

ADVENT FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

LAKE FOREST CHURCH



Dear Parents,

Christmas with kids can be quite an adventure! From school parties to decorating the tree and buying presents – there is scarcely little time left over for much else. That’s why this year we wanted to gift you with a Christmas Devotional designed specifically for parents with young kids. This daily reading guide can be used in the car, at the dinner table, or whenever you have a few minutes to pause with your family and reflect on the Christmas story from the Bible.

Each day’s reading contains a single verse or passage, plus a few questions to help your kids engage with the reading. The questions are intended to stir conversation and can be adapted as you see fit. We hope you’ll give it a try!

Here’s how to use it:

1. Tell your kids you are going to have a Christmas Devotion time. (approximately 5 minutes)
2. Begin with a simple prayer. (for example: “God, we thank you for the gift of your son. Please come and teach us through your word about the meaning and importance of Christmas. Amen.”)
3. Have one of your children read the verse aloud. (you can also read it if you prefer)
4. Then YOU read the comment section, pausing at each question allowing time for your children to respond. (This is meant to be a conversation. So have fun with it!)
5. Share your thoughts about the reading with your children, and then close with prayer. (You might even ask your child if he or she would like to pray.)

If you miss a day, don’t worry about trying to play, “catch up”. Just jump right in with that day’s reading. We hope this guide will help you!

p.s. – The first 18 days are based on the Christmas story from Luke’s gospel. (Luke 1:26-2:20) If you have the time, you might consider reading from the beginning each day, and stopping at the verse for that day.

December 25

2 Corinthians 9:15 (LB)

Thank God for his Son..his Gift too wonderful for words.

Merry Christmas!! Today we give presents and we receive presents. It’s exciting and fun. *What’s the best present you have ever gotten?* We give gifts to people we love. God loves us and he gave us a gift. *What is the gift? How can we receive the gift that God gave us? How do we open it?*

When someone gives us a gift, we thank them. Let’s thank God now for the gift He gave us. The gift of Jesus!



MERRY CHRISTMAS

December 23 John 1:1-9, 14 (LB)

Before anything else existed, there was Jesus, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is--nothing exists that he didn't make. His life is the light that shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never put it out--the One who is the true Light arrived to shine on everyone coming into the world. Jesus Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth.

One of the best things about Christmas is all of the Christmas lights. We put lights on our Christmas trees and in our yards and even on our houses. *What are your favorite Christmas lights?* We know that the wise men saw Jesus' star and followed it to see Jesus. Lots of people even use a star on their Christmas trees.

The Bible says that the very first Christmas light was Jesus. *What does it mean when we read that Jesus is the light of the world? What do the verses above say about light and darkness?*

Sometimes we think of darkness as scary or sad or hopeless. *Have you ever felt like this? How can Jesus as the light help us in the darkness?*

December 24 Matthew 1:21 (CEV)

 She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. 

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that we will never really die and by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

Tomorrow is Christmas!! Finally, as we finish up reading about Jesus' birth, it's important to talk about why Jesus was born; why he came to earth. *Can you list some of the reasons why? What do the verses we read today say about this? What is sin? Why did we need Jesus to come into the world?*

December 1

Luke 1: 26-30 (LB)

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin, Mary, engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Congratulations, favored lady! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to wonderfully bless you!"



The Christmas story begins with a visit from an Angel. God chose Mary to play a very important role in the Christmas story even though she was probably just 13 years old. She must have been very surprised to be visited by such an important messenger.

How do you think Mary felt when the Angel spoke to her? How do you think you would feel if you were chosen to do something important?

The Lord is with you!

December 2

Luke 1:31-32a (LB)

Very soon now, you will become pregnant and have a baby boy, and you are to name him 'Jesus.' He shall be very great and shall be called the Son of God.

Mary had not planned on having a baby so soon, but she trusted God with this unexpected gift.

Have you ever had something unexpected or surprising happen to you? What was it? How did it make you feel?

December 3

Isaiah 9:6 (LB)

For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. These will be his royal titles: "Wonderful," "Counselor," "The Mighty God," "The Everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace."

Sometimes people that love us will give us a nickname or special name that they call us. *Is there a nickname or special name that others in your family call you? What is it?*



The Bible tells us that the baby Jesus had other names too, like some of the names mentioned here: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Which one of Jesus' names means the most to you?*

WONDERFUL *Mighty God*
EVERLASTING FATHER
Prince of Peace COUNSELOR

December 4

Luke 1:35-38 (CEV)

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. Nothing is impossible for God!" Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said."

God gave Mary a big assignment. She was to be the mother of Jesus. But the angel reminded her that with God, nothing is impossible.

Have you ever faced a challenge that felt difficult, or even impossible? If you could ask God to help you with one challenge in your life right now, what would you ask him?

December 21

Psalms 95:6-7

So come, let us worship: bow before him who made us! Oh yes, he's our God and we're the people he pastures, the flock he feeds. Drop everything and listen, listen as he speaks!

This verse isn't from the story of Jesus birth. Instead it's from a book in the Bible called the Psalms, which are songs that the Jews sang and used in their worship of God. *What does it mean to worship? What are some clues we get from these verses we read today? What are some ways you can worship God?*



December 22

Matthew 2:11b

They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him.

The wise men brought very fancy, expensive gifts to Jesus. *We know what gold is, but what are frankincense and myrrh? If you were a wise man, what would you have brought to Jesus? What gift could you give Jesus today?*



December 19

Matthew 2:1,2 (CEV)

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

The birth of Jesus must have been a big deal because King Herod and wise men from other countries were talking about it. The wise men saw a star. They called it 'his star' and that baby Jesus was born to be King of the Jews!!

How do you think that made King Herod feel? What do you think his star looked like? And how was it different than other stars? Draw a picture of the star, if you'd like.



December 20

Matthew 2:11a

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him.

The Bible doesn't tell us how long it took the wise men to get to Jesus, but it does say they arrived at Jesus' house, not the manger so we believe that Jesus was not a newborn baby when they finally got to him. When they walked in they knelt down and worshiped him.

How do you think Mary felt about this? Do you think she was surprised that wise men, important men from other countries came to see and worship him?

December 5

Luke 2:1-3 (CEV)

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed.

Emperors in Jesus' day were very important people. They were like kings or rulers with lots of power.

Have you ever had someone tell you that you had to do something that you didn't want to do? How do you think Joseph and Mary felt about having to go on this trip?



December 6

Luke 2:4-5 (CEV)

So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family. Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby.

Joseph and Mary traveled a long way to get to Bethlehem, Joseph's home town. Probably as much as 40 miles... without a car! *Can you imagine walking 40 miles? What's the longest you've ever walked?*

The Bible tells us that another famous King was born here, a man named King David. *Can you recall any stories about David that you might have heard before?*



December 7

Luke 2:6-7a (LB)

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born; and she gave birth to her first child, a son.

Mary had waited a long time since the Angel first promised her that she would have a baby. Did you know that your mom had to wait for many months before she got to meet you?

How do you think Mary felt when she got to hold her baby for the first time? Have you ever had to wait for a long time for something you really wanted?



December 8

Luke 2:7b (LB)

She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.



When Joseph and Mary finally reached Bethlehem there was no room for them. The hotel in town was already full, and Joseph and Mary didn't know where they would spend the night. But don't worry. Even though there was no room for them, God would still take care of them. In fact, he had a special place in mind. It was a stable, a barn. And even though there were animals, and no beds, Mary kept Jesus warm by wrapping him in a blanket and laying him in a manger.

Have you ever been inside a barn or stable? What do you imagine it would be like to spend the night in a barn? How do you think Jesus felt?

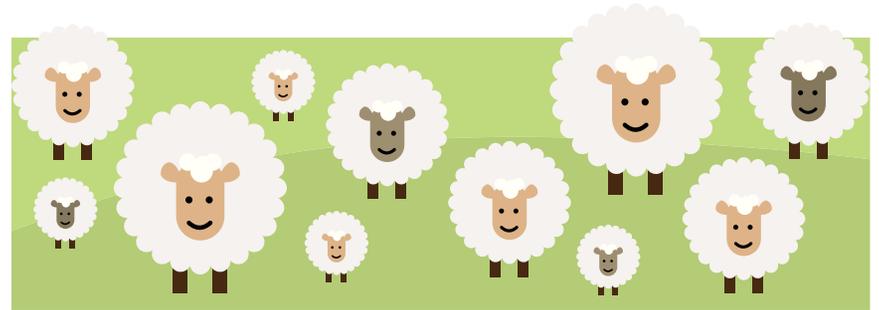
December 17

Luke 2:17-19 (CEV)

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the Angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

Wow! It must have been pretty exciting when the shepherds showed up. The Angel had told them that they would find the baby sleeping on hay. And when they arrived at the stable, it was just as the Angel had described.

Do you think the shepherds were surprised to find them there? How do think Joseph and Mary felt when the Shepherds told them about the Angels announcement?



December 18

Luke 2:20 (CEV)

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

The shepherds must have felt very special to be included in the Christmas story. But of course, the very next day they had to go back to work and take care of the sheep. The Bible tells us that they kept praising God and saying wonderful things about him.

What wonderful things do you imagine they said about God as they praised him? Is there anything in your life that you want to praise God, or thank him for?

December 15

Luke 2:16 (CEV)

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about."

Boy, I'll bet it was quiet after all those angels left! The shepherds talked about it and decided to go right away to see about what the angels said. They knew the angels were God's messengers because the Bible says 'what the Lord told us about.'

Do you think you would have gone right away if you were a shepherd? How does God give us news today? How does He talk to us?

December 16

Luke 2:17 (CEV)

They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

Have you ever played a game where you had to search for something? Maybe hide-and-seek? Or perhaps an Easter egg hunt?

Remember that Joseph, Mary, and the Baby were staying the night in a barn or stable.

How do you think the shepherds knew this was the Baby the Angels had told them about? (hint: Luke 2:12 You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.) If you were one of the shepherds looking for the baby, what would you have been looking for?



December 9

Luke 2:8 (LB)

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared among them.

In Bible times, being a shepherd was thought to be a very un-interesting and un-important job. No one wanted to be a shepherd. And people didn't think very highly of those who worked as shepherds either. So it was kind of surprising that God decided to send an Angel to tell shepherds about the coming of Jesus. That must have made them feel very important!

Have you ever felt like you weren't important? Why do you think God would send an angel to make such a special announcement to shepherds?



December 10

Luke 2:9 (LB)

Suddenly an angel appeared among them, and the landscape shone bright with the glory of the Lord. They were badly frightened.

When the Angel first appeared to the Shepherds in the middle of the night, the Bible says that they were afraid.

Why do you think they were afraid? Do you think you would have felt the same as the shepherds? Why or why not?

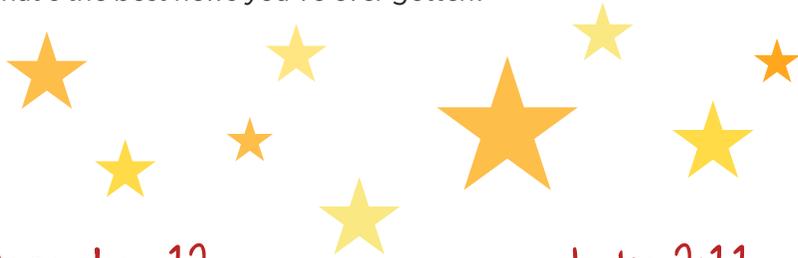
December 11

Luke 2:10 (CEV)

But the Angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone!"

The Bible says that the first thing the angel said to the shepherds was 'Don't be afraid' because he was bringing great news. And not just ordinary great news, but the 'most joyful news ever announced.'

What do you think this news was? Who did the angel say it was for? What's the best news you've ever gotten?



December 12

Luke 2:11 (CEV)

"This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord"

The good news that the Angel announced was the birth of a Savior! whose name was Christ the Lord. The word 'Christ' means "Chosen One," and the word 'Lord' means 'Ruler.' *Where do Rulers usually live?*

The angel said this Savior was born for you. *What did the angel mean when he said you?*



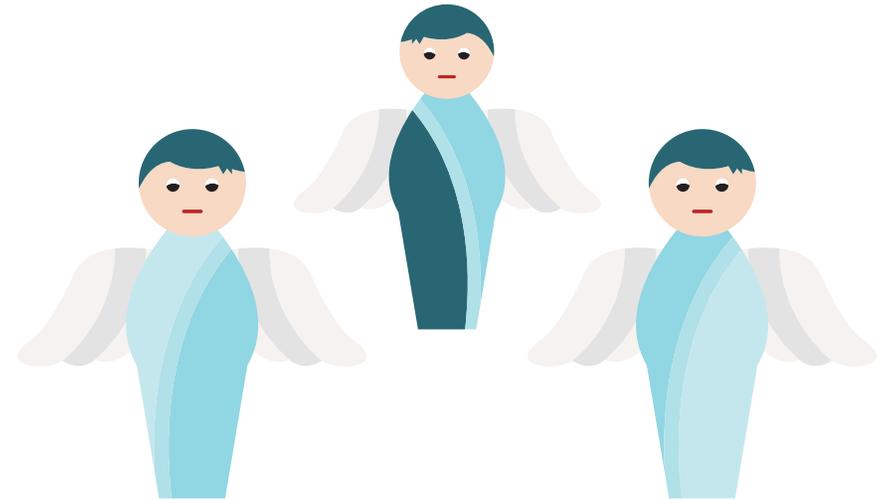
December 13

Luke 2:12 (CEV)

"You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

The Angel gives the shepherds directions on how to find the 'Chosen Ruler.'

Where did he tell the shepherds to look? Is that where newborn babies are usually found? Where did you sleep when you were a baby?



December 14

Luke 2:13-14 (CEV)

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God!"

Because this was the 'most joyful news ever announced,' lots and lots of angels came to give thanks to God for this gift.

What did they say? How do you think the voices of many angels sounded? If you were one of those angels, how would you have sung this song?