leave your house, pack the car and head out to some place you’d never been. He did not tell you

exactly where you were going but told you that you were never coming back. Think about having to pack everything you would need but only what you could carry in the car. That would be tough. The only thing you knew was that God was going to make you and your family into a whole new country when you got there. You'd be the ones to start that country. This was the deal God made with Abram. The promise God made to Abram was that He would majorly bless him and also make him a HUGE blessing. He promised to bless everyone in the world through Abram and his family. That includes you and me.

Every time I read this story in the Bible, I'm reminded of the Pilgrims who came here to start our country. They left everything behind, packed up only what they could carry on the boat, had little to no hope of ever coming back and really had no idea where they were going to end up. The dream God planted in their heart was to start a country where they could worship God in the way they understood He wanted to be worshipped through the Bible. They knew the Ten Commandments and they didn't feel like their country or church was upholding them very well. God led them to do a new thing. Often, when God calls us to do something NEW and BIG, there is a price to pay. We must leave what we know to be comfortable and familiar behind and start out to a place where He leads us, where we must depend only on Him and his GRACE.

Jesus did that for us when He came to earth. God the Father sent Him away from everything He knew to be perfect and good in heaven to earth. He sent Him with a promise and a purpose, but it was not easy. He was perfected by what He suffered every day. Jesus was the fulfillment of what God promised to Abram. Because of Him we can become a part of that family and to partake in that blessing.



Craft

- Materials: Popsicle sticks, sharpies, old flannel or clothe cut into pieces.
- Instructions: Use scraps of clothe or flannel and 20-30 popsicles sticks to make a tent that Abram and Sarah stay in. Make 3 sticks into Abram, Sarai and Lot. Pretend to make camp and move.

OR

- Materials: Big piece of white or green paper. Green or gold marker or crayon.
- Draw a Christmas tree on a big piece of paper. Print out pictures of your favorite people who bless you often and well. Cut their faces into circles and glue them on the tree as ornaments. Write across the top of the tree or the bottom: "Friends are the Ornaments of Life." And on the other end: "Make me a BLESSING!"



Follow-Up Question

What does it mean to be a blessing? List all the ways God tells Abram about blessings and what He is doing in Abram's life. How is He making YOU a blessing?



Family Activity:

Build a Campsite

Gather blankets and backpacks. Turn an area of the yard or the house into a campsite. Do your family devo's there this week. Talk about leaving everything behind and moving to a new place, only to live in a tent for the rest of your life.

OR

Make a Blessing Tree on your Sidewalk

Use your sidewalk chalk to draw a BIG CHRISTMAS TREE on a panel of your sidewalk. Across the bottom, write the phrase: "Friends are the Ornaments of Life." Draw lots of big ball ornaments on your tree. Set up a lemonade stand or hot cocoa stand and sit along the sidewalk. As people pass by, ask them to name one person in their life who is a huge BLESSING to them. As you wait, write the names of all the people in your life who God has made to be a blessing for you inside the balls.



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 8

Read Exodus 20:1-17

Rules are a necessary part of life. Think of all the ways they make our life better: speed zones, traffic lights, rules for soccer, rules for how you play board games, rules for how you spell words and how math works. Think about playing soccer or basketball. What if there were no clear marking for out of bounds? Someone could run so far away that you'd never catch them and get the ball back! We are the same. If we don't know what is "out of bounds" in life, we can never understand when we are wrong and need to seek forgiveness. Most importantly, if

God didn't give us any rules, we'd have no idea of the fact that we all sin and fall short of His Glory.

The thing I like most about the Ten Commandments is that they start with our relationship with God Himself. The first 4-5 teach us how to love Him well and what it looks like we go "out of bounds" in our relationship with Him. The second half focuses on our relationship with our fellow man. Think about each of them. Do you obey all these all the time? Jesus is the Only One who obeyed all the rules all the time. He was holy. We are not. We all disobey every day in what we say, what we do and what we think. God says without holiness, no one can see Him or approach Him. God is holy. Knowing these Ten Commandments helps us see that we are not holy. What do we do about that?

Think about God like this. When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He took him up on a mountain covered with smoke and fire. He told the people to look but not touch the mountain or they would die. God is like a fire. Fire keeps us warm, cooks our food, gives us light, but if we touch fire, it burns us. Holiness is like a fire. There are so many good things that result from God's holiness. We can't touch that holiness, but we can see it and benefit from it. Looking at God's perfect law warms our hearts, feeds our soul, lights our way to Him by showing us that He is holy, and we are not. Only through the cross can we approach Him in His splendor and Holiness. Thank God for the law that shows us our sin and leads us to Jesus.



Craft

- Materials: Sidewalk chalk or 20 pieces of paper/crayons
- Instructions: Using the panels of your sidewalk, draw out ways to live out each commandment.

Or

- Take 10 pieces of paper. Draw big numbers on each one. On another ten pieces of paper draw out what you think this commandment looks like. Turn all 20 pieces upside down. Play the matching game.



Follow-up Question

If you were making a list of the top ten commandments for your family, what would they be? Why do you think God put the first five as relating to Him and the last five as relating to men? How does being right with God help you be right with men? Can we keep all these commands? What do we do when we can't?



Family Activity

Build a fire. Sit around it and talk about fires. Talk about how we can get warmth, cook food, have light from fires, but how touching it burns us. Talk about God being holy. Holiness is like a fire. There are so many good things we get from God's holiness, but the mountain being covered with fire showed that God is holy, and we are not. We can't touch that holiness; we can see it and benefit from it. Only through the cross can we approach it. Now review the 10 Commandments. Play charades acting out the commandments one at a time.



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 9

Read Isaiah 40:1-11

God is with us. (Snuggle close with family)

The prophet Isaiah is telling the people how much God dearly loves them. Did you hear those sweet words "comfort, comfort"?

I like comfort. Do you have a comfy couch or a comfy bed? When you are snuggled in a comfy spot, everything is great. God is the best comfort. God knows we are weak. But God is strong! He knows we are like the grass. Sometimes we are up, and sometimes we are down. But God is always strong! Our great God loves us very much, just the way we are. I am so glad he loves us tenderly!

Think about Isaiah 40:11 "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; He gently leads those that have young." Jesus is the good shepherd. He carries little ones tenderly, just like your mommy or daddy hold you. I love that God lets us know we are held CLOSE to His heart! That is the comfiest spot ever, CLOSE to God's heart. Always remember that God loves you!

God is with us.



Craft

- Materials: coloring sheet and watercolors
- Instructions: Use your watercolors to color this coloring sheet.

<http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/jesus-christ-holding-a-lamb>



Follow-Up Question

What brings you comfort? Who do you run to when you are scared or sad? How do we lean into Jesus for comfort when we can't see or touch Him?



Family activity

Gather all the things in your house that bring you comfort. A favorite blanket, stuffed animals. Snuggle with them in your fort that you made earlier this week. Talk about what brings you comfort when you are scared or sad.



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 10

Read Luke 1:5-25

Have you ever been speechless? What's the last thing that happened to you that left you feeling that way? When a man and woman marry, many times they will start dreaming of the day when they will have a family of their own. They dream about how many kids they will have, what they will name them and where they will live. This week we have looked at two such couples. Imagine your grandparents. Both these couples were as old as your grandparents. Can you imagine them with a newborn baby? Think about that.

Waiting for what you want is hard. Both these couples listened to God and obeyed Him. They served him with all their hearts and soul and mind and bodies. What do you think they wanted more than anything? They wanted to have a family of their own. Why do you think God made both wait until they were old. Miracles are something only God can do. He can bring something out of nothing. Both Sarah and Elizabeth were barren. Barren means empty and void of life. Think of a desert. What grows in a desert? Not too much! Both these couples were older, and they had lost hope of a child of their own, but what does our God do? He takes them to a place where they must totally trust Him. What's something you've really wanted but had to wait a long time to come? Did you wait well? Do you think these two couples waited well? Read verse 6-8 again. What words are used to describe Zechariah and Elizabeth? Do those same words get used to describe you when you are not getting what you want?



Craft

- Materials: paper, crayons
- Instructions: Before you read the passage from Matthew, make a book out of a piece of paper by folding it in half, then folding it in half again. Staple the seam and cut through the bottom folds to create the pages. Tell your children that after you read the story, they will have to tell it back to you by drawing pictures with no words in their book. After they have finished, have everyone share their book with the family. Talk about how not everyone could read and write back in Jesus' day. They had to rely on storytelling to pass down the important details of their history



Family Activity

Set the timer on the oven for an hour. Try to do everything you do as a family without talking for that one hour. Imagine how hard it was for Zechariah to be silent for all those months while he waited for John to be born. Play Pictionary as a family. Talk about how hard it is to draw something in a hurry or to communicate something really important.



Follow-up Question

Who do Zechariah and Elizabeth remind you of? Go back to the Isaiah passage we read this week. How does the child they are promised remind you of the promise made in Isaiah? How does it make you feel to know that a promise God made thousands of years before is coming true? God always keeps His promises.



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 11

Read Luke 1:26-45

When someone calls on the phone, how do people usually answer it? With HELLO! Or HI! Maybe in Texas, someone might even say HOWDY, like "Big Tex" says at the State Fair! And when I call someone, I usually want to TELL them something; give them a message.

Well God, of course, doesn't need phones to send a message. But God had a very wonderful and important message to share with a young girl named Mary, who He had chosen to be the mother to Jesus, the Son of God. And it was time for God to tell her all about it.

So, God sent His angel, named Gabriel, to deliver this amazing message. Gabriel didn't say Hey or Howdy, though. Gabriel came to Mary and said, "GREETINGS! THE LORD IS WITH YOU!" What was God's message for Mary? That God's plan was to send Jesus into our world to be our Savior. God made a special way for Jesus to come as a baby. Mary had been chosen by God to carry Jesus, the Son of God in her womb. Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon Mary in a powerful and mysterious way.

Jesus' birth is like no other birth. And Jesus is like no other person that ever lived, either. Jesus is Immanuel – which means God with us. Pastor Mark likes to say that Jesus is 100 % God and 100% man. Fully God and Fully man.

God sent Jesus to become like you and me in every way except He never did anything wrong, what we call sin. Then when He grew up, Jesus followed God's plan to rescue us from our own sins by dying on the cross and then coming back to life 3 days later.

We don't deserve to be rescued, but Jesus loves us so much that He left his home in heaven and came first as Mary's little baby and then a man to save us so we can live forever with Him!



Craft: Coffee Filter Angel

- Materials: popsicle stick, 2 or more coffee filters, metallic pipe cleaner, glue and glue gun, markers, sequins/craft gems, thread or cord for hanging
- Instructions:
 1. To make your angel's dress, fold your coffee filter in half or not quite half, depending on how long and layered you want your angel's dress to be. To add an extra layer or frill to your angel's dress, fold 2 or more coffee filters this way, and layer them on top of each other.
 2. Now fold the edges of the coffee filters in until you get a "neckline" that's just a bit wider than your popsicle stick.
 3. Use white glue to glue the dress to the popsicle stick.
 4. To make your angel's wings, fold a coffee filter in half. Cinch the wings in the middle and twist a pipe cleaner around this section. Leave a bit of a tail on the pipe cleaner. It will make it easier glue the wings to the popsicle stick.
 5. For an easy angel face, make eyes, mouth and cheeks with permanent markers or pen.

<https://happyhooligans.ca/coffee-filter-angel-craft-ornament/>



Follow-Up Question

- How does even Gabriel's greeting to Mary point to who Jesus is?
- The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. Where do we see each of them in this passage of Scripture?



Family Activity

- Call a friend or family member and greet them with a message about Jesus.
- Read [Mary's First Christmas by Walter Wangerin](#)



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 12

Read Luke 1:46-56

What does it mean to magnify something? To make it bigger so you can see it better! Have you ever looked through a magnifying glass? So often when we do our expression is one of awe and wonder. We often say, "WOW, look at that!!! I never knew...."

What do you do when you are happy? A LOT of people sing. I can tell when the people in my house are happy when I hear them singing to themselves. It's a sure sign. Every movie we love usually contains a scene where the hero or heroine burst into song when something really good happens, a dream comes true or the battle is won. Even if they don't sing, you hear victory music playing in the scene while they celebrate. The music magnifies the joy of the moment.

Singing praise to God magnifies Him...makes His Name and His goodness BIGGER for everyone who hear you. When Mary shared the joy of carrying Jesus with Elizabeth and she heard the good news of Elizabeth carrying John the Baptist, their hearts were overjoyed. They burst out in song. This is the song we sing so often this time of year. Joy is magnified in song.

What makes you want to sing? When you see a dream come true, when something you really want happens, your heart will burst into song. What you sing about will become BIGGER and BETTER to all who hear you. That's why our hearts and homes are full of Christmas carols this time of year. The radio is bursting with music because the BEST GIFT EVER has come into the world in JESUS!



Craft

Make up your own song. Collaborate on a new Christmas song. Have Mom or Dad or your oldest child be the scribe. Once the song is finished, sing it to a favorite tune or make up your own music. If someone in your family plays an instrument, let them make up a tune. Record it and send it to your grandparents. Do you realize you are one of their dreams come true?



Follow-up Question

Re-read verses 48 and 54-55. How do you see this as the fulfillment of what we read in Genesis 12 earlier this week? Do you know who Mary's great-great-great-great grandfather was? How was she the fulfillment of all those promises as she became the mother of Jesus? How are all nations blessed through her?



Family Activity

Play "Name that Tune" with Christmas carols. Take turns humming the carol until someone figures out which one it is. That person gets to go next. Share your favorite carols with each other. Discuss why they are your favorite. Make a list of them and go to a neighbor who can't get out much. Sing your list of Christmas songs to them.

And/Or

Find a big magnifying glass. Go around the house looking at things up close. What do you learn? What makes you go WOW? How can you do this with Jesus this season?



Family Prayer

Merciful God, who sent Your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WEEK 3

December 14

Read Luke 1:57-80

God had promised Elizabeth and Zechariah a son and now he has arrived! This baby, named John, will be more than just a cousin to Jesus. He has been sent from God with a very special job to do. We are told that he will *prepare the way* for Jesus. What does this mean? It means he will get the people ready for the Messiah whom they have been waiting for! Remember that God has been silent for 400 years. And now John is sent right before Jesus to remind the people to be ready. Like the prophets from the Old Testament, he reminds them to repent of their sins. When we remember our sins, we are ready for a savior!

Zechariah had been silent too (but for only 9 months). God made him silent because he didn't believe that God could really give him a son. But he believes now, doesn't he? And when God lets him speak again, his first words are these beautiful verses of praise to God. He remembers that God has kept his promises to David and Abraham. He tells us that Jesus is coming like the sunrise after a long darkness. Isn't that a wonderful picture to think about?

-Amy Dunlap, *Elementary Ministry Volunteer*



Craft

- Materials: Watercolors and blank sheet of paper
- Instructions: Draw a picture of a sunrise as you imagine seeing it after 400 years of darkness!



Follow-Up Question:

- Why did Elizabeth and Zechariah name their baby John? Look back at 1:8-13 if you need to refresh your memory.
- What does it mean that John prepared the way for Jesus? How can we get ready for Jesus?



Family Activity – Silent Game

- As a family, see who can be completely silent. The person who is “it” selects who they think is being the most silent, then that person becomes it. See how many rounds you get to be it!



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

December 15

Read Revelation 21:1-8

Like the Israelites heading towards the Promised Land, God promises to bring the new Heavens and the new Earth to us! He is promising to restore all that is broken and hurting, and to remove all of our tears and our sadness. God is claiming that His children belong solely to him and that this story will truly end in the happiest of ways! Just like in Genesis, we get to see how glorious God is when he uses his voice to create everything in existence. We hear God say very important words: “It is done”. This means completion or being finished. Like when you read the last chapter of an amazing story or put the last piece into the puzzle, God is telling us that being with Him forever, in this restored new heaven and earth, will be the final part of our story! That is what we are looking forward to with hope. That is where our dreams and our eyes look to, longing for that day to arrive, where Jesus descends from Heaven and rules as King!



Craft

- Materials: two sheets of Paper, Markers
- Instructions: Label one sheet of paper, “Old Heavens and Earth” and the other sheet of paper, “New Heavens and Earth”. List out the broken things on the old Heavens and the Restored things on the new Heavens. Finally, both crumple and un-crumple the old Heavens paper to create a distressed look. Repeat this step and see how the paper changes over time!



Follow-up Question

- What important words does God speak in Revelation 21:6
- How does God show His glory in this chapter of Revelation?
- What do you think the new Heavens and new Earth will look like? What do you dream it will be like?



Family Activity – Something Old, Something New

- **Instructions:** Find both an old version and a new version of something and compare the difference! To make this a game, create a list of items and partner up. First team to collect the most items wins. Or if playing solo, set a timer to see how fast you can go.
- **Ex.** Find a new coin and an old coin, a new sock and an old sock, a new sheet of paper and an “old” sheet of paper



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

December 16

Read Revelation 21:9-27

With the New Heavens and New Earth, comes the New City of Jerusalem. While some read this section as a description of what the new city will look like, others take it as a symbol for the life in heaven for God’s redeemed children. Using our imagination, we can close our eyes and begin to dream and wonder how life with God, forever will be. Reflecting God’s glory and brilliance, the city is described with great beauty being filled with all sorts of gemstones and precious jewels. And with gates that are guarded by angels, we are reminded that we will be safe and secure as promised by God. That he will protect us and care for us. But the greatest change from an old city to new, is that the people of God are not worshiping in a temple or a church because God will be with them every day! Like in the garden, walking with Adam and Eve, God is at the center of this great city. His light is shining out and we, His children, are with him.



Craft

- Materials: Paper and Markers
- Instructions: Draw the New city of Jerusalem as described in Revelation 21



Follow-Up Question

- What is your favorite part of this new city?
- Why isn't there a church or temple in the city?
- Who is going to dwell in the city?



Family activity

- Listen, dance, or sing to “We Will Feast in the House of Zion”
- Read the lyrics and share how this song points to our life in the new city.



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

December 17

Read Micah 4:1-7

Like other prophets before him, Micah brought the Word of the Lord to the people of Israel. As a city, Jerusalem was often the center of major battles and conquests. It was captured and taken by various enemies, with its walls overtaken and the temple where God's people worshiped, destroyed. Yet Micah tells us of a day where the city of Jerusalem will be the center of God's reign. In fact, much of this story shows us how God intends to do the unexpected. God plans to take the weakest of cities and make it the strongest. He will bring peace to world that swords and spears will be turned into farming equipment. Instead of training soldiers, we will be working with and alongside our neighbors enjoying the wonder of God. And finally, we see that God is bringing the outcast and the exiled. Those who aren't the greatest and smartest but those who have been forced from their homes by other nations. God does not call those who are qualified, but rather He qualifies those whom he has called.



Craft

- Materials: Playdough
- Instructions: First, make a sword and a spear with your playdough. Then, like the soldiers in the New City of Jerusalem, turn your weapons into Farm tools! Are there other things you can think of that might be repurposed in the new city? Try that out as well!



Follow-up Question

- Why do you think the city is located on the Highest mountain in this story?
- List the things that make the new city different from the old city
- Which city would you prefer to live in? Why?



Family Activity: New vs Old City Charades

- Prepare: on slips of paper write things that are either from the old city or the new city. Ex – Sword Fight; Farming; Napping under a tree
- Take turns acting the words out and see if others can guess if it is an “old city” word or a “new city” word.
- To compete, divide into teams and get points for each correct action your team guesses. Use a timer or decide how many totals each person can do.



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

December 18

Read Genesis 22:1-14 & Heb 11:17-19

Abraham faced a test that revealed the strength of his faith in God. It was a test that touched his deepest love, but it was also a test that revealed God’s faithfulness and strengthened Abraham’s faith. God commanded Abraham to offer the son he deeply loved back to Him. Isaac was not just his son, he represented his “dream,” the promise of God. God asked Abraham to obey him, even when it was hard. Abraham had worshiped God on the mountain before. He knew that God was pleased with the sacrifice of lambs and goats, but now God asked for a sacrifice of the thing Abraham had dreamed of and longed for and loved: his son, Isaac.

Just as Abraham trusted his Heavenly Father; Isaac trusted his father, Abraham. Isaac loved to worship God with his father. Isaac remembered the wonderful stories of God his father had told him. As they walked up the mountain, they carried the wood, fire, and knife they would need. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham responded, “God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Abraham gave up his desires in order to do what God asked. He didn’t want to give up his son. He didn’t understand God’s plan, but Abraham knew God was trustworthy, that He was faithful, and that He could do all things. Just when Abraham had the knife raised, God called out to him. Abraham looked up and he saw a ram caught by its horns in some nearby bushes. He knew that God provided this ram to take the place of his son. God’s call to sacrifice Isaac would become a picture of God’s sacrifice of His only son, Jesus. God promised that through Abraham’s offspring, all nations on earth would be blessed because Abraham obeyed Him. This promise of all being blessed is found in Abraham’s descendent, Jesus Christ. God would sacrifice His only Son. Jesus died on the cross as an offering for our sins. God provides His forgiveness and love through His Son, Jesus Christ.

– Heath and Scott Beasley, *Elementary Ministry Volunteers*



Craft

- Materials: sidewalk chalk
- Instructions: Go outside to the sidewalk, your walkway or driveway. Choose one person to draw Jesus in a manger, but everyone else draw a lamb (however they would like and what they think a lamb looks like). Have an older child or an adult write John 1:29, “Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”



Follow-Up Question

- What do you love most? What would have been the hardest to give up, like Abraham giving up Isaac?
- How do you think Abraham felt as he walked up the mountain with his son? How do you think God felt giving Jesus for our sins?
- Why does Jesus come as the sacrificial lamb? Why must he die?
- What words describe who God is in Genesis 22?



Family Activity

- Sing, listen or dance to: “I Surrender All” & “Lamb of God”



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

December 19

Read Genesis 28:10-22

Can you imagine being in the shoes of Jacob as you are leaving your family? Jacob had just stolen his brother's birth right and now his brother was conspiring to kill him! And so, he rushed out the door and was fleeing to his Uncle's house. But after a long day's journey, he decided to sleep. Using a rock as a pillow, he fell fast asleep and had the most incredible encounter with God. I can imagine for Jacob that some of the stories that he was told about God, as a child, felt a bit distant. Sure, Isaac had survived a miraculous sacrifice but for Jacob, he had only ever seen the harder parts of being a twin with Esau. But can you imagine that night for Jacob? He hears the voice of God affirming that He is the God of his father Isaac and also his grandfather Abraham, and that the promises for them are also the promises for his own life! That this land would be for him and his offspring and that from him, the whole world would be blessed. He sees the staircase or ladder with angels descending and ascending to heaven and knows that God is exactly who He says he is, and his promises are real!

God is at work in this story, actively shaping and pursuing Jacob. This will become one of two incredible encounters that Jacob has with God, struggling to find and believe his place in God's kingdom. But God, with the picture of a ladder connecting the heaven to the earth, is committed to bringing heaven to us and establishing his people, for his own glory!



Craft

- Materials: Paper and playdough
- Instructions: Sketch out the dream sequence that Jacob has. Then use the playdough to make a 3-D ladder or staircase.



Follow-up Question

- How do you think Jacob felt leaving his family?
- How would you have reacted to the dream that Jacob had?
- List out ways that God has answered prayers in your life or been there for you



Family Activity - Act it out!

- Using props around the house to help, reenact the story from the perspective of Jacob. Possible characters: Voice of God, Jacob, Angels descending and ascending staircase



Family Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

WEEK 4

December 21

Read Philippians 2:5-11

God loves you and He loves me. And did you know God is with us? His name is Immanuel which means God with us. In these verses we see Our Savior was first a servant. Even though He is The King of all Kings, He chose to serve. He willingly traded His crown for a cross. That cross is where He paid for all our sin. And Jesus wants us to follow His example. What If He hadn't chosen to serve and die willingly on the cross? We wouldn't have a Savior. We wouldn't have forgiveness for our sin. So today think of ways you can serve someone else. Put someone else's needs above your own. And while doing this remember what Jesus did for you. With your tongue confess that Jesus is Lord and give God all the glory! Praise God for Jesus!



Craft

- Materials: Crayons and paper
- Instructions: Make a coupon for one household chore you can do to serve your family this week.



Follow-Up Question

- Why do you think Jesus laid down His crown for the cross?
- How do you feel when someone serves you, is kind to you and helps you?
- How do you feel when you serve someone else, and are kind to them and help them?



Family Activity

Have each family member give their coupon to someone in your family and let them use it today. After you've done your chore to serve your family, share how it made you feel to serve. And share how it feels when someone serves you.



Family Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by Your daily visitation, that Your Son Jesus Christ, at His coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 22

Read Titus 2:11-3:7

What does "God with us" mean? It means that because Jesus came, it's possible for us to go to heaven when we die. But when God sent us Jesus, it was more than this. We are now on God's team and part of His big wonderful plan, a plan that He had for each of us when He made the world. It was a special plan... He would send His Son, Jesus, as a baby who would grow up to be a perfect Man, showing all people how they could make good choices.

But He knew people couldn't do it on their own. So He took away the bad part of death for them and for us when He died and rose again. Jesus then went back to heaven to be with God and sent us the perfect present, the Holy Spirit, to be with us always.

Because of this, we can begin to make those good choices that God prepared for us when He created us. According to God's Word, the Holy Spirit came and enables us to choose to repent and to choose to believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us live the right way making good choices every day. We can choose to do what God says. We can choose to: "be obedient to every good work"; "speak evil of no one"; "avoid quarreling"; "be gentle"; "show perfect courtesy toward all people" and many other good choices that we are to be making.

So, because God loved us and made us to be on His team, we now want to read the Bible to learn what He wants us to do and we now want to thank Him every day for being with us always.

-Susan Keyes, *Nursery Ministry Volunteer*



Craft

- Materials: Crayons and paper
- Instructions: Make a Christmas card that shows love to someone



Follow-up Question

- What does God with us mean?
- Who did God send to help us make good choices?
- What book did God give us that shows us everything He wants us to do?



Family Activity

Have your family take their Christmas cards to a loved one or neighbor



Family Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by Your daily visitation, that Your Son Jesus Christ, at His coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 23

Read Matthew 1:1-17

God has a perfect plan for all of us. In these verses you will see that God had a perfect plan for the time Jesus would be born. Did you know God had a perfect plan for the time you would be born? It wasn't an accident. You were born at the exact moment God wanted you to be born. You were born to the exact parents and into the exact family God wanted you to be born into. God's people had been looking for a Savior for a very long time. Sometimes we feel like we're waiting a long time for God to do something. His plan and His timing are perfect. So, our job is to trust Him, to praise Him, to thank Him, and to wait for Him. His plan for your life is PERFECT!



Craft

- Materials: Crayons and paper, sidewalk chalk or paints and paper
- Instructions: Draw a picture of your family around your Christmas tree. It will remind you of the beautiful family God gave you and His beautiful gift of sending Jesus at Christmas.



Follow-Up Question

- Why do you think God has a perfect plan for all of us?
- How does it make you feel to know He loves you so much He has a perfect plan for you?



Family activity

Sing Christmas Carols as a family and remember God's perfect plan for each of you and His perfect plan for sending Jesus.



Family Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by Your daily visitation, that Your Son Jesus Christ, at His coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 24

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Remember God's perfect plan? God's perfect plan for Jesus was to have Mary as His mother and Joseph as His earthly father. God also had a perfect plan for when Jesus would be born. And where He would be born. He also had a perfect name for His son. The angel told Joseph to not be afraid but to take Mary as his wife and call his son, JESUS. The angel also told Joseph that this baby would save His people from their sins. His name is also IMMANUEL. Which means God with us. God loves us so much He not only created us but wanted us to have a way back to Him. So He sent His only son Jesus so He could be our connection back to God.



Craft

- Materials: Playdough
- Instructions: Create a nativity scene with baby Jesus, His mother Mary and His father Joseph.



Family Activity

Pull out your family's nativity. Take turns telling the story of Jesus birth to the rest of your family. Each of you will have a different perspective that will be a blessing to your family.



Follow-up Question

- Who was Jesus Heavenly Father?
- What city was Jesus born in?
- Where was Jesus born?



Family Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by Your daily visitation, that Your Son Jesus Christ, at His coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

December 25

Read Luke 2:1-21

This is the most beautiful story of Love. It shows us how much God loves us. It also shows us how much Mary loved God, and how she trusted Him to help her be the mother to the Savior of the world. Childcare birth is not easy even if it is the Savior of the World. It was full of pain, but also a labor of love. Joseph and Mary were all alone in a stable full of animals. It was probably not very clean. It was probably cold. There were no doctors or midwives to help them in the middle of the night. But the star shone bright and reminded them that God was with them. Joseph and Mary were very aware that this baby was the creator of the universe, He would move mountains, He was the Savior of the world.

As all of this was happening, angels appeared to the shepherds in the field. Not to kings or government officials, but to lowly shepherds. And told them. "FEAR NOT! I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. A savior has been born in Bethlehem. And you will find Him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." A manger? Don't you mean a beautiful crib in a nice, warm nursery? No! A scratchy, hay filled manger in a stable filled with stinky animals was where the Savior of the World was born. All the angels were praising God saying, "GLORY

TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED!" So the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see what was going on. There they found Him with His mother Mary and father Joseph. All the while His mother Mary was treasuring all these things in her heart. And they named him Jesus just as the angel told them to do.



Craft

- Materials: Your choice
- Instructions: Make a birthday cake for Jesus and sing Happy Birthday to Him



Follow-Up Question

- What do you think Mary was thinking? How do you think she felt?
- What do you think Joseph was thinking? How do you think he felt?
- What do you think the shepherds were thinking? How do you think they felt?



Family Activity

Have everyone put on their bath robe. Read together this beautiful love story of Jesus birth.



Family Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by Your daily visitation, that Your Son Jesus Christ, at His coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.