Advent at Home

A FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

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Advent is the four-week season leading up to Christmas. It gives us time to remember the birth of Jesus and look forward with confidence to his return, when he will make all things new. Through hope, peace, love, and joy, we reflect on who Jesus is and what he has done for us. This guide is an invitation to spend intentional time together in God's Word. Gather around the table, share a meal or a treat, light a candle, and talk about Jesus. Use what serves your family and adapt the conversations for the ages in your home.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND

- Suggested supplies for Advent nights
- One gathering guide for each week: Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy
- Communion guidance and a Christmas Day celebration
- A short list of resources and space to plan

A SMALL BEGINNING

Choose one night each week to gather. You do not need to answer every question or use every resource. Read the Scripture, give everyone a chance to share, and pray together. Carry the week's theme into everyday conversations and acts of service.

GETTING STARTED

Preparing for Advent

PREPARE FOR THE MONTH

Have a Bible, an Advent wreath or candles, and any music you want to use. For young children, the Jesus Storybook Bible may be helpful. Plan a simple meal or special treat. Have communion elements available if sharing communion is appropriate for your family.

FOLLOW THE SAME RHYTHM EACH WEEK

1. Gather and light the candles. Begin with the week's candle-lighting words. Invite different family members to help.
2. Read Scripture. Read the main passage aloud. Use the additional readings during the week or as time allows.
3. Talk together. Ask the questions and listen before offering the short teaching summary. Give children room to wonder and ask questions.
4. Sing or listen to the week's Kids' Choir song and talk about how it points to Jesus.
5. Remember and pray. Use the week's prayer.
6. **Communion:** If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use this simple explanation with any weekly gathering.

   Read: Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, or 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

   Say: "The bread and cup remind us of Jesus's body and blood, given for us. We remember his death, rejoice in his resurrection, and proclaim his death until he comes again. The Savior born in Bethlehem is the Savior who gave his life for us." For children who are not participating, explain what the bread and cup mean and invite them to listen and join in prayer. Use the week's prayer to thank God for the hope, peace, love, or joy we have in Christ.
7. Choose a way to serve. Decide on one practical step and make a plan to follow through.

CANDLE ORDER USED IN THIS GUIDE

Week 1 – Hope: Light the first purple candle.

Week 2 – Peace: Light the first and second purple candles.

Week 3 – Love: Light all three purple candles.

Week 4 – Joy: Light all three purple candles and the pink candle.

Christmas Day: Light all four candles and the white Christ candle.

If you do not have an Advent wreath, use the candles you have, flameless candles, or another simple reminder of each theme.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

At meals or bedtime, ask: What did we learn about God? How does that change the way we live? Who can we encourage or serve this week?

WEEK ONE

Hope

Our hope is secure in Christ.

DATE FOR FAMILY WORSHIP _____

MEAL IDEA _____

WHO WE WILL INVITE _____

LIGHT THE FIRST PURPLE CANDLE

Say: "We light the Hope candle to remember that God keeps his promises. Jesus has come, and we wait with confidence for him to return."

READ AND REFLECT

Read: Exodus 3:7-22.
Additional readings: Psalm 63:1-8; Jeremiah 29:11.

Hope is more than wishing something will happen. Biblical hope is a confident expectation rooted in God's promises. In Exodus, God sees his people's suffering, hears their cries, and promises to deliver them. His people can trust him even while they wait.

Jesus's birth reminds us that God has come near. Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus overcame sin and death. Our hope reaches beyond present circumstances to the eternal future we have in him. Jeremiah 29:11 was spoken to God's people in exile; it reminds us of God's faithfulness, rather than promising an easy life.

TALK TOGETHER

- What are you hoping for? How is hope in Jesus different from a wish?
- What does Exodus 3 show us about God when his people are hurting?
- How can remembering Jesus help us when life feels overwhelming?
- How can we focus on Jesus this Advent amid presents and parties?

SING AND PRAY

Sing: "O Come O Come Emmanuel" by the Kingdom Kids. Why is the news of Jesus's birth worth sharing?

Pray: Father, thank you for sending Jesus into our broken world. Help us trust your promises when life is hard. Keep our eyes on Christ as we wait for his return, and help us share his hope with others. Amen.

COMMUNION

If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use the simple explanation on Page 2 with any weekly gathering.

SHARE HOPE THIS WEEK

Participate as a family in our student-led Toy Drive benefiting the Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children (OBHC). Bring new, unwrapped toys to Christ Church from November 16–December 16. For more information, email major@christnorman.org.

WEEK TWO

Peace

Jesus brings us near to God and to one another.

DATE FOR FAMILY WORSHIP _____

MEAL IDEA _____

WHO WE WILL INVITE _____

LIGHT THE FIRST AND SECOND PURPLE CANDLES

Say: "We light the Peace candle to remember Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Through him, we can be reconciled to God and learn to live at peace with others."

READ AND REFLECT

Read: Isaiah 9:6-7; Ephesians 2:14-18.
Additional readings: Luke 1:26-38; Colossians 3:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

Biblical peace is more than a quiet moment or the absence of conflict. It includes wholeness and restoration. Jesus brings peace with God through his death on the cross. In Ephesians, he brings believing Jews and Gentiles together as one people with access to the Father.

Isaiah describes the promised King as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. His wisdom, power, enduring care, and just rule give us reason to trust him. His peace can sustain us even when we feel afraid or face difficult circumstances.

TALK TOGETHER

- What do Isaiah's names for the promised King tell us about him?
- How does Jesus make peace between God and people, and between people?
- What makes you afraid? How can knowing God is near help you?
- Is there someone you need to make peace with? What step can you take?

We cannot control how others respond, but we can do our part to pursue peace. Read Romans 12:18 and Hebrews 12:14 together.

SING AND PRAY

Sing: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by the Rend Collective. What might "peace on earth" help us remember about Jesus?

Pray: Father, thank you for Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Help us trust you in our fears and pursue peace in our relationships. Let Christ's peace guide our hearts as we wait for his return. Amen.

COMMUNION

If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use the simple explanation on Page 2 with any weekly gathering.

SHARE PEACE THIS WEEK

Take a step toward repairing a relationship. Serve a meal to a foster family or widow, showing the care of Christ to people facing difficult circumstances.

WEEK THREE

Love

God's love moves us to love others.

DATE FOR FAMILY WORSHIP _____

MEAL IDEA _____

WHO WE WILL INVITE _____

LIGHT ALL THREE PURPLE CANDLES

Say: "We light the Love candle to remember God's steadfast love. He sent his Son for us, and his love teaches us to love one another."

READ AND REFLECT

Read: Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 4:7-8.
Additional readings: Psalm 100:5; Colossians 1:15-17; 3:12-14; 1 Peter 4:7-11.

God reveals himself as merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. His love is not uncertain or temporary. We see it most clearly in Jesus, who came to earth and gave his life to rescue us.

Love is expressed through words and actions. Because God has loved us, we are called to show compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and forgiveness. Loving others reflects God's character and gives us opportunities to tell them about Jesus. Hospitality and service are practical ways to put that love into action.

TALK TOGETHER

- What does Exodus 34 teach us about God's character?
- How do Jesus's coming and his death show us God's love?
- When have you felt loved through someone's words or actions?
- Where do you need to practice patience, kindness, or forgiveness?
- How can our family show God's love to someone this week?

SING AND PRAY

Sing: "O Holy Night" by the Kingdom Kids. Talk about Jesus's humble birth and his willingness to come for us.

Pray: Father, thank you for showing your love through Jesus. Transform our hearts so we love you and one another. Help us forgive as we have been forgiven, and show us someone we can serve. Amen.

COMMUNION

If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use the simple explanation on Page 2 with any weekly gathering.

SHARE LOVE THIS WEEK

Invite a neighbor for dinner, visit someone in a nursing home, or bring someone a handwritten card or drawing to show God's love. Choose a day to serve one another at home through chores, encouragement, and thoughtful kindness.

WEEK FOUR

Joy

Lasting joy is rooted in knowing Jesus.

DATE FOR FAMILY WORSHIP _____

MEAL IDEA _____

WHO WE WILL INVITE _____

LIGHT ALL FOUR ADVENT CANDLES

Say: "We light the Joy candle to celebrate the good news of Jesus. Our Savior has come, and we look forward to the fullness of joy when he returns." Leave the white Christ candle unlit until Christmas Day.

READ AND REFLECT

Read: Luke 2:1-20.
Additional readings: Psalm 16:11; John 16:16-24.

The announcement of Jesus's birth brings good news of great joy: the Savior has come. Our deepest joy is rooted in God's love, his presence, and the salvation we have in Christ. It reaches beyond a moment of excitement to the future he has promised.

Joy can coexist with sadness and difficulty. We do not have to pretend that hard things are easy. We can hold on to God's goodness and his promises in the middle of them. Gifts, celebrations, and time with family can bring real happiness; enjoy them with gratitude while remembering that Jesus is our lasting source of joy.

TALK TOGETHER

- Why was Jesus's birth good news of great joy for the shepherds?
- What gives you joy? How do those gifts point you toward God's goodness?
- Can you have joy while you are sad? What promises can help?
- What distracts us from Jesus during Christmas?
- How can we share the good news of Jesus with someone else?

SING AND PRAY

Sing or listen: "Joy to the World (Joyful, Joyful)" by Phil Wickham. Talk about why Jesus's coming gives us reason to celebrate.

Pray: Father, thank you for the joyful gift of Jesus. Help us find our joy in knowing him, even when life is hard. Fill our home with gratitude, and help us share your goodness as we look forward to Christ's return. Amen.

COMMUNION

If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use the simple explanation on Page 2 with any weekly gathering.

SHARE JOY THIS WEEK

Deliver treats to first responders or healthcare workers. Offer practical help to a single parent or caregiver. Play a game that makes your family laugh.

REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE

Christ Has Come!

REMEMBER JESUS THROUGH COMMUNION

If sharing communion is appropriate for your family, use this simple explanation. Read Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, or 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Say: "The bread and cup remind us of Jesus's body and blood, given for us. We remember his death, rejoice in his resurrection, and proclaim his death until he comes again. The Savior born in Bethlehem is the Savior who gave his life for us."

For children who are not participating, explain what the bread and cup mean and invite them to listen and join in prayer.

CHRISTMAS DAY: LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE

Gather around the wreath and light all four Advent candles along with the white Christ candle. **Say:** "Today we celebrate Jesus's birth. The hope, peace, love, and joy we have remembered throughout Advent are found in him. Christ has come, and we rejoice!"

Read: Luke 2:1-20. Invite each person to share something they have learned about Jesus during Advent.

Celebrate: Feast, give gifts, sing, and enjoy your family traditions. Let the celebration point your hearts toward Christ.

Pray: Father, thank you for sending your Son. Thank you for the salvation we have through his life, death, and resurrection. Help us carry his hope, peace, love, and joy into the days ahead. We look forward to his return. Amen.

PLAN YOUR CELEBRATION

Our meal or special treat: _____

A tradition we want to enjoy: _____

Someone we can include or encourage: _____

Keep It Simple

These selected resources are optional companions to your Bible reading; you do not need to purchase anything to use this guide.

FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

- Jesus Storybook Bible and its printable Advent reading plan
- The Advent Story Book
- The Little Village Advent Guide
- SEEDS Family Worship Christmas album

FOR TEENS AND ADULTS

- Family Advent Guide – Matt and Lauren Chandler
- Good News of Great Joy – John Piper
- Hidden Christmas – Tim Keller
- Come Let Us Adore Him – Paul David Tripp

MUSIC FOR THE SEASON

- O Come O Come Emmanuel – Kingdom Kids
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing – Rend Collective
- O Holy Night – Kingdom Kids
- Joy to the World (Joyful, Joyful) – Phil Wickham

Christ Church