

Jesse Tree Advent Devotional Guide

Isaiah 11:1 & 2

The Branch From Jesse

¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him —
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD —



Celebrating Advent with the Jesse Tree Devotions

The idea for the Jesse Tree comes from Isaiah 11:1 “A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots.” Through these devotions we unfold the Story of God in the Old Testament by connecting the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God. The branch, a biblical symbol for newness out of discouragement, became the way to talk about the expected Messiah. It is a symbol of Jesus the Christ, who is the revelation of the grace and faithfulness of God.

Through the Old Testament we see the struggle of God’s people to believe and trust in Him and of their need for a deliverer. We see a history of chosen people who would struggle to believe God and trust Him in the way they lived. We see the faithfulness of God who loves sinners—people made in His image who chose their own way—so much that He would make the way for them to return to Him. We see a promise keeping God who would continue to pursue His people. We see key people in and out of this history who loved Him and remained open to God and His Word to them. These key people were those who believed God and were waiting for His deliverer.

How to Celebrate with a Jesse Tree

The Jesse Tree can be a banner or a tree. This can be as simple or as elaborate as you would like to make it. The banner could be as simple as a poster with the ornaments colored and glued to the poster or cloth ornaments that attach to a cloth banner. The tree can be a leafless branch set in a container decorated to look like a stump, an inexpensive small artificial tree, or some other creative tree to display the ornaments on.

The symbols that illustrate each devotion are made into ornaments that can be attached to the banner or the tree. These give a visual reminder of our family history as God’s children—whatever age we may be. It gives a fun way to celebrate Jesus and keep him central in the Advent season.

December Jesse Tree Schedule

DATE	TEXT	FOCUS	SYMBOL
Dec 1	Isaiah 11:1-5	Shoot from Jesse	Stump with Branch
Dec 2	Genesis 1:26-31	Creation	World
Dec 3	Genesis 3:1-24	The Fall	Apple and Snake
Dec 4	Genesis 6:11-18, 7:17-8:3, 9:8-17	Noah	Ark and Rainbow
Dec 5	Genesis 12:1-7	Abraham	Tent and Camel
Dec 6	Genesis 15:1-6	Abram and Sarai	Star
Dec 7	Genesis 21:1-7	Sarah	Cradle
Dec 8	Genesis 22:1-18	Isaac	Ram
Dec 9	Genesis 28:10-22	Jacob	Ladder
Dec 10	Genesis 37:1-36, 50:15-21	Joseph	Coat
Dec 11	Deuteronomy 5:1-22	Moses	Tablets
Dec 12	Joshua 2:1-21	Rahab	Rope
Dec 13	Ruth 1:15-2:3, 4:13-17	Ruth	Grain
Dec 14	2 Samuel 5:1-5	David	Crown
Dec 15	Isaiah 9:2-7	Prophets	Rose
Dec 16	1 Kings 18:15-39	Elijah	Fire and Altar
Dec 17	Daniel 6	Daniel	Lion

DATE	TEXT	FOCUS	SYMBOL
Dec 18	Jonah 3:1-5	Jonah	Fish
Dec 19	Esther 4	Esther	Scepter
Dec 20	Isaiah 11:6-9	Peace	Lamb and Wolf
Dec 21	Micah 5:1-5a	Bethlehem	City
Dec 22	Luke 1:26-38	Mary	Heart
Dec 23	Matthew 1:18-25	Joseph	Tools
Dec 24	Luke 2:1-5	Journey	Sandals
Dec 25	Luke 2:6-21	Birth	Star



Read: Isaiah 11:1-5

Reflect: God has a plan for everything. Long before Jesus was born lived a man named Jesse. Jesse had seven sons; the youngest was named David. When David grew up, he became a great king of Israel. God had a plan for Jesse and for his son David, even before they were born.

Jesus was also part of Jesse and David's family tree, born many, many years after David. People waited a long time for the birth of the Savior. The season of Advent is a season of waiting for us, too. We wait for Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is hard to be patient, especially when we are waiting for something wonderful like Christmas! But it is important to learn to be patient, and to trust that God has a plan for us, too.

Talk About:

- 💡 Why is it important to know God has a plan for us?
- 💡 God often calls us to wait as He unfolds His plan for us. Why is waiting so hard?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you that you have a plan for each of us. Help us to be patient as we wait for Jesus' birthday and help us to keep our hearts fixed on Him.



Read: Genesis 1:26-31

Reflect: God is the creator of all things. God made the world and everything in it: the air and the water, the plants and the fish, the animals and the people. The people were made in His image and were made to have fellowship with Him.

When God finished creating the world, it was perfect—the people were perfect too. They did not sin or do anything to make God unhappy. Adam and Eve were to care for the world God made and walk in perfect fellowship with Him. They loved and trusted God and each other with their whole hearts and they cared for the garden God had given them to live in.

Talk About:

- 💡 What must it have been like to completely trust God and care for the world He made?
- 💡 How can we show God we trust Him and continue to care for what He has made?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you, Creator God, for making our wonderful world and creating us in your image.



Read: Genesis 3:1-24

Reflect: Yesterday we read about the perfect world that God created, including perfect people. Today we read in the Bible about Adam and Eve, and how they disobeyed God.

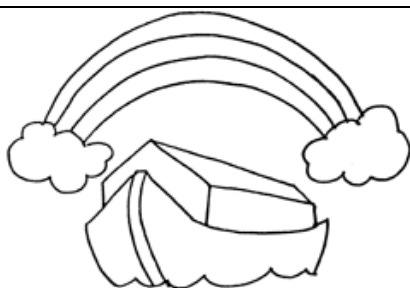
God had given them everything, and had only asked that they not eat the fruit of one special tree. But Eve and Adam did eat the fruit. Eating the fruit did not make them wise, it brought sin and confusion into the world.

God's love for Adam and Eve did not change, but he had to punish them for disobeying him. God sent them out of the beautiful garden, and they had to work for their food. God also made a promise to Adam and Eve: that God would always love them and that He would send a Savior to rescue them from their sin.

Talk About:

- 💡 Why did God have to punish Adam and Eve?
- 💡 How much did God love them?
- 💡 What promise of deliverance from sin is here?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Mighty God, help us to see when we mistrust you and how to trust you to avoid sin in our lives.



Read: Genesis 6:11-18; 7:17-8:3; and 9:8-17

Reflect: When people sin, or do wrong things, we are saying no to God and His ways. There came a time when there was so much sin in the world that it was time for God to judge sin. So he asked Noah to build the ark and to save his own family, as well as the animals, because Noah and his family remembered God.

Then God sent rain and the world flooded, and God destroyed all the people and animals that were not on the ark.

When the flood was over and Noah and his family were safely on dry ground, God made a covenant, or a promise, with Noah. God promised not to send another flood that would destroy the world. As a sign of this promise, God put a rainbow in the sky.

God loves us and keeps his promises. Sin was judged, but not defeated, God would keep His promise and send His Son to defeat sin and death.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Name some more promises of God.
- 🕯 How have you seen Him keep His promises?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you, Almighty God, for keeping your promises.



Read: Genesis 12:1-8

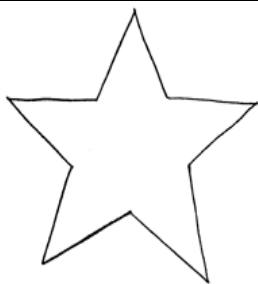
Reflect: Sometimes God asks us to do things that are hard to do. Sometimes God asks us to go places and do things we'd rather not do. God asked Abram to take a long trip, and to leave behind the place that Abram called home. Abram had to trust God and depend on Him. God made promises to Abram. God promised to bless Abram. God was going to make a people for himself through Abram.

Abram still had problems and struggles, especially when he forgot to listen to God's directions, but God kept all of the promises He made to Abram. Most importantly, God was Abram's friend forever.

Talk About:

- 🕯 When and how have you depended on God?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Holy God, help us to depend on you and do the things that you want us to do.







Read: Genesis 15:1-6

Reflect: God loves to make promises. Have you ever made a promise that was hard to keep? Has someone made a promise to you but then broken it? When that happens, we feel sad. The good news is that God never, ever breaks a promise!

God made a promise to Abram and his wife Sarai. Abram and Sarai had no children, and since they were almost 100 years old, they thought it was too late. But God promised Abram that he would have a son of his own. God invited Abram to come outside, look up into the night sky, and try to count the stars. God said, "Your family will be like that—there will be too many to count!" Abram believed in God's promises and had faith that it would happen.

When you look up into the sky, see how many stars you can count. Do you know there are many, many more stars beyond what we can see? God's promise was beyond what Abraham could "see"—could understand—but he trusted God.

Talk About:

-  What does it mean to trust God with what we cannot "see"?
-  What is hard for you that requires deep trust in God?
-  What do you learn about God in this passage?
-  How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Faithful God, thank you for being trustworthy. Give thanks to God for His care of you and your family.



Read: Genesis 21:1-7

Reflect: Have you ever wanted something very, very much, but also very, very sure you would never be able to have it? It's so hard to be happy when we focus on the things we don't have, instead of the things we do have.

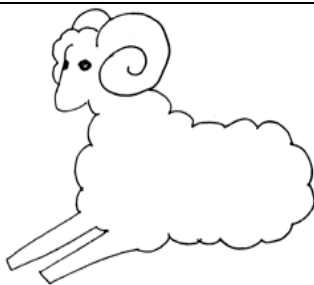
Sarah wanted a baby more than anything else, but even though she prayed a lot and tried everything she could think of, she didn't have a baby. When Sarah gave up trying to make her own way, God made His promise to her a reality. God had promised Sarah her own son. God kept his promise.

When Sarah and Abraham's son was born they named him Isaac. Isaac means laughter. Sarah received great joy from God through the gift of her son Isaac. Sarah was very happy and grateful to God for keeping His promise to her.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Have you ever wanted something as much as Sarah wanted to have a baby?
- 🕯 How has God blessed you?
- 🕯 How has God answered your prayers?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for listening to us and answering our prayers. Thank you for knowing what is best for us and giving us that—thank you for giving us Jesus!



Read: Genesis 22:1-18

Reflect: We know that Isaac was special because he was the son of promise to Abraham. Abraham loved Isaac very much, but he loved God even more than Isaac. God tells us that we should love Him more than anyone else, but that is often hard for us to do.

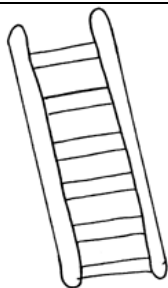
One day God asked Abraham to take Isaac on a journey. Abraham obeyed. God also asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, as a way of showing how much Abraham loved God. We don't know how Abraham felt, but we know that he obeyed God. He trusted that even though he was being asked to do something terrible, God would make everything right.

As he was getting ready to sacrifice Isaac, God sent an angel to stop Abraham and save Isaac's life. Then Abraham sacrificed the ram God provided and worshipped God with his son Isaac.

Talk About:

- 🕯 How has God protected you and provided for you?
- 🕯 In what hard ways is God asking you to trust Him?
- 🕯 How much do you love God?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you, God, for being our constant and gracious provider and protector.








Read: Genesis 28:10-22

Reflect: Instead of waiting on God, Jacob had often tried to make his own way. He had done some deceptive things. In Jacob's fear he was running away.

Jacob lived away from his family for many years. While he was away he married and had children. Many years later God brought Jacob back to his home and to reconcile with Esau.

When Jacob ran away from his family, he may have thought that he was running away from God, too. God spoke to Jacob in a dream. God reminded Jacob of promises He had made to Jacob's father and grandfather, and that those promises were meant for Jacob, too. Jacob could not run away from God, was with him and would continue to be with him. God will keep his promises through and to Jacob.

Talk About:

-  How do you know that God is always with you?
-  Can we run away or hide from God?
-  How do you see God's great forgiveness in this passage?
-  What do you learn about God in this passage?
-  How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Remind us each day, God, that you are with us.



Read: Genesis 37:1-36; 50:15-21

Reflect: Sometimes even love cannot protect us from bad things. Joseph was loved very much by his father, Israel (Jacob)—maybe too much. Joseph's brothers hated him because they were jealous of their father's special love for Joseph.

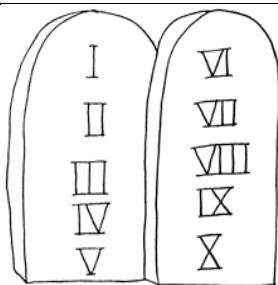
They sold him to a man who made him a servant and even put him in prison. However, God had given Joseph a special gift of understanding dreams, and Joseph was able to use this special gift to help the Pharaoh.

The Pharaoh rewarded Joseph by giving him a very important job. While Joseph was doing this job, he again met his brothers, who did not recognize him. Instead of revenge, Joseph chose to forgive and help them. He knew God had been with him through everything, and that God was using the hardness in Joseph's life to do good things.

Talk About:

- 💡 How can God use your hard times or relationships to do good things?
- 💡 Who do you need to forgive?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: God of forgiveness, help us to be forgiving even when it is hard to do.



Read: Deuteronomy 5:1-22

Reflect: God's people had been in Egypt for 400 years surrounded by false gods/idolatry. God gave Moses and us a simple way to understand who He is and how to live as His people. God wants us to love and care for each other. To help us to understand how to care for each other, many years ago God gave Moses the ten best rules for living.

These rules are called the Ten Commandments, and they are still good rules for us today. Not everybody likes to follow the rules. They think rules keep them from having fun. But God gave us the rules not as a punishment, but as a way of helping us to show God that we are thankful for what He has done for us. God wants us to understand Him and His ways, and will help us to do the right thing by guiding us to the right path.

Talk About:

- 🕯 What rules help your family to live together and be happy?
- 🕯 How do you see the Ten Commandments as the foundation of your family rules?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Righteous God, thank you for loving us enough to give us rules to guide us.



Read: Joshua 2:1-21

Reflect: The Israelites were ready to enter the land that God had promised them. They sent two men into the land to find out more about it. It was very dangerous to go into the land; if the people who ruled the land had found the two Israelites they would have been killed.

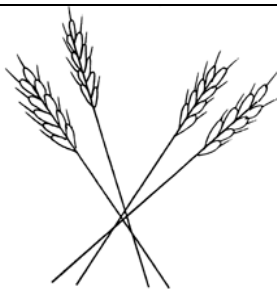
Rahab saved the lives of two of God's people. She hid the two men in her house and then helped them to escape. She knew that God had promised the city of Jericho to Joshua and the Israelites, and she believed that God is a powerful God. Rahab had courage to honor God because she believed in God's power.

In return, the Israelites promised to protect Rahab and her family. They gave her a red cord to tie on the window of her house so that the Israelites would see it and protect her all who were in her house with her, which she did. God remembered Rahab and took care of her for the rest of her life.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Rahab declared that God is God in heaven above and on earth below. What did she know about God? How did she know this?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Dear God, give us hearts to declare who you are to others so they will believe in you too.



Read: Ruth 1:15-2:3; 4:13-17

Reflect: Ruth and Naomi lost all the people they loved—except each other. Naomi's two sons--one was Ruth's husband--had died, and Naomi's husband had died too.

Naomi had been living in Ruth's country, far from her family, and so Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem. Ruth could have stayed in her own country with her own family, but she chose to go to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Naomi was so sad that she thought that God had forgotten her. In their time, women without husbands had no provision or protection. As widows, women could go the fields and take the grain that the farmers left behind. Ruth went to the field to gather grain, and there she met Boaz, a relative of Naomi's.

Boaz took care of them. Boaz and Ruth married and had a son, and Naomi was happy. She found out that God had not forgotten them, even when she thought He had.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Even though Naomi thought of her life as empty, God was fully with her. Is there anyone you know like Naomi that you could love in some special ways as a family?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for being with us always. Please help us to always see your goodness and share our blessings with others.



Read: II Samuel 5:1-5

Reflect: Although David was chosen by God to be king when he was a boy, he didn't become king until he was thirty years old. David was a good king because David listened to God and trusted Him. David served as king for forty years.

Being a king is an important job. Kings must be wise and strong; they must do what is good for the people of their land. Sometimes they must fight wars, but whenever possible they need to try to keep peace. Kings should protect their people like shepherds protect their sheep. David had been a shepherd, and then he became a king. God trusted him to take care of the people of Israel.

A very important king would come from David's family, the King of Kings also known as The Good Shepherd. The perfect king.

Talk About:

- 🕯 How do you see God caring for you?
- 🕯 Of whom is God trusting you to take care?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for watching over us and protecting us.

**Read: Isaiah 9:2-7**

Reflect: Many, many years before Jesus was born, people called prophets would bring God's message to the people of Israel. The prophets reminded the people of what God wanted them to do. God wanted them to understand who He was and trust Him in the way they lived their lives. The prophets told the people to worship only the one true God. The rose ornament symbolizes the prophets' love and devotion for God.

The prophets also reminded their people that God had promised a savior. The prophets gave the people hope that no matter how bad things might be here on earth, God had not forgotten them. God was going to send a child who would grow to be the world's savior. God was sending His Son. God gave the prophets many clues to share with His people about the Savior so the people would recognize Him when He came.

Talk About:

- 🕯 What "clues" about Jesus do you get in this passage?
- 🕯 God's Word speaks to us today. What truths from God's Word gives you hope in your God walk?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you for giving us your Word and speaking to us through it.



Read: I Kings 18:15-39

Reflect: The people of Israel had forgotten to worship God. Instead, they were worshipping a false god named Baal. God sent his prophet Elijah to remind the people about the true God. But the people didn't want to listen to Elijah.

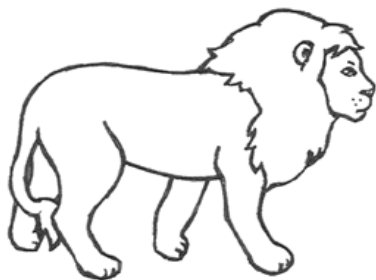
So Elijah showed the people God's power. He prepared a sacrifice, and the prophets of Baal prepared a sacrifice. The prophets of Baal prayed that their god would send fire to burn the sacrifice, but of course the false god did nothing. But when Elijah prayed, God sent fire. The Israelites had forgotten God, until God miraculously showed His power and might.

God still does miracles today, but we need to remember and trust God even if we don't see miracles. Our God is a great God; we need to praise God at all times.

Talk About:

- 🕯 What do you know of God's power and might?
- 🕯 Why should we listen to God?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: We praise you, powerful God, for all that you are and do for us.

**Read: Daniel 6**

Reflect: God wants to be the most important one in our lives: more important than our family, more important than our things, more important than even our own lives. Daniel understood that; he worshipped God even though it might cost him everything, even his own life.

It was against the law for Daniel to worship God, but Daniel knew that God is the only true God, and he would not stop worshipping God. Daniel was punished for breaking the law, and he was put in a pit with lions. But God protected Daniel from becoming the lions' dinner. People learned of God's power because of Daniel, and many others worshiped God because Daniel had trusted and honored God.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Who/what do you love the most?
- 🕯 How does loving God most, help us to love others better?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Savior God, it is not always easy to love you more than anyone or anything else. Help us to trust and honor you each day.



Read: Jonah 3:1-5

Reflect: Jonah was one of God's special preachers, called a prophet. God asked Jonah to do a special and important job.

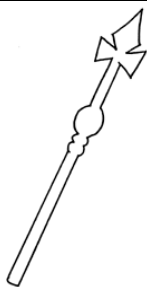
Jonah didn't want to do the job God asked him to do, and so he ran away. Of course, God always knew where Jonah went; no one can run away from God. God was with Jonah on the storm-tossed ship. God was with Jonah in the belly of the fish. God was with Jonah when he obeyed and went to Nineveh and preached throughout the great city. God was with Jonah when he was angry about God's mercy to Nineveh.

We can't run away from God. God wants us to obey him, but even when we don't, God is still with us. God loves us at all times and in all places.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Have you ever tried to hide from God? If you have, how did He come after you?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for watching over us in all things and for loving us when we try to run away from your love.

**Read: Esther 4**

Reflect: God is at work in everything. Sometimes things don't seem to make any sense to us at all, but later we understand why God put us in a certain place at a certain time.

Esther was a beautiful young woman. God used her beauty to put her in place as the queen. Then Esther showed greater beauty by her willingness to put her own life at risk to try to save the Jewish people from death.

Esther's uncle told her of the danger to her and to her people, and he helped her to plan how to save the people. At first she didn't think she could help, but her uncle reminded her that everyone is important. God had put Esther in the palace for a special job. God used her to rescue His people.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Does God have a special job for you?
- 🕯 How can you trust Him to lead you?
- 🕯 What is beautiful to God?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: All-knowing God, open our eyes to the special plans you have for us.



Read: Isaiah 11:6-9

Reflect: Animals are one of God's great gifts to us. God made each animal unique. Many of them are gentle, but many others can hurt us or other animals. Most animals only hurt others when they are hungry or frightened.

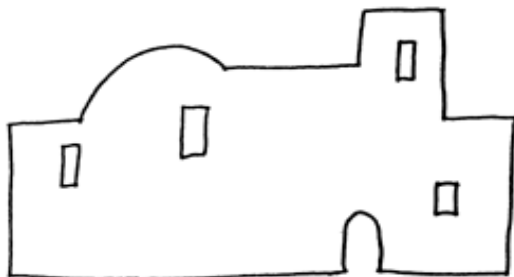
Before Eve and Adam sinned, all of the animals got along with each other. There was no danger. God created a peaceful kingdom, but sin changed things.

Someday God will restore peace to the world. There will be no hunger or fear, and all of the animals will get along again. They will not hurt each other, and we will not hurt them. In this restored world, all of God's children will be at peace with Him and with each other. There will be no more war and no more pain. What a wonderful world that will be!

Talk About:

- 💡 How can you be a peacemaker?
- 💡 What will make God's Kingdom a kingdom of peace?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Loving God, help us to understand and know the peace that comes from loving and trusting You.



Read: Micah 5:1-5a

Reflect: Often God does things that surprise us. God chose the small town of Bethlehem for the birthplace of Jesus. In Bible times, most rulers in important families were born in bigger cities, but Jesus was born into an ordinary family in a small village.

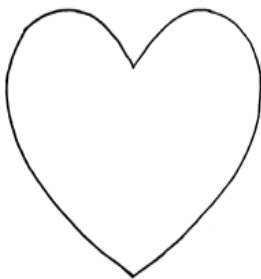
God chose Bethlehem many years before Jesus was born. The prophet Micah wrote that Bethlehem would be the place where the Savior would be born. But even so, the town of Bethlehem wasn't ready for the birth of Jesus. The world may have not been ready to make room for God's Son, but God made a place for him.

The day when we celebrate Jesus' birth will soon be here. Is your heart most focused on Jesus this Christmas?

Talk About:

- 🕯 How much room do you have for Jesus?
- 🕯 How are you getting ready to celebrate Jesus' birth?
- 🕯 What is most important about Christmas to you?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Eternal God, help us to always be ready for you. Help us to celebrate you every day.



Read: Luke 1:26-38

Reflect: God had a special job for someone. God had an earthly home picked out for his Son, Jesus. Jesus was going to need a mother who loved and trusted God. He would need a mother who was thoughtful, discerning, strong and loving.

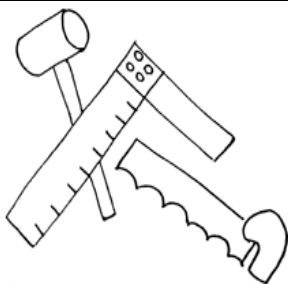
God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother. God sent an angel to talk to Mary. Mary wasn't sure how she could be the mother to Jesus, but Mary trusted God. Mary knew that she was an ordinary girl with an extraordinary God. The angel reminded Mary that God would be with her.

God was giving her a difficult and important job, but she knew that God would guide her. Mary loved God and wanted to do whatever she could to serve him. Mary said yes with a joyful heart.

Talk About:

- 💡 Talk about some things that have happened to you or others that seem impossible. How was God revealed in those seemingly impossible ways?
- 💡 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💡 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you, God, that nothing is impossible with you.



Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Reflect: Yesterday we talked about Jesus' mother, Mary. Today we look at the husband God chose for Mary. God chose a man named Joseph, who was a carpenter.

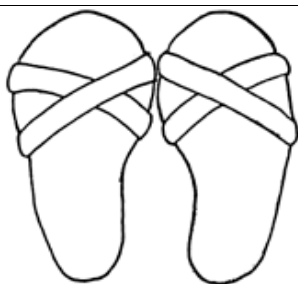
God sent an angel to talk to Joseph in a dream. The angel explained that God had chosen Mary, and that Mary's baby would be very special.

When Joseph woke up, he knew that he and Mary were a part of God's plan. Joseph knew that God was calling him to love and care for Mary and God's Son, Jesus.

Talk About:

- 🕯 Name some ways that God speaks to us.
- 🕯 How is God using you to love and care for others?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: God, who calls us, help us to hear your voice.



Read: Luke 2:1-5

Reflect: Sometimes taking a trip is fun, like when we go on vacation. Sometimes it's not so fun, like when we go to the doctor when we're sick. But usually when we're on a journey, whether a short trip or a long one, we experience something new. We learn things on a journey.

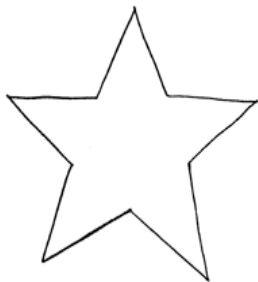
Mary and Joseph went on a journey. If we were to take the same journey by car it wouldn't take very long, but because Mary and Joseph were walking, it took a long time.

They had to go to Bethlehem because the country's ruler said they had to. But it was all part of God's plan. Mary and Joseph were continuing to learn about God's plan for them on their journey with Him.

Talk About:

- 🕯 What new journeys did you take this past year?
- 🕯 How did you see God's love and care of you on these journeys?
- 🕯 How did you learn more about God on these journeys?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Guide our journeys wherever they take us, holy God. Help us to grow in our love for you every day.






Read: Luke 2:6-21

Reflect: Our waiting is over! Jesus is born! The star is shining, the angels are singing, the shepherds are worshiping. Our savior is here!

When sin first came into the world, God made a promise. Even when the people forgot about God and the promise, God didn't forget about the people. God guided the people, protected the people, and loved the people, even though they were sinful. God was faithful, and today we celebrate the promises that are fulfilled in Jesus.

Talk About:

-  What is your favorite part of the Christmas story? Why?
-  What do you learn about God in this passage?
-  How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Thank you, God of the universe, for the most wonderful gift of your son, Jesus. Help us to treasure You and celebrate the gift of Jesus everyday—not just today!



Full Advent Season Schedule

The length of the Advent season varies. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. The season can be as long as 29 days (counting Christmas day). Following are four more devotions and ornaments to go with these devotions for those longer Advent seasons. You may also choose to work these in during shorter years or may choose to replace one of the other devotions with one of these. With these you have a full set whatever the length of the season.

DATE	TEXT	FOCUS	SYMBOL
Week One			
Day 1	Isaiah 11:1-5	Shoot from Jesse	Stump with Branch
Day 2	Genesis 1:26-31	Creation	World
Day 3	Genesis 3:1-24	The Fall	Apple and Snake
Day 4	Genesis 6:11-18, 7:17-8:3, 9:8-17	Noah	Ark and Rainbow
Day 5	Genesis 12:1-7	Abraham	Tent and Camel
Day 6	Genesis 15:1-6	Abram and Sarai	Star
Day 7	Genesis 21:1-7	Sarah	Cradle
Week Two			
Day 8	Genesis 22:1-18	Isaac	Ram
Day 9	Genesis 28:10-22	Jacob	Ladder
Day 10	Genesis 37:1-36, 50:15-21	Joseph	Coat
Day 11	Deuteronomy 5:1-22	Moses	Tablets
Day 12	Joshua 2:1-21	Rahab	Rope
Day 13	Ruth 1:15-2:3, 4:13-17	Ruth	Grain
Day 14	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Samuel and David	Oil Horn

DATE	TEXT	FOCUS	SYMBOL
Week Three			
Day 15	2 Samuel 5:1-5	David	Crown
Day 16	Isaiah 9:2-7	Prophets	Rose
Day 17	1 Kings 18:15-39	Elijah	Fire and Altar
Day 18	Isaiah 11:6-9	Peace	Lamb & Wolf
Day 19	Jonah 3:1-5	Jonah	Fish
Day 20	Micah 5:1-5a	Bethlehem	City
Day 21	Esther 4	Esther	Scepter

Week Four			
Day 22	Daniel 6	Daniel	Lion
Day 23	Habakkuk 2:1-4	Waiting	Watch Tower
Day 24	Luke 1:5-25	Zechariah and Elizabeth	Man and Woman
Day 25	Matthew 3:1-6	John the Baptist	Shell
Day 26	Luke 1:26-38	Mary	Heart
Day 27	Matthew 1:18-25	Joseph	Tools
Christmas Eve	Luke 2:1-5	Journey	Sandals
Christmas Day	Luke 2:6-21	Birth	Star

Extra Devotions:

Day 14:

Samuel and David

(between Ruth and David)



Read: I Samuel 16:1-13

Reflect: God has a plan for you. God made us to love and worship Him. Even when we are young, God sees into our hearts and knows what kind of people we are and what kind of people we will be. Most of the grown-ups who saw David thought he was just a kid who tended the sheep, but while David was still a child God chose him to be a king.

God's servant Samuel poured oil on David's head and anointed him as the future king of Israel.

God has a plan for each of us. Not many of us will be rulers, but each of us can serve God in important ways. It's important to listen for God's call and to find ways to honor Him with our lives.

Talk About:

- 🕯 How do/can you honor God with your life?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: God of wisdom, guide us to serve you. Thank you for calling us to be yours.

(after Daniel)







Read: Habakkuk 2:1-4

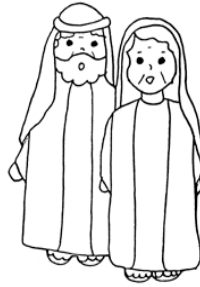
Reflect: Christmas is less than a week away! Waiting is so hard! But we know that Christmas will eventually come, and our waiting will be over. We wait for so many things, some of them happy and some of them not so happy. Waiting means we are looking ahead to the future.

Before Jesus was born, the people were waiting for a savior. They had faith that God would keep his promise. They waited a long time; some of them forgot to keep looking for God's promised son. They no longer cared about God or God's promise, and when Jesus arrived they didn't recognize him. But those who watched and waited—who remembered and trusted God—recognized Jesus and their waiting was finally over.

Talk About:

-  Tell about a time when you had to wait for something special.
-  What do you wait on God for now?
-  What do you learn about God in this passage?
-  How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: God of all time, be with us as we wait on You and celebrate the birth of your son.



Read: Luke 1:5-25

Reflect: Zechariah and Elizabeth loved and honored God, and they knew God loved them. They did not have a child and they seemed too old to have a child.

One day while Zechariah was working in the temple, an angel brought him a message from God, saying that he and Elizabeth were going to have a very special son and his name was going to be John.

Zechariah didn't believe the angel, and so God took away Zechariah's voice as a sign of His power. Then Zechariah knew God was powerful enough to give he and Elizabeth a child in their older age. When Zechariah insisted that their son be given the name John, God restored his voice. Zechariah and Elizabeth were happy to know that they had a son chosen by God to do important work.

Talk About:

- 🕯 What can you tell others about what God has done for you?
- 🕯 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 🕯 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Almighty God, give us the courage to tell everyone about your good works.

(after Zechariah & Elizabeth)



Read: Matthew 3: 1-6

Reflect: Elizabeth and Zechariah's son grew up to be John the Baptist. He was Jesus' cousin. God chose John to tell the people that the Savior God had promised the people so many years ago was coming to them soon.

John told the people to stop rebelling against God and return to following God. John baptized them if they repented and returned to trusting God. John wanted God's people to be ready to believe in Jesus when He came. John did not look like other people, and some people probably thought he was a little strange. But many people listened to John, and they were waiting for God to send the promised Savior.

Talk About:

- 💧 Repentance is turning from our own way and turning to God. Where do you need to turn from your own way to God's way and put trust Him more fully?
- 💧 What do you learn about God in this passage?
- 💧 How are the needs of yourself/mankind revealed in this passage?

Prayer: Holy God, please give us repentant hearts centered on You instead of ourselves.

*Original Written by Christina Van Eyl.
Some reflections edited for Grace Community Church by Carol Hill.
Illustrations by Helen Phillips except for the lion which was drawn by Jeff Brown.
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Grace Community Church wishes you and yours a blessed Advent and merry Christmas!