



LifeWay[®]
Kids
Family Advent Guide

Merry CHRISTMAS!

This guide is designed to help you point your family toward the Savior throughout this holiday season. Use these devotions, activities, and discussion questions as you celebrate the birth of Christ with your kids.

DECEMBER 3, 2017

week 1: HOPE

By Shelly Harris, Content Editor
Explore the Bible: Kids

“Look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“when I will fulfill the good promise that I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”—Jeremiah 33:14

HOPE IN GOD’S PROMISE

Hope is believing and longing for something while trusting that God will keep His promise. The people of Israel had waited and hoped for hundreds of years. But God’s plan began long before Israel even knew to hope for it. Before the world began, God had a plan for our redemption. He knew we would need a Savior. When Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke the first recorded promise about Jesus. God made another promise about Jesus to Abraham, then another to David. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised His people that He would send a Messiah—their Savior. God’s timing is perfect and God always keeps His promises. But it is hard for humans to wait. Israel waited and waited with hope for the day that God’s promises of a Messiah would come true. It had been 400 years since God had last spoken to the people. They waited and hoped.

MITTEN UNWRAPPING

Place a present your family will enjoy inside a box and wrap it. Gather a pair of mittens and a timer. If you have preteens use cooking mittens to increase the challenge.

Explain that each family member will have 10 seconds to attempt to unwrap the package while wearing the mittens. At the end of time, the next family member gets a chance. The game continues until the package is completely unwrapped. After the game, talk about what it was like to wait and hope you would be the one to open the present.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What is something that you are hoping God will do (now or in the future)?

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2. How can our family share about Jesus and His birth with our neighbors and family this year?

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DAILY READINGS FOR THE FAMILY

December 4—Isaiah 7:14

December 6—Luke 2:12

December 8—Acts 5:31

December 5—Matthew 2:10

December 7—Matthew 1:21

December 9—Luke 1:26-27

DECEMBER 10, 2017

week 2: LOVE

By Andrea Pace, Production Editor
Explore the Bible: Kids

God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. —John 3:16

MORE THAN A WORD

Love is a frequently used word. Kids and adults alike use it to describe how much they enjoy or prefer something: I love baseball. I love ice cream. I love being with my friends. But love is more than just liking something.

First Corinthians 13 describes love as selfless and never-ending. John 3:16 tells us that God loved us SO MUCH that He sent Baby Jesus to be born in a manger, knowing that one day He would die for each one of us. This kind of love is more powerful than liking a sport or a food: you may like those things today and change your mind in a few years. God loves us every day, now and forever.

CHRISTMAS CARDS OF LOVE

Just as God loves us, we should love others. Christmas is a great time to show God's love to others in your community. Help your child think of three to five people that you could deliver cards to this Christmas season.

On the front of each card help your child write out John 3:16. On the inside encourage your child to draw a picture and to write a note such as "God loves you and I do too. Merry Christmas!" (If your child is a pre-reader, have him trace letters using colorful crayons.) Deliver the cards as a family.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How did God show His love for us?

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2. How can you show love for others?

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DAILY READINGS FOR THE FAMILY

December 11—Luke 1:28
December 12—Luke 1:30

December 13—Luke 1:31
December 14—Luke 1:32

December 15—John 1:14
December 16—Matthew 1:22-23

DECEMBER 17, 2017

week 3: JOY

By Jeremy Carroll,
Publishing Team Leader
The Gospel Project for Kids

The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”—Luke 2:10-11

JOYFUL, JOYFUL

Joy is one of the hardest human experiences to explain and describe because the emotion goes beyond surface-level life circumstances. Joy is sometimes confused with happiness. Whereas happiness is often determined by the things that happen to us or around us, joy is determined by something inside us. Since joy comes from within, we can find joy in both good and hard situations. Did you know joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). This means that God produces joy in us, and one of the ways God produces joy inside us is through giving to and serving others. In our verses for today, the angel said “I bring you good news of great joy ...” which is why we sing songs like “Joy to the World” at Christmas. Jesus is God’s gift to us which, not only gave God joy, but gives us joy, as well.

JOY OF GIVING AND SINGING

Experience joy through giving: Prepare a gift basket of some snacks to give to one of your neighbors. Take a trip to a local grocery store and pick out some snack foods (e.g. popcorn, candy, hot chocolate, etc.) and a basket.

Experience joy through singing: Sing “Joy to the World” with your family.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How is joy different from happiness?

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2. What are ways God produces joy in us?

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DAILY READINGS FOR THE FAMILY

December 18 - Luke 2:1-3
December 19 - Luke 2:4-5

December 20 - Luke 2:6-7
December 21 - Romans

December 22 - 2 Corinthians 9:15
December 23 - Psalm 29:11

DECEMBER 24, 2017

week 4: PEACE

By Jeff Land, Publishing Team Leader
Bible Studies for Life: Kids

The Lord gives his people strength; the Lord blesses his people with peace.—
Psalm 29:11

GOD BLESS YOU

This might sound kind of strange, but I really love to sneeze. Sometimes I sneeze so loudly that it scares people who are around me. Did you know that when you sneeze, the pressure of the air moving from your body can be 100 miles per hour? The louder the sneeze, the faster it travels! Did you know that you don't sneeze when you are asleep? Did you know that you can't keep your eyes open when you sneeze? God made your body so smart that it knows to automatically close your eyes when you sneeze.

One of my favorite things about sneezing is when someone says "God bless you!" It reminds me that people love God and that they know that He blesses people. That gives me peace. Peace is a feeling of calm, quiet, and knowing that God is in control. This Christmastime, pray that God will give you peace as you celebrate the birth of Jesus.

PEACE DOVE ORNAMENTS

The dove is a sign of peace. Trace each family member's hand on heavyweight white paper. Cut out each handprint. Draw a small black dot at the top middle portion of the thumb on the cut out handprint. Cut a small triangle of yellow paper and glue to the thumb near the eye to be the dove's beak. Write today's verse on the dove. Be sure to write each person's name and age on his handprint. Use ornament hangers to hang your dove family on your Christmas tree.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some times that you feel peaceful?

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2. Why do you think Jesus is called the Prince of Peace?

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DECEMBER 25, 2017

celebrate JESUS

By Klista Storts, Content Editor
Vacation Bible School

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host^[a] with the angel, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest heaven,^b and peace on earth to people he favors! —Luke 2:11-14

AMAZING LOVE

Amazing! That’s the first word that comes to my mind when reading today’s verses. Can you imagine being with the shepherds in a dark field when all of a sudden the sky was filled with the heavenly host praising God? Maybe it was a little scary at first, but then, wow! Don’t you imagine that was an experience those shepherds never forgot?

Think about today. With all of the presents, parades, and programs we have around us now at Christmas, we can lose focus of why we celebrate. Although that unforgettable night was so very long ago, we should still be amazed at the love God showed us when He sent us His only Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: SING HIS PRAISES

During the busyness of the day, stop and take time to talk about how God showed His amazing love through the gift of Jesus Christ. Read today’s Scripture again, reminding kids how the angels sang praises to God. Ask each family member to pantomime the name of his favorite Christmas carol. Once the correct carol has been named, sing the song together.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we celebrate Christmas?

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2. The angels praised God when Christ was born. Why do we still praise Him today?

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