

Anticipating Immanuel

An Advent Interactive Guide for the Family

*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel.*

Isaiah 7:14



1 Corinthians 13 Parenting

with

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An Advent Interactive Guide for the Family

The 1 Corinthians 13 Parenting Team is excited to provide this interactive Advent devotional to share with your family. We pray this guide will assist in bringing Christ-focus to your family's anticipation of Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation, to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child. There are four weeks in Advent, each focusing on a specific meaning to prepare our hearts for Christmas. Each week includes a variety of activities in which your family may participate in order to draw closer to one another and ultimately to Jesus. Enjoy this special time!

Week 1 Promise Week 2 Faith Week 3 Hope Week 4 Joy Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Love

Start by creating an Advent wreath with your family to use throughout the season. Sunday begins each new Advent week with lighting the designated candle(s). Activities for the week can be found following Sunday's devotion. Be blessed as you and your family celebrate the coming of the Savior.

With faith, hope, and love,
*The 1 Corinthians 13 Parenting Team,
your family, faith, and education experts*

Advent Wreath

The advent wreath is full of symbolism regarding our Christian faith. Its shape is circular, representing eternity. The greenery reminds us of the eternal life we find and can have only in Christ. The four candles represent promise, faith, hope, and joy found while anticipating Immanuel. The large middle candle, the Christ candle, signifies God's love for us shown in the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world.

Supplies: artificial wreath (flame retardant) round tray large enough to accommodate wreath
 four taper candles one white pillar candle
 holly berries, pinecones, ribbons, floral candleholders (from craft store)
 fruit, nuts, bows wire

Instructions: Lay the wreath on the tray. Attach candleholders to wreath. Decorate wreath with berries, pinecones, ribbons fruit nuts, nuts or bows. Secure decorations with wire. Set the white pillar candle in the center. Place taper candles in the candleholders. Find a special place in your home to display the Advent wreath.

NOTE: Discuss with young children that only adults are allowed to use matches to light the candles.

The Promise of the Messiah Week One

The First Sunday in Advent

Read aloud: *God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel said to her, "You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus." Luke 1:26, 27, 31*

Light the first candle.

Read and discuss. Can you imagine how Mary felt? It must have been pretty freaky having an angel show up to talk with her. Then, of all things, to tell Mary, a young woman engaged to be married, that she was going to have a baby!

Mary loved God and believed what Gabriel had told her but at first she was frightened. The angel recognized her fear and said, "Don't be afraid. You have found favor with God." (Apparently when angels arrive on the scene they always say, "Don't be afraid.") How would you feel?

After Mary got over the initial shock, she embraced the angel's message. She essentially said, "Okay! I'm in." (Luke 1:38)

God promised a Savior. God said Mary was going to have a baby. She trusted The Lord Most High. She willingly and joyfully joined God in his plan.

God keeps his word.

Prayer Father you are faithful. I confess I have trouble keeping my promises. Help me to be a promise keeper like you. Amen.

Fun Fact There are MULTITUDES of angels!

Activities for Week One

Relight the first candle Monday through Saturday. Choose an activity for each day.

Read, Ponder & Discuss Luke 1:26-38

In spite of Mary's unexpected situation, she trusted God. In what life circumstances do you need to trust in God and his promises?

Truth to Memorize

Who God is:

The Lord is trustworthy and faithful. Psalm 145:13

Who God says I am:

I am formed in the womb by God. Jeremiah 1:5

Sing a Joyful Song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the son of God appears.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

More Truth to Discover

Isaiah 11:1-3, Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 139:13-16

Faith-filled Family Fun

With clay or play dough, have each family member create a model of self. Discuss Isaiah 64:8 as it relates to each clay creation.

Reflections

What truth did you learn about the promised Messiah to tuck away in your heart? Use the back of this page to record one insight from each member of the family.

Faith in a Faithful God Week Two

The Second Sunday in Advent

Read aloud. *The Lord appeared to (Joseph) in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save people from their sins.” Matthew 1:20-21*

Light the second candle.

Read and discuss.

Joseph might have been a little bit scared. That’s okay, we all get scared sometimes, but the angel had a message about a special little baby and about Joseph’s wife, Mary.

The angel not only told Joseph the baby will save people from their sins (Sins are the bad things that people do.) but he gave the child a name! Moms and dads usually have a hard time finding just the right name for their child. Not Joseph and Mary though. The angel did that for them. The special baby had a great name, Jesus!

Prayer Father, please help us when we are afraid and remind us we can always trust you. Amen.

Fun Fact Jesus means, God saves!

Activities for Week Two

Relight the first and second candles Monday through Saturday. Choose an activity for each day.

Read, Ponder & Discuss Matthew 1:18-25
Joseph listened to the angel and was obedient to God. He knew God was faithful. In what situations has God been faithful to you?

Truth to Memorize

Who God is:

God is faithful. Revelation 1:4-6

Who God says I am:

I am chosen. 1 Peter 2:9

Sing a Joyful Song “O Come All Ye Faithful”

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem,
Come and adore him, born the King of angels.
O come let us adore him O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

More Truth to Discover

Psalm 145:13, Micah 6:8, Luke 1:26-38, Hebrews 11:1-3

Faith-filled Family Fun

Play hide-and-seek.

Research the meaning of your family members’ names.

Reflections

What truth did you learn about God’s faithfulness this week? Use the back of this page to record one thought from each family member.

Christ is Our Hope Week Three

The Third Sunday in Advent

Read aloud. *But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rules of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.* Matthew 2:6

Light the third candle.

Read and discuss. Bethlehem was a little city. Today, we would call it a town or a village. There weren't very many people in this little town. Nevertheless, it was a very special, tiny town.

God was going to make something really important happen in this little city. Old Testament prophets preached about this *waaay* before Jesus was born. Can you guess what was going to happen?

Jesus was going to be born in this tiny little town of Bethlehem!

It wasn't a big place and there may not have been any big houses or rich people in it but one day, when God knew it was time, the little city would be where the King of Kings would be born.

Pretty neat, huh?

Prayer Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus, the hope of the world. Thank you that through him we can live forever with you in heaven. Amen.

Fun Fact Bethlehem means House of Bread. And Jesus calls himself the Bread of Life!

Activities for Week Three

Relight the first, second, and third candles Monday through Saturday. Choose an activity for each day.

Read, Ponder & Discuss Matthew 2:1-12

Why do you think King Herod was disturbed when he heard about Jesus being born? Why did the Magi not go back to King Herod after seeing Jesus?

Truth to Memorize

Who Jesus is:

The Way. John 14:6

Who God says I am:

I am a citizen of heaven. Philippians 3:20

Sing a Joyful Song “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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.

More Truth to Discover

Micah 5:2, John 14:1-4, Titus 3:4-7

Faith-filled Family Fun

Gather some toothpicks, craft sticks, moldable craft-foam, and cardboard. Make a little town with shops and stores and a stable for Jesus to be born in. Make cotton balls into sheep, spools of thread into cattle, and pipe cleaners into people. Imagine!

Reflections

What truth did you learn about the hope we have in Jesus? Use the back of this page to record quotes from family members.

The Joy of the Lord Week Four

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Read aloud. *In a loud voice, (Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit) exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said will be accomplished!”* Luke 1:42-45

Light the fourth candle.

Read and discuss. Having a baby is a miracle. Having a baby under impossible circumstances is MIRACULOUS. Having an angel deliver the “with child news” is beyond comprehension. Yet Mary, a virgin, and her cousin Elizabeth, well past child-bearing age, share a similar experience. What would you do if you were in Mary’s shoes? Would you go and see your cousin too?

Prayer Father, you are the joy giver. Please cleanse me of a negative or complaining spirit. Fill me with the joy of the Lord. Give me the strength and ability to tell others the great good news of Jesus. Amen.

Fun Fact Elizabeth was the mom of John the Baptist. John was the forerunner, the messenger, the final prophet, who paved the way for Jesus to begin his ministry and they were cousins!

Activities for Week Four

Relight all four candles Monday through Saturday. Choose an activity for each day.

Read, Ponder & Discuss

Luke 1:39-45 Elizabeth was so filled with Holy Spirit joy she couldn’t contain herself! When have you been so overwhelmed with happiness you wanted to shout it from the rooftops? How do you proclaim the great good news of Jesus?

Truth to Memorize

Who God is:

King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 17:14

Who God says I am:

I am a child of God. John 1:12

Sing a Joyful Song “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world the Lord has come, let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing.

More Truth to Discover

Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, Luke 1:46-56, Luke 2:10-14

Faith-filled Family Fun

Make a family collage on poster board filled with pictures of ways in which God has blessed your family. Take turns talking about how God blessed each person in the family today.

Reflections

What truth did you learn about the joy we have in our Lord Jesus?
Use the back of this page to record the family’s thoughts.

God's Love Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Read aloud. Luke 2:1-20 **Light the middle candle. Relight the other four candles.**

Read and discuss. Have you ever been so excited or amazed that you cannot wait to tell someone about it? (Give everyone a chance to share.) Maybe you feel that way right now! The story of the shepherds gives us a wonderful picture of excitement. They saw something that few people ever saw – angels! And those angels gave them the greatest news anyone has ever heard – that the Savior of the World had come to earth! Why did God send angels to the shepherds? Shepherds were the least important people. They were even considered “unclean” because of how they had to live to care for their sheep. Maybe part of the reason God sent this news directly to the shepherds is because **God is love**. We talked about having exciting news. Who do you want to tell first? The people you love! God was telling the shepherds, “I love you,” by sharing His amazingly exciting news with them first. Who do you know that needs to know Jesus loves them? Share with them the exciting news of Jesus. Write a letter. Make a phone call. Plan to have them over for dinner. Remember, God’s love is the best news at Christmas and all year long!

Truth to Memorize **Who Jesus is:** *The light of the world.* John 8:12 **Who God says I am:** *I have light.* John 8:12

Sing a Joyful Song “Silent Night” (Christmas Eve)

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!

“Away in a Manger” (Christmas Day)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

More Truth to Discover Isaiah 9:6-7, John 1:14, John 3:16, John 8:12

Faith-filled Family Fun

Have each family member find 12 things that they no longer want or need. Over the next “12 Days of Christmas” be intentional about giving to those God has called you to love: your neighbors, friends, and those in need. After Christmas is an easy time to discover what you really don’t need anymore. Your family may choose to find 12 items total OR go purchase 12 new things with money/gift cards you’ve received for Christmas. Be sure to include a note of encouragement with scripture!

Prayer Lord, help us to remember how much you love us. Then give us the power to share that love with those who don’t know you. Amen.

Fun Fact The Magi arrived in Bethlehem when Jesus was considered a child (maybe around 2-years-old) not a baby. See Matthew 2.

*Glory to God in the Highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.*

Luke 8:14

Have a blessed Christmas!

A special thank you to our 1C13P team contributors and collaborators:
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FAMILY TIME
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PARENT

