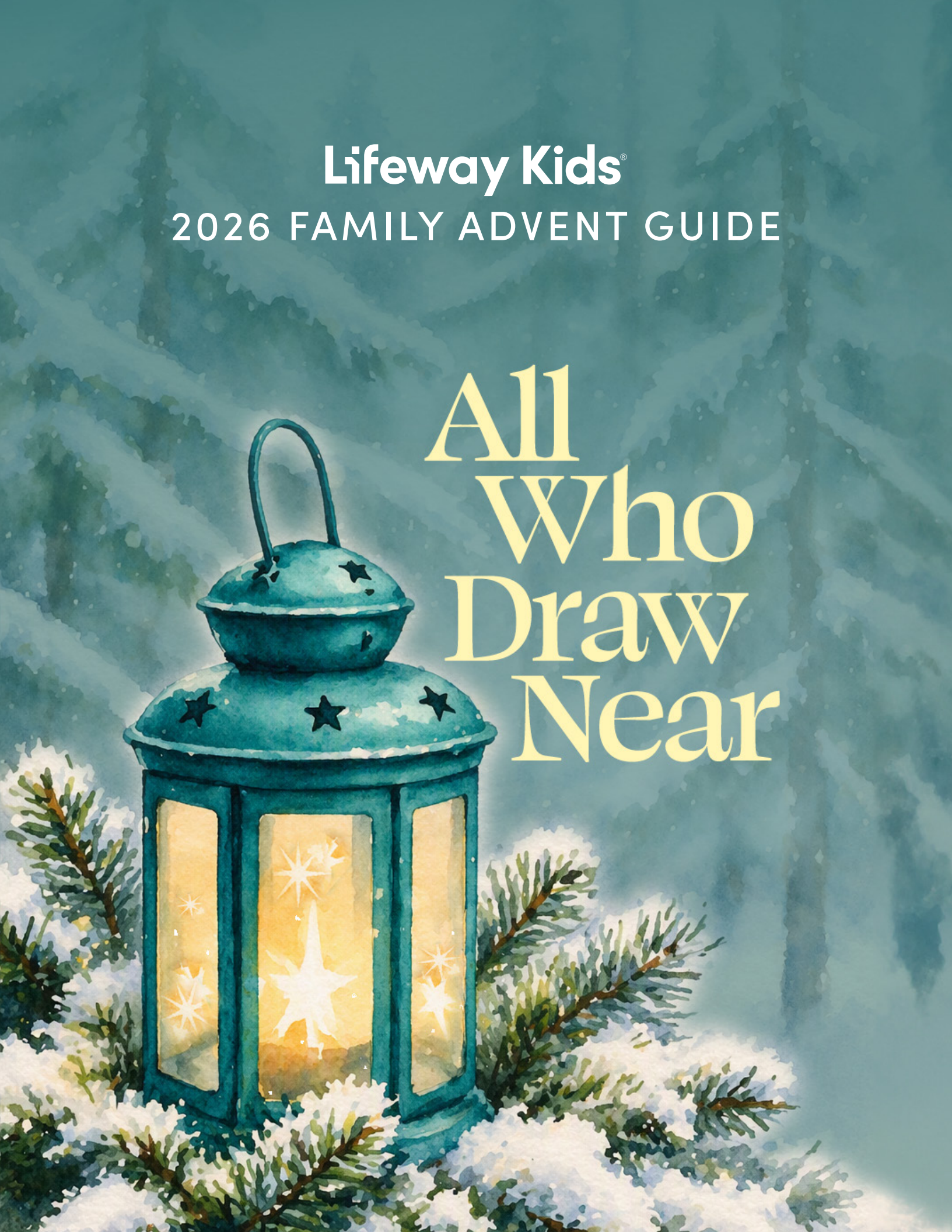
Lifeway Kids®

2026 FAMILY ADVENT GUIDE

All Who Draw Near



HOW TO USE

Do you and your family travel to see loved ones to celebrate the holidays together? Did you know that traveling on Christmas isn't a recent trend? It goes all the way back to the first Christmas, when the Son of God left heaven to come to earth. This Advent season, you and your family will journey through the Bible to discover how some of the main characters of the Christmas story traveled and made their way to the place where God "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). As a family, you will read the Bible to inspire everyone to have their own journey to know, love, and reflect the Savior.

Before the Bible study journey begins, check out the "Gather It" section for supplies you may need to collect. For each week of the study, we've highlighted a key Bible passage for your family to journey through. Read the passages aloud or assign them to the older kids to read aloud. After you've talked, prayed, and read the Bible as a family, spend some time worshiping and singing Christmas songs together. As Christmas approaches, kids of all ages will get to see the magnitude of Christ's entrance into the world.

WEEK 1

Jesus: Journey of Rescue

GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Sheets and blankets in a variety of sizes (to make a tent fort "tabernacle")
- ☐ Flashlight

ASK IT: What would be your favorite way to travel to a family member's house for the holidays: train, plane, car, or walk?

When we think about Christmas, we often picture Baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, but John begins the Christmas story before that. Even before the world began and before Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, Jesus was with God.

READ IT: Open your Bibles and read or summarize John 1:1-18 and John 3:16-17.

TALK ABOUT IT: Jesus didn't begin in Bethlehem. He has always existed as God's Son. Then something amazing happened: Jesus left heaven and came to dwell among us. John intentionally uses the word dwell to remind us of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, where God's presence lived among His people during their journey through the wilderness. God planned to send Jesus to live among people on earth. John 3:16 explains the reason Jesus came to earth, lived and taught among people, and died for our sins. He did these things because He loved the world. Jesus was God's greatest gift of love to each and every one of us. He came to earth so we could know God and be part of His family.

Younger Kids: What are some things you think about when you hear the word "Christmas?" Where was Jesus before He was born in Bethlehem? Jesus was in heaven with God. God sent His Son to live among people on earth. God loves you very much!

Older Kids: What does John tell us about who Jesus is? Why do you think Jesus chose to come to earth?

Teens: Why is it important to know that Jesus didn't begin as a baby in a manger? What does John 1:14 mean when it says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us?"

DO IT: Build a blanket fort or tent together as a family. Once everyone is inside, turn off the lights and use a flashlight to light up the tent. In John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." How is Jesus like a light? How can we reflect the light of Jesus to others? Christmas isn't just about celebrating the day Jesus was born. It's about celebrating that God came to live among us so we could know Him. Jesus is the Light of the world, and when we trust Him, His light shines in our hearts so we can share His love with others.

PRAY:

Thank You, God, for displaying Your love for us by sending Your Son, Jesus, to bring salvation to the world. Help us to reflect the light of Jesus to others this week.

WEEK 2

Mary and Joseph: Journey of Obedience

GATHER IT:

☐ Bibles ☐ Smartphone Map App

ASK IT: Is it always easy to obey? Why or why not? Would it be easy or hard to obey if you were asked to eat Christmas cookies before dinner? Would it be easy or hard to walk almost 90 miles from one home to another for Christmas?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and read or summarize Luke 2:1-7 and Matthew 2:13-15,19-23.

TALK ABOUT IT: Mary and Joseph traveled a lot before and after Jesus was born. The first recorded trip of the Christmas story is when Mary visited her relative Elizabeth after she received news from Gabriel that she would give birth to Jesus. Then Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. God warned Joseph in a dream about Herod wanting to kill Baby Jesus, so they fled to Egypt. An angel instructed them to return to Israel after Herod's death, and then they finally settled in Nazareth. Do you think it was easy or hard for Mary and Joseph to obey God, especially when God led them to travel to a different place? Obedience means trusting God enough to do what He says, even when we don't know what will happen next. Mary and Joseph couldn't see the whole story, but God could. Every step they took helped fulfill God's plan to bring salvation to the world through Jesus.

Younger Kids: Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem? How was Joseph warned to take his family to Egypt? Why did Joseph take his family to Egypt?

Older Kids: Do you think Mary and Joseph understood everything God was doing? Why do you think they chose to obey anyway?

Teens: How did God take care of Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus? Have you ever had to obey when you didn't understand why? What are some ways God asks us to obey Him today?

DO IT: Open a map app on your phone and search for these routes: Nazareth to Judah, Nazareth to Bethlehem, and Bethlehem to Egypt.

Select walking or driving directions to see the distance and estimated travel time. Zoom in and out to notice the mountains, valleys, and deserts Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus would have traveled through. How do you think Mary and Joseph felt as they obeyed God on these long journeys?

PRAY:

God, help us to be obedient like Mary and Joseph. Help us obey even when we don't understand and when it is hard. Thank You for Your love.

WEEK 3

Shepherds: Journey of Wonder

GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Shepherd's Dinner Ingredients (unleavened bread or flatbread, hard cheese made from goat's milk, dates, figs, raisins, almonds, olive oil, olives)

ASK IT: Have you ever been so excited about something that you couldn't wait to tell a friend? What was it about? When the birth announcement that the Messiah had been born came to ordinary shepherds outside Bethlehem, how excited do you think they were?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and read or summarize Luke 2:8-20.

TALK ABOUT IT: The shepherds were doing their ordinary jobs outside. They were watching their sheep at night. They probably didn't expect anything unusual to happen. Then suddenly, an angel appeared and announced the greatest news ever: the Savior had been born! The angel was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. The shepherds received the angel's good news and quickly journeyed to Bethlehem to see Baby Jesus. The shepherds had a choice. They could ignore the message or believe it. They chose to believe the angel's words and hurried to Bethlehem to see Jesus for themselves. When they found Baby Jesus, everything the angel had said was true. Their lives were changed. They left worshiping God and couldn't stop telling everyone what they had seen and heard.

Younger Kids: What were the shepherds doing before the angel appeared? What did they find in Bethlehem?

Older Kids: Why do you think God chose the shepherds to hear the good news first? What is something wonderful that Jesus has done for you?

Teens: How do you think the shepherds felt when they finally saw Baby Jesus? What would you have done if you had been there that night?

DO IT: For this week's family devotion, gather your family, a Bible, and some ingredients that the shepherds from the Bible would have eaten for dinner. Sit outside and eat a simple shepherd's dinner while you read your Bibles about the shepherds' journey of wonder.

PRAY:

God, help us to be like the shepherds and joyfully share the good news of Jesus this week.

WEEK 4

Wise Men:
Journey of Seeking

GATHER IT:

☐ Bibles ☐ Pens ☐ Paper ☐ Scissors ☐ Nativity Scene

ASK IT: Have you ever searched for something that was important to you? (Feel free to use an example from your family life that you remember, if needed.) What was it? If you were able to give a gift to Baby Jesus, what would it be and why? The wise men traveled from the east to Jerusalem to find the one who had been born King to the Jews. They saw His star at its rising and had come to worship Him.

READ IT: Open your Bibles and read or summarize Matthew 2:1-12.

TALK ABOUT IT: The wise men were on a journey of seeking. It had been foretold that the King of the Jews would come from Bethlehem and would be the shepherd of the people of Israel. They traveled far in search of Jesus, guided by the star, because they believed He was the promised King. When they found Him, they bowed down and worshiped Him. God protected the wise men on their journey home. They were warned in a dream to take a different route home. They obeyed God and went home another way. When we truly meet Jesus, He changes our lives too. We continue to seek Him every day by reading His Word, praying, worshiping Him, and obeying Him.

Younger Kids: What did the wise men follow to find Jesus? What did the wise men do when they found Jesus? What gifts did they bring Jesus?

Older Kids: How did God warn the wise men? Why do you think the wise men journeyed so far to find Jesus?

Teens: What does it mean to worship Jesus? Why is it important for the wise men to obey God's warning? The wise men were willing to travel a long distance to find Jesus. What are some ways we seek Jesus today?

DO IT: Draw and cut out four to six paper stars. Write a question and a clue on each star. Hide them around your home, with each star leading to the next one. Place a Nativity scene at the final location. Give one family member the first star to begin the adventure. Read the question on each star together. After your family answers the question, read the clue that tells you where to find the next star.

Here are some questions you can ask:

- Where did the wise men come from?
- What were they following?
- Where did the star lead them?
- What gifts did they bring to Jesus?
- How did the wise men worship Jesus?
- How did God protect the wise men from King Herod?

After each question, add a clue to the next star. For example:

- "Look where your family keeps their shoes."
- "Find the place where you eat dinner."

At the final hiding spot where the Nativity scene is, pray as a family. Thank God for sending Jesus, our King, and ask Him to help your family seek and follow Him every day.

PRAY:

God, help us all to seek and follow Jesus every day. Help us to joyfully worship You and thank You every day for sending Your Son to save us from our sins.

WEEK 5

Christmas Eve

ASK IT: Who are all the people that we have learned about on their journey to Jesus? Which journey was your favorite?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and read or summarize Luke 2:1-20.

TALK ABOUT IT: Over the last four weeks, we have seen that everyone's journey was different. The shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and even the wise men all had different experiences, but every journey led to Jesus. Mary and Joseph obeyed and trusted God's plan. Their journey shows us that God keeps His promises. The shepherds hurried to see Jesus. It shows us that Jesus is for everyone. The wise men searched for the promised King and showed us that Jesus is worthy of worship.

Jesus is the Savior God promised, and He's worth trusting, following, worshiping, and sharing with others. Our journey looks different from theirs, but our destination is the same. Every day, we can seek Jesus, trust Him with our lives, and help others know Him too.

DO IT: As a family, reflect on what you've learned over the Advent season. Ask each family member the following questions.

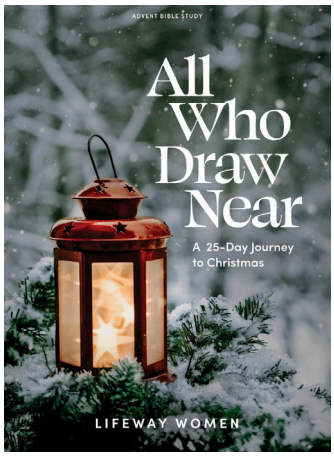
- What is one thing you learned about Jesus?
- Who is one person from the Christmas story that demonstrated true faith and following God?
- Thinking of the upcoming new year, what is one way you'd like to grow in following Jesus?
- What is one thing you want to thank God for today?

As your family celebrates the birth of Jesus through your meaningful traditions, take a moment to pause and thank God for the greatest gift of all, His Son, Jesus.

PRAY:

God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You for giving us the examples of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men and showing us how they followed You. Help our family trust You like Mary, obey You like Joseph, share the good news like the shepherds, and worship Jesus like the wise men. As we continue our own journey, help us follow Jesus every day. Amen.

Wonder anew at God's goodness and purpose displayed through the birth of Jesus.



All Who Draw Near: A 25-Day Journey to Christmas is an Advent Bible study that focuses on the many journeys of the main characters of the Christmas story. We'll chart their travels and explore their stories as they made their way to the place where God "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Their first Christmas travels will inspire you to freshly behold the wonder and magnitude of Christ's entrance into the world and will challenge you to be diligent in your own joyful journey to know, love, and reflect the Savior.

- Enjoy four weeks of personal study focused on the coming of Christ
- Extra activities and ideas to add joy and fun to your Christmas celebration and travel
- Leader helps for 4 group sessions
- Be reminded of the beautiful truths nestled in the Christmas story.
- Celebrate the first Advent of a Savior for all people as you anticipate His return.

Order your copy of *All Who Draw Near* an Advent Bible study for women.