

Advent Devotional for Teen Girls

Scripture Verses for Week One - Hope

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⁶ For a child is born to us. A son is given to us; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. – **Isaiah 9:6**

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11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. - **Luke 1:11-13**

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14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. - **Luke 1:14-16**

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29 Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. 30 “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “For you have found favor with God! 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

- **Luke 1:29-33**

34 Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

35 The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. - **Luke 1:34-35**

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36 What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. 37 For the word of God will never fail."

38 Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her. - **Luke 1:34-38**

Week One: Hope – The Prophecy Candle (Purple)

Scriptures – Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:5-17, Luke 1:26-38

This Week's Theme and Main Idea – The Prophecy candle and the prophets - Jesus brings us hope more than anything else ever could.

Christmas song of the week: *"Oh Come All Ye Faithful"* [lyrics attached in separate folder. Feel free to print them out for each student to use to sing along.]

The first candle - The Prophecy Candle

"The first candle is called the "Prophecy candle." It symbolizes hope. It's lit on the first day of Advent to remember the prophets of old, who wrote about the birth of the Messiah long before He was even born!

"Can anyone name a few prophets that predicted Jesus's birth?"

"Those are all good answers! Here are some notable prophets that we are going to discuss today:"

"There was a really popular prophet named Isaiah who lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born. He wrote some of the most famous verses about the birth of the Messiah, also called the Savior. Today, we know Jesus is our Savior, but back in Isaiah's days, Jesus wasn't born yet. So, the prophets weren't sure Who the Messiah would be. They just had faith that He was coming and was going to save humanity.

Let's see what Isaiah has to say about the Messiah.

"Who has **Isaiah 9:6 (WEB)?**

⁶For a child is born to us. A son is given to us; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

"As you can see from this passage, Isaiah was hopeful about the Messiah's birth. He was trying to express that hope to Israel, who desperately needed a Savior. You see, Israel had the Old Testament Law which was given to

them by God, but they were terrible at keeping the law. They were constantly breaking it and sinning. They needed a Savior that would give them salvation and a new way of living.

“For years afterward, the Israelites would read Isaiah’s words and anxiously wait for the birth of their Messiah.

“There’s another famous prophet mentioned in the Bible. You may have heard of him. I’ll give you a hint: he was Jesus’s cousin! Can anyone guess who he is?”

“John the Baptist! He’s another famous prophet who told the people about the Messiah’s coming. He wasn’t much older than Jesus, but he knew early on in his life that Jesus was the Messiah. Over the course of his short life, he spread the word about Jesus to everyone he could.

“Now John the Baptist was kind of a crazy guy. He ate weird things and was kind of a “survivalist” who made his home out in the desert. And guess what? He was born in some of the craziest circumstances ever.

“You see, John’s father was named Zechariah, who was a priest. Now, before John was born, Zechariah was really old and so was his wife, Elizabeth. They weren’t able to have any children. But one day, Zechariah was performing his priestly duties in the temple. Suddenly, an angel appeared to him with a spectacular message:

“Let’s read **Luke 1:11-16 (NIV)** Who has verses 11 through 13?

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.

“Okay, whoever has verses 14-17, please finish reading.

14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

“Isn’t that bonkers? John’s parents were super old. They never should have been able to have children at their age. But John was a special child who needed to be born. His crazy birth story just shows how special of a person he really was, and how important his message about Jesus was going to be to the entire world!

“You see, Isaiah, John, and the other prophets knew what it meant to have hope. They had hope that Jesus would do everything that was prophesied about Him. They had hope that Jesus would bring peace to a dying world. That’s why we light the Prophecy candle on the first week of Advent - to remind everyone about the wonderful hope we have through baby Jesus’s birth.”

Discussion about Hope

“The prophets talked about the hope that Jesus was going to bring to the world. So, what are you hoping for this Christmas? What is the coolest gift you could possibly get? Or what is a really cool gift you once got that you loved?

“Those are all awesome gifts! Do you know who else was waiting for a cool gift? The Israelites, of course!

“A long time ago, they would read the words of the prophets and long for the best gift ever - the Messiah. The prophets told Israel that a baby would someday be born who was God in human skin. This baby would grow up to be a King who would save everyone. He would rescue His people and free them.

“But there was a huge problem. Can you guess what that was?

“Since the Israelites lived under the control of the Roman empire at the time of Jesus’s birth, they believed that the Messiah would conquer Rome. Makes sense, right? You would probably think that too! But the Israelites misinterpreted the prophets. What the prophets really meant was that the Messiah would do something even better than conquer Rome: He would save every single person from their sins so that all people (even Romans!) could live free, joyful lives with God forever.

“Year after year, the people searched for, hoped, and waited anxiously for this prophesied baby. Finally, the day came! A girl named Mary was visited by an angel. The angel told her that she would become the mother of the Messiah. Mary wondered how this could possibly be since she was unmarried and still a virgin. But the angel told her that God was powerful enough to do anything. She would soon become mother of the Messiah and He was to be named Jesus.

“Let’s read about Mary’s response to the angel in **Luke 1:29-38 (NLT)**

“Whoever has verses 29-33, please read them.

29 Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.³⁰ “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “For you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

“Awesome. Whoever has verses 34-35, please read them.

34 Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

35 The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

“Thank you for reading. Now, whoever has the rest of the verses, please finish reading them.

36 What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. 37 For the word of God will never fail.”

38 Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

“As you can see by these verses, baby Jesus was born miraculously through Mary. As Jesus grew up, He did every single thing that was originally prophesied about the Messiah! He never conquered Rome. Instead, He saved people from their sins and gave them a new hope of

heaven. But the cool thing is, He did it for every human on the planet, including you and me.

“Even though you and I might hope for Christmas gifts this year, we have already received the best gift we could ever hope for Christmas! That gift is baby Jesus. He was given to us by God so that we can live joyful, freedom-filled lives with Him forever. This is why we celebrate Advent and Christmas. It’s a reminder of the fantastic hope of heaven that Jesus gave us.”

Discussion Questions (Answer here or in your journal)

- Have you ever felt like something was hopeless in your life? How did you respond?
- What are some things that bring you hope for the future?
- What is something you can do to give hope to someone who needs it this week?

Weekly Activity – Homemade Prayer Tree

What you will need:

- *Twigs or small branches of equal thickness*
- *Garden clippers*
- *Construction paper*
- *A hole punch and Scissors*
- *Ornaments*
- *Plenty of string, yarn, or twine*
- *Pens*

Instructions for activity:

1. Go outside and gather lots of twigs or branches of similar thickness (about 8 - 10 per person.) With garden clippers, cut all the twigs in graduating lengths so that they eventually get shorter and shorter.
2. Cut two long pieces of string, about 2 - 3 arm's length. Make sure both strings are the same length!
3. Tie the first string around the end of the longest branch, and the second string around the other end of the branch. This will be the bottom of the tree.
4. With the first string, create a loop around the next twig, which should be shorter than the previous twig. Then, repeat with the other side. Continue to loop the strings around the twigs until the last, shortest twig is used. Knot the strings together at the very top. The tree is complete.
5. Now that your tree is made, decorate it however you want!
6. Cut out some construction paper tags, hole-punch them, and write the names of a few people you are going to faithfully pray for every day this Christmas season. Attach all the ornaments, the tags, and anything else you would like to decorate your tree with.
7. Lastly, hang it on your wall, door, or a corkboard, and don't forget to faithfully pray for the people on the tree!

Christmas song of the week: “Oh Little Town of Bethlehem”

Verse One

*O little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

Verse Two

*For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above.
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.*

Verse Three

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

Verse Four

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us today!
We hear the Christmas angels; the great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel!*

Scripture Verses for Week 2



¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. - **Matthew 1:18-19**



²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” - **Matthew 1:20-21**



²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus. - **Matthew 1:22-25**



Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. - **Hebrews 11:6**

Week Two: Faith – The Bethlehem Candle (Purple)

Scriptures – Matthew 1:18-25, Hebrews 11:6

What We Discussed Last Week – The Prophecy Candle - Jesus brings us hope more than anything else ever could.

This Week's Theme and Main Idea – Without faith we can't please God. Faith is what made Christmas what it is today.

Christmas song of the week: *"Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"*

The second candle - The Bethlehem Candle

"Does anyone remember what we discussed last week, and what the name of the first Advent candle was?"

"We just lit the second candle of Advent. Last week we discussed the first candle or, the "Prophecy Candle," which symbolized hope. The second candle is called the "Bethlehem Candle." It symbolizes faith.

"After Mary got the special word that she was soon going to be the mother of the Messiah through supernatural means, she had a rough time. Especially after her baby bump began to show!

"Can anyone guess why?"

"You see, Mary had a fiancé, named Joseph. They weren't married yet. Out of the blue, Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant! You can imagine how he probably felt! He likely felt cheated and hurt that his fiancé would do something like that. Especially since he didn't understand the circumstances.

"Even though Joseph was angry that Mary would be unfaithful to him, he still didn't want her to be publicly humiliated for her "infidelity." Back in those days, it was actually dangerous for young women to be unfaithful. They could have been shunned, abused, or even killed! Though he was hurt, Joseph didn't want Mary's life to be threatened. So he decided to break up with her quietly. As he was thinking about how to do it, he fell asleep. That's when an angel visited him in a dream.

"Let's read **Matthew 1:18-25 (NLT)**. Who has the first verses?"

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

“Perfect, thank you. Whoever has verses 20-21, please grace us with your reading.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,^[1] for he will save his people from their sins.”

“Now whoever has verses 22-25, please finish reading for us.

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

“Isn’t that really cool? Joseph was a faithful guy. He received the angel’s message and believed it. He knew in his heart that Mary had done nothing wrong. Instead of breaking up with her, he decided to marry her early. He raised the baby as his own son.

“Joseph had the faith to do what many people would be unable to do! He didn’t humiliate his fiancé, or become jealous or angry at her. He protected her and adopted baby Jesus.

“Mary’s faith was special too. Remember what we talked about last week? When the angel came to her to tell her about the supernatural birth of the Messiah, she believed that it would happen! Despite worrying about what her fiancé might think, she accepted the message from the angel and trusted in God to take care of her.

“Fast forward a few months. Mary and Joseph are now married and Mary was still pregnant with Jesus... very pregnant, in fact... and suddenly, the Caesar ordered all Jews to go to their family’s homes to pay taxes. It turned out that both Mary and Joseph’s ancestral families were from the town of Bethlehem. They traveled many miles to get there. It must have been terrible to travel like that for a pregnant woman!

“But that’s the reason we light the Bethlehem candle. It’s to remind us of the extraordinary faith that Mary and Joseph had and commemorate the grueling travel to their hometown of Bethlehem. You see girls, it would soon be the birthplace of our Messiah.”

Discussion about Faith

“Let’s discuss more about faith now. Who has **Hebrews 11:6 (WEB)?**

Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

“Can anyone explain what this verse means in their own words?”

“Those are all great answers. What this verse means is that the very foundation of Christianity is faith. Without it, we can’t be close to God or know Him at all. That is why faith is so important and we commemorate it on Advent. Joseph and Mary both had enough faith to believe in God’s words regarding the Messiah. Because they trusted in Him, they were blessed, and baby Jesus was able to come into the world to save you and me.

“Let’s think about how scary this is, though. Times were different back in those days. Mary would not have been much older than you when she received the angel’s message! How would you have responded if an angel brought you the same message it brought Mary?

“It’s scary to step out in faith, isn’t it! But faith is crucial in the Christmas season. Do you know why? Because Christmas is the celebration of Jesus’s birth! If we don’t have faith that Jesus came to earth as a baby, then we also can’t believe that He died for us or gave us forgiveness.

“Advent is a countdown to Christmas. Does anyone know what the word “Christmas” actually means?

“Christmas literally means “Christ’s day.” That says it all, doesn’t it? The faithful people who came before us named Christmas after the birth of Jesus Christ.

“This shows is that faith is really what shaped Christmas to be what it is today. It’s the most famous holiday in the entire world! Nearly everyone knows about existence of Christmas, even people in other countries that don’t believe in Jesus, and those who don’t celebrate Christmas. This explains why many faithless people today want to take His name out of the holiday!

“These stories are so unfortunate! Due to Jesus’s beautiful birth and the faith of all the people who came before us, Christmas became a huge celebration all over the world. Can you imagine what Christmas would look like without faith, or if baby Jesus was no longer part of the holiday? Without baby Jesus being a part of Christmas, the entire holiday would become shallow. It certainly wouldn’t be what it is today!

“My point is, Jesus’s birth is literally what shaped Christmas! It is a special celebration for the birth of a very special baby.

“This holiday season, keep your faith in God as you prepare for Christmas. Remember that you are celebrating the most awesome person ever born: Jesus Christ!”

Discussion Questions about Faith (Answer here or in your journal)

- Imagine Christmas without baby Jesus. What would that holiday look like?
- Do you know anyone who celebrates Christmas but doesn't understand the meaning behind it? What do the holidays look like for them?
- What are some things you can do to share your faith with someone this Christmas?
- How and when are you going to do these things?

Weekly Activity – Eat Together

“Did you know that joy is often associated with food? One of the “fruits of the spirit” is joy. Even Jesus calls Himself both the “Bread of Life,” and also the “Giver of Joy!”

“Joy and food are so similar because food gives us nourishment for our bodies. In a weird way, joy does too! Here’s what **Proverbs 17:22 (WEB)** has to say: “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” In that case, joy really is nourishing to us!

“Eating with friends or family is one of the ways that we can share joyful moments with the people we cherish.”

Christmas song of the week: “Joy to the World”

Verse One

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing!

Verse Two

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ!
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy!

Verse Three

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as, the curse is found!

Verse Four

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love,
and wonders Of His love, and wonders, wonders, of His love!

Scripture Verses for the Week

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In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register. – **Luke 2:1-3**

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4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. – **Luke 2:4-5**

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6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. – **Luke 2:6-7**

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. – **Luke 2:8-9**

10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” – **Luke 2:10-12**

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” – **Luke 2:13-14**

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15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” – **Luke 2:15**

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17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, – **Luke 2:17-18**

Week Three: Joy - The Shepherd's Candle

Scriptures – Luke 2:1-5, Luke 2:6-7, Luke 2:8-15, and Luke 2:17-18

What We Discussed Last Week – The Bethlehem Candle - Without faith we can't please God. Faith is what made Christmas what it is today.

This Week's Theme and Main Idea – Joy nourishes us! It is meant to be spread around!

Christmas song of the week: "*Joy to the World*"

The third candle - The Shepherd's Candle (Pink)

"Does anyone remember what we discussed last week, and what the name of the second Advent candle was?"

"Today, we discuss the third candle, or the Shepherd's Candle."

"Do you remember how last week we left off talking about how Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem? Well, today we finally are going to talk about the birth of Jesus!"

"Let's start out by reading **Luke 2:1-5 (NIV)**. Who has verses 1-3?"

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

"Thanks for reading. Now whoever has verses 4-5, please read them."

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

"Thank you! As you can gather from these verses, Mary and Joseph have finally arrived in Bethlehem. But on their first night there, Mary and Joseph were unable to find any inns at which to stay. The city was packed with people traveling because of the census. Bethlehem wasn't a very large town to begin with, so there probably weren't a lot of places to stay even

prior to the tax. The inns that were there were completely full. It is likely that tons of people had to sleep outdoors because there was no room for them. But Mary began giving birth. She couldn't exactly do that outside! So, someone offered them a place to stay in a stable, or a barn.

"Who has **Luke 2:6-7 (NIV)**? Will you please read it for us?

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

"Have you ever been inside a barn? Barns are dirty, there's poop everywhere, and farm animals often don't smell the best. But it was better than giving birth in the middle of the street, where Mary would be in the public eye! The barn offered some privacy. Joseph and Mary accepted the offer to stay in the barn, and soon after, Mary gave birth to Jesus. She swaddled Him in cloths, and laid Him in a feeding trough full of hay to sleep. Not the most glamorous place for the Messiah to be born!

"Not too far away, there were shepherds working the night shift. Out of nowhere, they were visited by tons of angels. These angels appeared in the night sky, proclaiming the good news that the Messiah, or the Savior, was finally born! The shepherds were terrified! But they listened intently to what the angels had to say. As soon as the angels left, the shepherds discussed what happened among themselves. They were joyful over the message of the angels. At last, their Savior was born! They had been hearing about the Messiah for years, and He was finally here. They left their flocks of sheep and went to find the baby Messiah.

"Let's read **Luke 2:8-15 (NIV)**

"Who has verses 8-9?"

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

"Now, who has verses 10-12?"

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a

Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

“Thank you for reading. Now let’s read verses 13-14.

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

“Perfect. Who has the last verse (15)?

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

“That’s exactly what the shepherds did. They left their sheep behind to go find baby Jesus. They found the baby wrapped in cloths and worshiped Him as Messiah.

“Remember the name of this week’s candle? It’s called the Shepherd’s Candle. The Shepherd’s Candle commemorates the poor shepherds who were the first people to receive news about the Messiah’s birth. Do you know why that’s so special? Because God chose the poorest people to bless with this news. God didn’t choose the rich, the kings, or the famous people to receive this angelic message. He chose the shepherds. They were the poorest of the poor, yet they were the first people to meet the newborn Messiah! This shows how much God loves all people, the rich and the poor alike. In fact, the birth of the Messiah proves how much God loves the whole world.”

Discussion about Joy

“What makes you happy during Christmas? Is it Christmas songs? Food? Giving gifts to your family? Or maybe the festive Hallmark movies?

“All of these things are super fun! But have you ever noticed that the day after Christmas is kind of depressing?

“The day after Christmas is so sad because all the festivities fade really fast. The tree comes down, the gifts get put away, the Christmas movies won’t be seen again for another year, and they don’t even wait until New Year’s to turn off the Christmas music on the radio!

“Let me tell you a secret: Christians have been given a superpower. It’s called joy. Joy is different than happiness. Can anyone guess the difference between joy and happiness?

“Happiness is circumstantial – in other words, it doesn’t last very long. Cheesy Christmas movies, cookies, and gifts give us momentary happiness. Soon after Christmas, that happiness goes away. But joy is something that never really goes away, even during tough times. Joy is constant and is so much deeper than happiness. Happiness is circumstantial, joy is present regardless of the situation.

“On the night of Jesus’s birth, the shepherds found true joy at the good news that the Messiah that they heard about had finally come. That joy lasted forever! **Luke 2:17-18 (NIV)** says that the shepherds spread the word about Jesus and the message of the angels. The people who heard the testimony of the shepherds were astonished at their joy. After all, the shepherds were poor and lowly! Yet they had so much joy. Their joy was so much deeper than happiness.

“Who has **Luke 2:17-18?**

¹⁷ After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished,

“You and I have access to this same joy the shepherds had, all because of Jesus’s birth. It’s the kind of joy that keeps us living in the Christmas spirit all year long, just like the shepherds did!”

Discussion Questions about Joy

- Have you ever experienced true joy? If so, talk about it.
- What are some things that you think contribute to joy?
- Do you sometimes find yourself lacking joy? If so, why do you think that is?
- What is one thing you can do to truly have joy all year long?

Optional Activity – A Joyful Letter to Baby Jesus.

Take the five minutes to write a letter to baby Jesus. Describe how you feel about Him coming to earth as a baby – write down whatever is on your hearts.

Share what you wrote with a friend, or add it to your Christmas tree to picture “giving it to Jesus”.

Peace Activity – Love Your Enemy

“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
– James 3:18 (WEB)

“One of the biggest ways we can learn about peace is by learning how to love! If we love other people, we won’t be offended by them so easily. If we aren’t offended, we will naturally have more peace. The love we have for others produces peace.

“Loving others can be really, really tough. Jesus gets it. He was the ultimate example of peace and love, and yet people chose to abuse, torture, and kill Him. However, on the cross, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them because they don’t know what they are doing.” Even at the very end of His life before His resurrection, Jesus chose to love those who hated Him. Can we live by the example that Jesus set?

“For this activity, think about one person that you don’t get along with. It could be anyone – a family member, a sibling, or someone that goes to your school or church. **(It’s against the rules to say the person’s name out loud!! This is not a gossip session!)**”

1. Name one thing you admire about the person you don’t get along with:
2. What is one way you can show love to this person even if you can’t get along with them?

Example:

1. *“The person I don’t get along with is not afraid of people. I weirdly admire that about her.”*
2. *“I can show love by trying not to gossip about her behind her back.”*

“Every time you get irritated with this person in the future, try to think about what you said about them in this activity. Instead of being angry with them and losing your sense of peace, try to pray a prayer for them.”

Christmas song of the week: “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Verse One

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains.
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains:

Chorus

Glo - o - ria in excelsis Deo!

Verse Two

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?

Chorus

Verse Three

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing.
Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the Newborn King.

Chorus

Scripture Verses for Week Four - Peace



18 Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

19 The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.” - **Luke 1:18-20 (NIV)**



²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” - **Luke 2:26-28 (NIV)**



“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” - **Isaiah 26:3 (WEB)**

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” – **Luke 2:29-33 (NIV)**



“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
– **James 3:18 (WEB)**

Week Four: Peace – The Angel Candle

Scriptures – Luke 1:18-20, Luke 2:26-33, Isaiah 26:3, and James 3:18

What We Discussed Last Week – The third candle, the Shepherd's Candle - Joy nourishes us! It is meant to be spread around and shared, just like the shepherds did!

This Week's Theme and Main Idea – Jesus brings peace and freedom from anxiety. The angels declared Jesus to be the Prince of Peace.

Christmas song of the week: *"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

The fourth candle - The Angel Candle (Purple)

"Does anyone remember what we discussed last week, and what the name of the third Advent candle was?"

"Today is the last week of Advent before Christmas Day. Tonight, we light the fourth candle, or the "Angel Candle." The Angel Candle represents peace. This candle commemorates all the angels who came to earth to proclaim that Jesus, who is called the "Prince of Peace" was coming into the world.

"There are four notable angelic visits we can discuss – one for each lit candle. Can anyone remember some of the angelic visits we've already discussed in weeks past?"

"Good job everyone, those are all great answers! Let's talk about the very first angelic visit we discussed at the beginning of Advent. Do you remember a priest named Zechariah? Who was he?"

"Remember, Zechariah was John the Baptist's dad. He was doing his usual priestly duties in the temple when all of a sudden, he was visited by an angel named Gabriel. Gabriel proclaimed that Zechariah was going to be a father. In fact, his baby was going to be a great man who preached of the coming of the Prince of Peace to many people. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were unable to have children for many years, and now, they were childless and very old. Zechariah didn't believe the divine words of the angel.

“Let’s see how the Gabriel responds to Zechariah’s unbelief:

“Let’s read **Luke 1:18-20 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

“Though Zechariah didn’t believe at first, he soon realized the truth of what the angel Gabriel was saying! He became unable to speak until John was born.

“The second angelic visit features Gabriel again. This time, Gabriel appeared to Mary herself. He proclaimed that Mary was going to give birth to the “Peace-bringer,” or Jesus. Unlike Zechariah, Mary believed Gabriel’s words, despite any fear of what would happen to her.

“Let’s see what the Bible has to say about this story:

“Whoever has **Luke 2:26-28 (NIV)**, please read.

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

“Very good reading, thank you! Now please finish with **Luke 2:29-33 (NIV)**:

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“As you can see from these verses, Gabriel was proclaiming the Good News about the birth of Jesus, our Prince of Peace.”

“Now, let’s talk about the third angelic visit. This visit is from an unnamed angel – it could have been Gabriel, but we don’t know for sure. This angel appeared to Joseph, Mary’s fiancé, in a dream. He explained to Joseph that Mary was pregnant due to God’s power. She was completely innocent of any infidelity or wrongdoing. He told Joseph that Mary was going to birth the Prince of Peace, or the Messiah, through the power of God. Thankfully, Joseph believed the words of the angel. He married Mary and raised Jesus as his very own child.

“The final angelic visit is probably the most famous one! It’s the one we discussed during last week’s lesson. A whole army of angels came to lowly shepherds to exclaim “Peace on earth and good will towards men!” The angels proclaimed the excitement of the Messiah being born. This Messiah was going to bring peace to all men in the coming days. The shepherds believed the words of the angels and went to find the baby Messiah.

“The most notable thing about each of these angelic visits is the message they brought: each of them declared the birth of the Messiah - a prince who would someday bring peace to the entire world. This is why we call Jesus the Prince of Peace, to remember that peace is ours through Jesus Christ!”

Discuss

“Do you ever feel anxious about anything? What are some things that typically make you feel anxious?”

“Yeah, all these things are terrible, aren’t they? It’s no fun to feel anxious. All this anxiety might make you wonder, “Why is everything so awful if Jesus says He brings peace?”

“You see, the peace that Jesus brings is different than the peace we typically understand. We often think of peace in terms like “world peace.” But Jesus didn’t come to bring “world peace” as we know it (at least not yet!) Instead, He came to give each and every one of us a personal kind of peace. This feeling is similar to *tranquility* or *deep contentment*.

Was there ever a time you felt tranquil or had deep contentment?

“It’s easy to feel peaceful when times are good, but imagine feeling calm even while something terrible was happening to you. Sounds impossible, right? It’s not! Jesus gives us a “peace that surpasses understanding.” No matter what happens on earth, we have access to this special kind of peace. Sounds pretty good!

“So how do we get this otherworldly peace? Let’s read **Isaiah 26:3 (WEB)** -

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!”

“Can anyone describe in your own words what this verse is talking about?

“Thank you for sharing!

“In other words, this verse says that all you have to do to receive peace is to trust in God and keep your thoughts fixed on Jesus!

“As you continue to trust in Him, He will give you the calmness and peace you are looking for. In the meantime, you will also be able to forgive others who hurt you. You’ll be able to seek forgiveness from someone you hurt. You’ll learn to love others more (even if they irritate you!)

“Even though it’s hard to do, all of these things combined will contribute to a wonderful feeling of peace that only Jesus can give you.

“So, let’s do a group project now that is going to help us feel more peaceful today!”

Optional Group Activity – Lend a Helping Hand

With so much negativity in the world, people need peace more than ever - especially those who don't know Jesus during this holiday season. This is a great reason for you and your group to do something impactful to promote Jesus and the peace He brings.

Share some ideas on what you would like our group to do to help our community. Here are some to get started:

-Caroling at a nursing home

-Helping at a food bank

-Collecting items for Piedmont Women's Center

-Helping clean for someone elderly from church

-Helping Facilities undecorate from Christmas or clean after an event

-Picking up trash at a local park

-Preparing meals for people in our community who need them

Groups can pick a date this Winter to go serve and volunteer together.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you believe God can help you overcome anxiety? Why or why not?
- Is there someone you need to forgive in order to help you gain peace of mind? If so, how can you do that?
- Do you need to make amends with someone? How can you seek their forgiveness? [

Christmas Day

To be done alone or with family members.

Light the last candle (White) and play some Christmas songs of your choice.

Today is the most exciting day of the year: Christmas day!

Long ago, there were some foreign men called Magi, or “wise men.” They lived very far away from Jesus’s Jewish birthplace.

The Magi were ancient astronomers who made a living studying the stars and the sky. It turned out that right around the birth of Jesus, there was a star which appeared in the night sky. It greatly piqued their interest because they knew that this was no ordinary star! It meant something very special - the birth of the Messiah would be very soon. The Magi remembered the prophecy that He would be born in a Jewish town, so they followed the star to Jerusalem.

When they arrived at the city, the Magi thought that the leaders would be overjoyed at the birth of the Messiah. But when they talked with king Herod, he was jealous when he heard the news. There was no way he wanted a *baby* to take over the throne! He tricked the Magi into believing that he also wanted to find the Messiah so that he could worship Him. He asked the Magi to find the Messiah and then give him word as soon as they knew where He was.

The Magi did indeed find the baby Messiah, named Jesus. They worshipped Him and adored Him. However, an angel came to the wise men and told them not to go back to Herod, since Herod actually wanted to kill baby Jesus. They listened to the angel and returned home a different way.

Read Matthew 2:1-12

These Magi went to great lengths to find the baby Jesus so that they could worship Him. They likely traveled hundreds of miles and in terrible conditions just to meet the Messiah face-to-face. They waited for His birth to be fulfilled. They had faith that the special star was a sign from God, proclaiming the birth of Jesus. They believed the warning from the angel not to return to Herod, thus, saving Jesus's life.

You and I should strive to be like the wise men. Do you know why? Because they had faith in Jesus.

Jesus has promised to come back again! He is not dead. He rose from the grave three days after He was killed. He ascended into Heaven and fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah. When Jesus returns, it will be a day full of joy. Everyone who believes in Jesus will be there. It will be an everlasting time of comfort, happiness, and fun!

This is why we need to strive to have faith just like the wise men had, so that we are ready when Jesus returns. But how do we do that?

1. We need to believe in the prophecy of Jesus.

Believing the prophecy about Jesus is the first way we can be wise men.

The Magi believed in the truth of the *first prophecy* - that Jesus would be born. But for you and me, we must believe in the second prophecy - that Jesus will return. When He does, all who believe in Him will be given a place in heaven, where we will have no more suffering. Instead, every single day in heaven will be exciting, fun, and joyful as we live in Jesus's presence with our friends and family members who also believe in Him!

2. We need to have deep faith

Believing that Jesus exists is not enough. It's a start, but it's not going to get us into heaven. We must believe that Jesus is our Savior who died for us. That is the only way we can be saved.

James 2:19-20 says, *You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder. But do you want to know, vain man, that faith apart from works is dead?*

The man who wrote these verses (Jesus's brother) knew that faith had to be more than just believing in Jesus's existence, because even demons believe Jesus exists. Faith has to have depth to it in order for it to be real!

The wise men showed this depth of faith by traveling in grueling conditions to find the baby Jesus. They didn't take half measures! They traveled hundreds of miles just to adore their Savior.

We must show our depth of faith by believing in Jesus, just as the wise men did.

3. We need to watch for Jesus

Just as the wise man watched for the star in the East, we need to watch for the return of Jesus. This is the heart of Advent- waiting expectantly for Jesus's second coming. We do this by being spiritually prepared. This means doing our best to live in the way that reflects our Savior. When we live like Him, we are preparing ourselves for His return so that we don't get caught off-guard.

4. We need to listen to warnings

The wise men listened to the angel who warned them not to go back to King Herod. In the process, they ended up protecting Jesus's life!

Is there a warning that you've been given that you need to listen to? Maybe there's a person you hang out with that is tearing you down or trying to get you to do wrong things, and you know you shouldn't be friends with that person anymore. Or maybe your parents are warning you not to do something they believe is dangerous for you. Whatever it might be, have the faith and courage to listen to those warnings. You never know how your actions might affect you or someone else later on.

5. We need to adore Jesus

When you do something nice for someone, do you enjoy being thanked by them? Of course you do! We all love being thanked for a job well done.

Did you know that God loves hearing your words of thanks to Him too?

The Bible tells us that one of the best ways we can adore Jesus is by giving Him words of thanks. In fact, the Bible tells us to always be thankful. A thankful heart is very important to Jesus, because it shows that we love Him and all the things He has done for us.

Perhaps when the wise men came to see Jesus, they gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to thank Him for coming into the world as the Messiah.

On this Christmas Day, show some gratitude to Jesus. Give Him thanks for creating the world, creating you, saving you from your sins, and giving you hope for heaven! On the next two pages, write down several things that God has done for you over the years. *(They can be whatever you want, such as "God, thank You for my family," or "God, thank you for my cozy bed.")*

God, thank You for

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Spend some time alone in prayer. Give thanks to God for everything on this list, and come back to it whenever you need to throughout this upcoming year.



*Merry
Christmas!*

