

# CHRISTMAS at REVOLUTION

## A Simple Advent Guide for Families

We know at times the last 21 months haven't felt very hopeful, peaceful, joyful and loving, but when we look to **Advent**, we are expectant that the coming of Jesus does bring **hope, peace, joy and love**. The word advent means *coming*. For the next four Sundays before Christmas, we prepare our hearts for the season by looking at the Bible and remembering both the prophecies that foretold Christ's coming and the gospel stories of his birth.

*And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God." Luke 1:35  
ESV*

Christmas. What a story! Jesus is born of Mary and brings **hope** to all. In the most humble of surroundings, a manger in a field, the Savior of the world comes as the Prince of **Peace**. As Jesus comes to fulfill God's plan for redemption, He brings us great **joy**. And eventually, at the cross, Jesus shows us true **love**.

Traditionally, each week focuses on one of the different gifts that Jesus' arrival brought us: the gifts of **hope, peace, joy, and love**. This guide is meant to be a simple tool to help focus your attention on the things that matter most. Set aside time each Sunday to gather with your family and use this guide as a simple devotional. There's a devotional for each of the four Sundays of Advent and another for Christmas day.

Our prayer is that these devotionals spark conversations and questions with your family about the **hope** we have in Christ, the **peace** he gives us, the **joy** that overflows from our hearts, and the unconditional/sacrificial **love** he has shown us.

# Week 1: Hope

**Devotional:** Sometimes the familiar Christmas songs we sing during the holiday season become just words. We can sing them every year and never really understand the meaning. That said, have you ever thought about the Christmas carol, *O Holy Night*? There's a line in the song: "*a thrill of hope; the weary world rejoices...*" What does that mean? Well, we don't have to look far to feel the weariness in our world. Everyone, to some extent, is weary, tired, worn out, and overwhelmed. **(Share some examples with your family of how the last year has been tough.)**

As we look to the coming of Jesus, a Christian's hope is so different from the world's hope. The world's hope is a wish: *I hope the Braves win* or *I hope I can pass this test tomorrow* or *I hope next year is better than this year*. But when we put our hope in Jesus, our hope is not just a wish. Jesus keeps His promises. Everything Jesus promises and says is true. He's God. He never changes. He can't go back on His word. It's a guaranteed hope that He is the light in the darkness. He came to save us from the penalty of sin and to bring us back into relationship with our Heavenly Father. Biblically, hope means *an expectancy*. And here's the cool part - we can be expectant that Jesus will never leave us! The Bible says Jesus is God and He will always be with us. It's actually one of His names as we see in Matthew 1:23: "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel*" (which means, **God with us**).

Therefore, if hope is *an expectancy*, then we can look at the coming of Jesus as not only something to rejoice about, but to find, as the song says, *thrilling*.

**Scripture:** As a family read and talk about Isaiah 9:2, Lamentations 3:22-24, Romans 5:1-5.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do they mean for us?

## Further Discussion:

- Has there been a time when you were afraid but felt Jesus with you?
- Share about a time you placed your hope in Jesus.
- How can you share the **hope** you have in Jesus with your neighbors, your family, your classmates, your co-workers?

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for not leaving us in darkness but sending your light into the world instead. We have hope because Jesus was born. Help us to shine your light in the darkest corners of our neighborhoods, our schools, our kids sports teams, our workplaces and the world. Help us to follow you and abide in you. We love you. Amen.

## Week 2: Peace

**Devotional:** As we have said, at times the past 21 months have been extremely difficult in so many ways. One way to describe it would be *chaos* which means complete disorder and confusion. When chaos is present, there's only one thing that can break that authority and that is the *shalom or peace of Jesus*. As Isaiah 9:6-7 says: "*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*"

Zeal means excitement. Think about that. **God is excited to send Jesus**. And if God is excited about sending His Son to us, we should be excited about His arrival and presence in our lives. Jesus *is* the Prince of Peace. At Advent, we pause to reflect on the promise of peace He brought to a world filled with sin and chaos.

**Scripture:** As a family read and discuss Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 2:1-7.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do they mean for us?

### Further Discussion:

- What things in your life bring conflict and chaos?
- What can truly break the authority of chaos?
- How does knowing that Jesus came to bring peace between us and God make you feel?

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for sending Jesus to bring peace. We're grateful for the peace that comes through knowing Him. Help us to be carriers of your peace and to celebrate your peace. May we be peacemakers in a world torn by sin and conflict. Help us to follow you and abide in you. We love you. Amen.

## Week 3: Joy

**Devotional:** Have you ever noticed that one of the most amazing things in life is how often the word amazing is used? “Oh, did you see the game last night? That was AMAZING!” or “It’s amazing how gas prices have risen.” or “You have to go to this place I found over the weekend. The pizza is (you guessed it) AMAZING!” The word loses its power when used in so many ways. Do you want to hear something really amazing? God sent His Son to be born with one thing in mind: that Jesus would be the Savior of the world! Jesus brought salvation to a lost and broken world by taking our place for the penalty of our sins, so that we could have an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father. Now THAT’S amazing! If that isn’t the definition of JOY then what is?

**Scripture:** As a family read and discuss Luke 2:8–14.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do they mean for us?

**Further Discussion:**

- What brings you joy?
- How can you and your family bring joy to others this Christmas?

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save us and bring us back into relationship with you. Thank you for bringing us joy through Jesus. We rejoice because He came. And because our joy now overflows, help us share this good news with others so they can experience the joy that we have. Help us to follow you and *abide* in you. We love you. Amen.

## Week 4: Love

**Devotional:** There are so many misconceptions about love. So many songs have been written about love. There's even a holiday in February dedicated to love and candy hearts. But true love? True love can only be found in one place. The Cross. What does that mean? How can the place where Jesus died also be the place where true love was shown? Look no further than John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

As you're sharing this with your family, have each person read that verse and insert their name where it says *the world*. (i.e. For God so loved \_\_\_\_\_ that He GAVE His only Son...) Powerful. Right? That's how much God loves you. Someone had to pay the penalty for our sin, but instead of us paying the penalty, Jesus showed unconditional love by taking our place. Jesus is the demonstration of God's love, and at Advent, we pause to reflect on the overwhelming love he brought to us. The whole purpose of Jesus coming was to show us how much God loves us.

**Scripture:** As a family read and discuss John 3:16-17 and Romans 5:8.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do they mean for us?

### Further Discussion:

- Do you love anyone enough to die for them?
- What are some ways we can show God's love to one another?
- What are some of the ways we misunderstand love?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for your never ending, steadfast love. Thank you for loving us enough to die for us. Help us to love you with all our heart. By your Spirit, help us to love our neighbors. Help us to follow you and *abide* in you. We love you. Amen.

# Christmas Day: Adore

**Devotional:** It's Christmas! Let's sing! "O' come let us adore Him...O come let us adore Him..." Singing this song brings us all great joy and maybe some wonderful memories of caroling, candlelight services and warm apple cider. But what does it mean to adore something or someone? Adore is a great word and one that when reserved only for Jesus, allows us to put Him in His proper place: Lord of our lives. The word adore means to give honor to and to worship so deeply that we cherish that person above everyone else. That's how the wise men approached the newly born Savior when they got to Jerusalem. They came to worship Jesus in that deep affection and adoration.

**Scripture:** As a family read and discuss Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-12.

- What stood out to you in these verses?
- What do they mean for us?

## Further Discussion:

- How can we show Jesus how much we adore Him?
- What are some ways we can share the "Christmas spirit" all year long?

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for sending Jesus. He is a gift beyond our wildest imagination. Through Him we have light and life, hope and peace, joy and love. As we celebrate His birth, we're so grateful, Lord, for your great love. Help us carry your hope, peace, joy, and love with us and help us abide in you. We love you. Amen.