

Northview Kids

Family Advent
Devotional

—
UNEXPECTED



Dear Parents,

All you have to do is walk into a mall and you will quickly realize that Christmas is upon us! You will also realize that the world around us embraces the lights, the sparkle, the gift-giving, the spending, the music, and all the other trappings. At best, the manger has been pushed to the side. More accurately, the manger has been pushed out.

Christmas is an exciting and fun time, but as Christians, Christmas must be more than that. The birth of the Son of God defines our faith. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ...” is the most significant event that this world has known. The King of Heaven lying in a manger, announced by angels, visited by lowly shepherds, sought by magi from the east.

Parents, the best thing you can do for your family is to take time to teach your children the importance of the birth of Jesus. This devotional will help you as we move through the weeks of Advent. The Scriptures will line up with the messages from the weekend services! We hope you will enjoy this time as a family! It is our prayer that, as you grow closer together, you will also grow closer to our Lord Jesus. It’s all about HIM.



Merry CHRISTmas!

Northview CM Pastors!

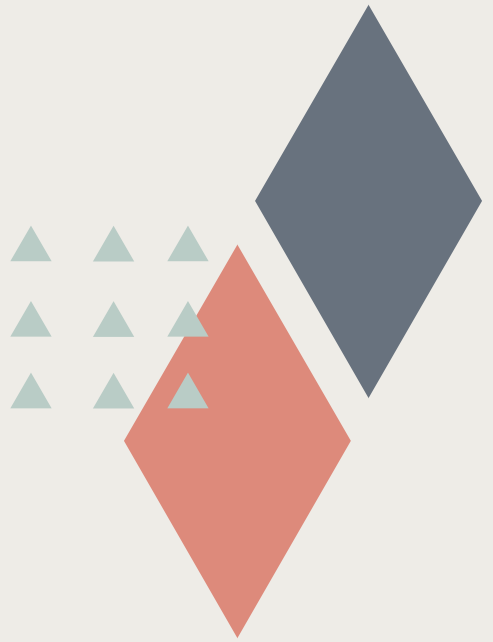


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Week ONE

Study + Reflect

Read The Bible

Light the first Advent candle and read the Scriptures below.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Genesis 3.15

See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

Malachi 4.5

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Luke 1.57-66

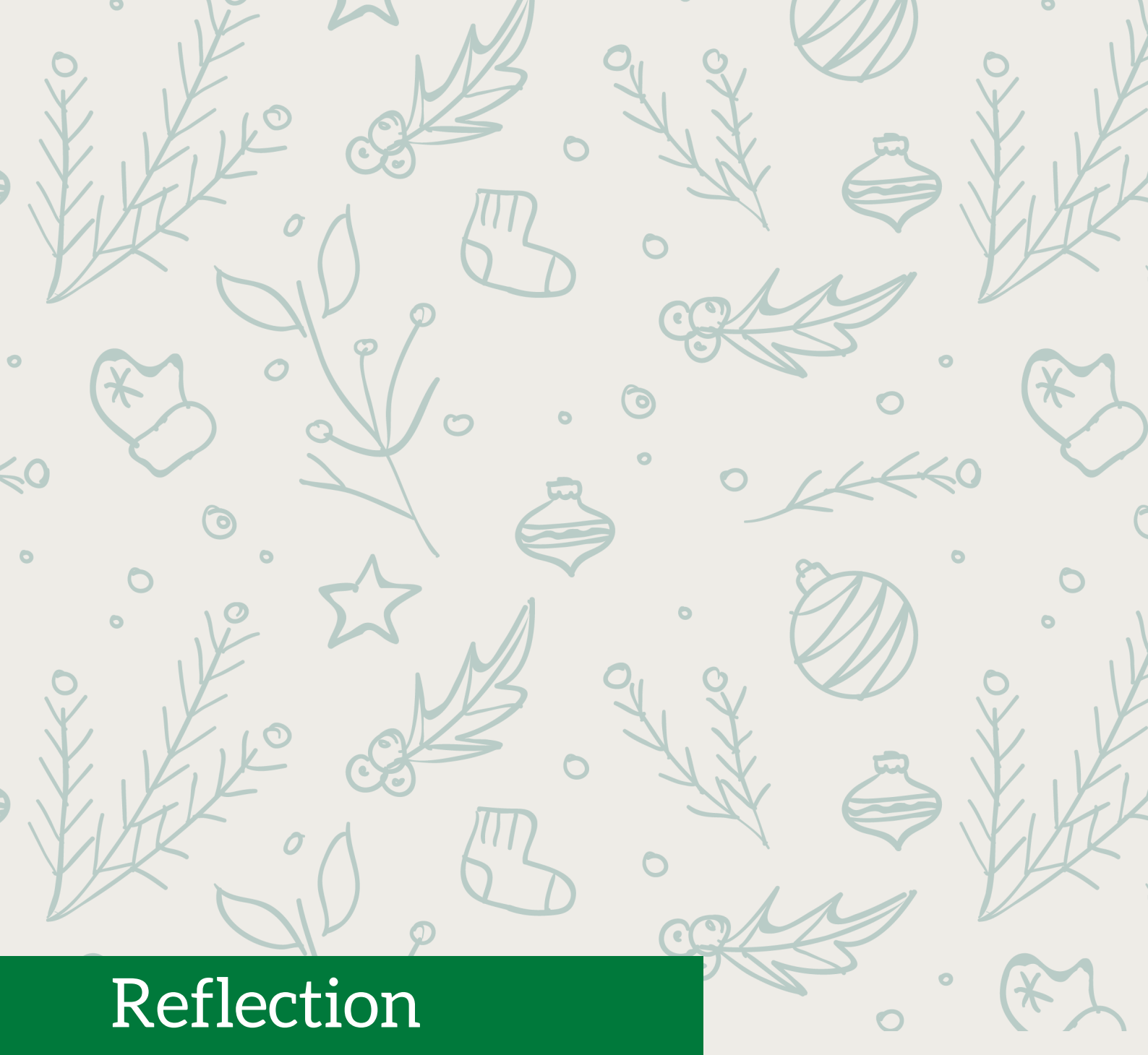
There will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9.1-7



QUESTION

Was there a time in your life when you got some unexpected news? How did you deal with the news?

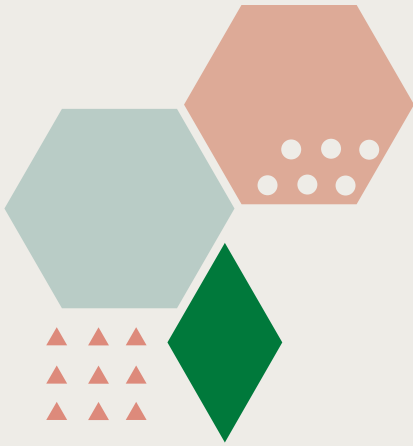


Reflection

God has called many people to stand in the gap at a time when His people most needed it. Nehemiah was a compassionate government employee; Esther was a quiet leader, Noah a man who prepared his family for a catastrophe; and David an overlooked shepherd boy. They were very different people with different circumstances, but the calling of God was the same: to listen to His voice and stand in the gap in times of weakness and danger. John the Baptist was one of those who stood in the gap and prepared the way for the coming Messiah.

John's message was that the King had come! Not as a great warrior with a flaming sword on a mighty horse, but as a carpenter's son. It was John's incredible privilege to herald the King's **UNEXPECTED** appearance. As we follow John's example, we will find our voice to talk about Jesus and we can be the voice of God to our families and neighbours!

Taken from "In The Gap" by Wilfredo De Jesus.



Family Time

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.")

Light the first Advent candle and have someone **read Isaiah 9.1-2.**

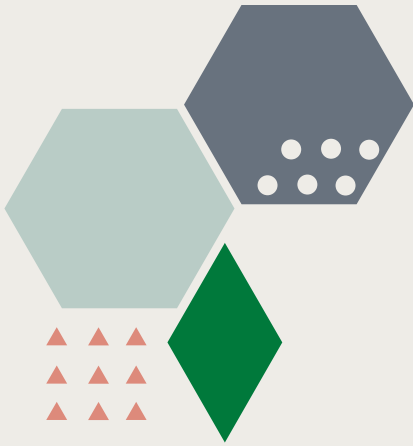
Let your kids know that the first candle symbolizes the **HOPE** we have in Christ and our desire to spend eternity (**as well as** the present!) with Him. During the first week of Advent, we wait for Jesus with **HOPE**.

Hope = Believing that something good will happen! What does hope mean? Why do we have hope? How do we get hope?

For smaller kids: With mom or dad (or by yourself) come up with a list of some things you hope will happen.

Parent/Guardian say: Even with all the stuff you hope for, in what ways does Jesus give us all that we really need? What good things does Jesus promise will happen?

Parent/Guardian: 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.)



Family Play

CRAFT

Make your own advent wreath

*for ideas please visit www.northview.org/kids

Read the Bible

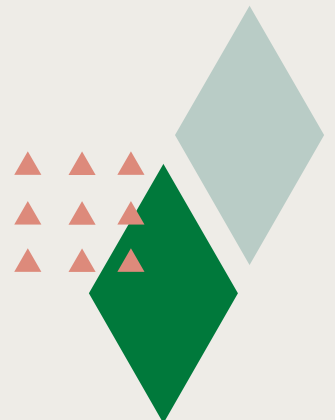
Light the first Advent candle and read Isaiah 9.6.

Activity

Advent Word Search

*for additional copies please visit www.northview.org/kids

Pray Together!



A Time To Prepare

D O N K E Y A P I E Q B H R J
 J L Y C W B X R H N J E S U S
 O O F H N L Z E Q D U T P W K
 S N I M A R Y P K V F H H B M
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 P S Q Z A S V R M O P E G S N
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ADVENT

ANGEL

BETHEHEM

DONKEY

HEARTS

JESUS

JOSEPH

LORD

MAGI

MARY

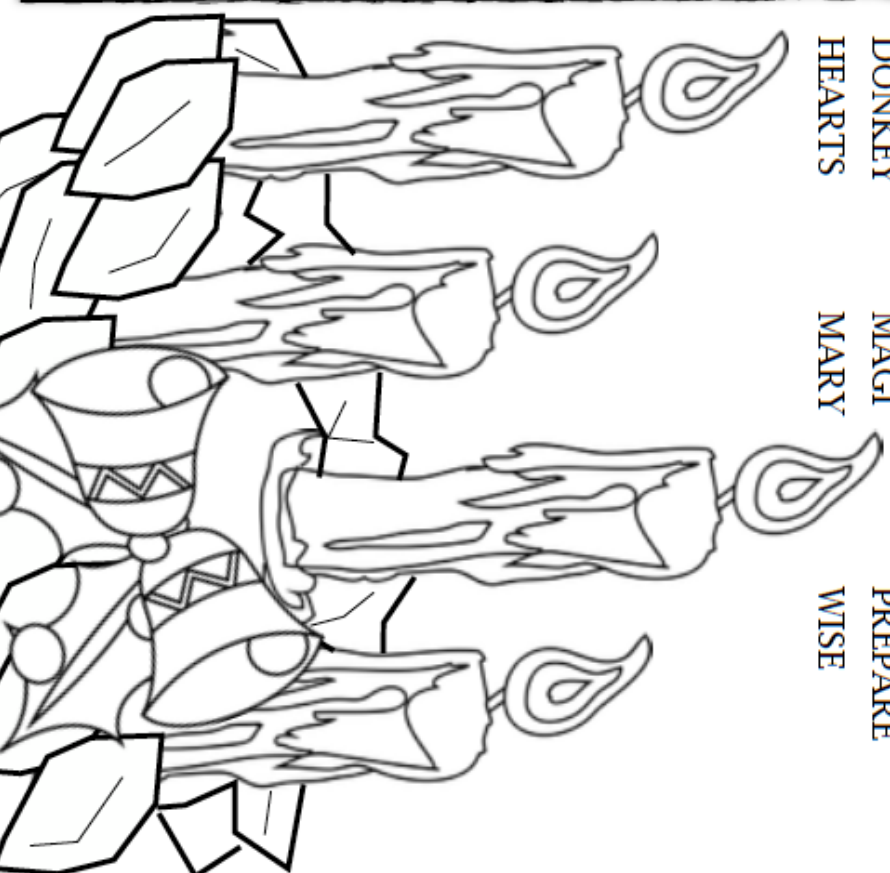
MANGER

NAZARETH

PRAY

PREPARE

WISE





Week TWO

Study + Reflect

Read The Bible

Light the first and second Advent candles and read the Scriptures below.

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Luke 1.67-80

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7.10-14



QUESTION

Have you ever had to wait a long time for something? How did you feel when it happened?

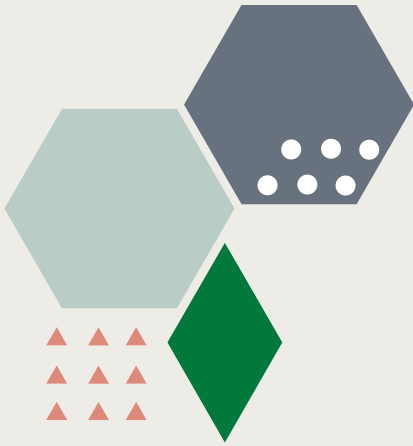


Reflection

For four hundred years, the nation of Israel waited for the one who would redeem them. Then something **UNEXPECTED** happened, the Lord broke through the silence when an angel appeared to the priest Zachariah and told him that he and his wife Elizabeth were going to have a baby (John); the one who would prepare the way for the coming Messiah!

Zachariah praised God because he understood that John's birth meant God's long-anticipated redemption for Israel and for all of us was about to start. And that good news should bring peace in all of our hearts and lives. God's prophets spoke of what the Messiah would come to do. Zachariah praised God for what had not yet taken place. John was meant to go ahead of Jesus and to give testimony about the kingdom of God.

Sometimes our testimony is not what God has already done, but what He will do. Like John, we too can point the way to Jesus Christ. In fact, that's what God wants us to do. God wants us to tell people about Jesus! He wants us to point people to the only one who has the power to save them; and that is Jesus!



Family Time

Begin with a simple prayer.

Let your kids know that the second candle symbolizes the **PEACE** that Jesus brings. Have someone **read Luke 1.76-79**.

Peace = when all things get along!

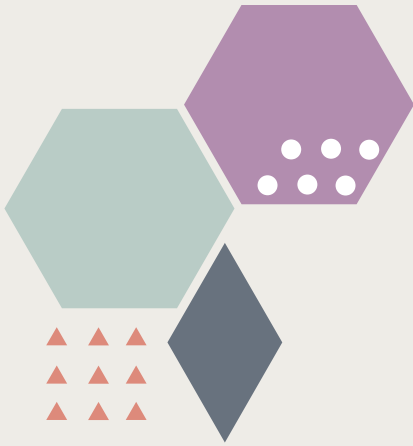
In Matthew 5, Jesus says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” While Advent is a time to anticipate the coming of Christ and the embodiment of peace, he has also called us to bring his peace to the world.

This week, think of a relationship in your life that needs mending. As an agent of God’s peace, carefully consider what you can do to repair the relationship. Then this week, take one step toward peace.

How can you help bring more PEACE to your school or your family or your neighbors?

For younger kids: Draw a picture of the PEACE that will be on earth when Jesus comes back.

Parents/Guardians: Share your thoughts about the reading with your children, and then close with prayer



Family Play

CRAFT

Advent Colouring Wreath

Supplies:

colouring sheet provided in booklet

*for additional copies please visit www.northview.org/kids

Read the Bible

Light the first and second Advent candle and **read Luke 1.76-79.**

Activity

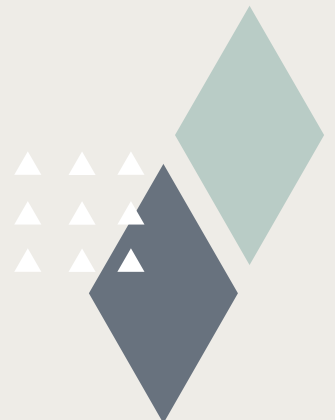
Christmas Star Maze

Supplies:

maze sheet provided in booklet

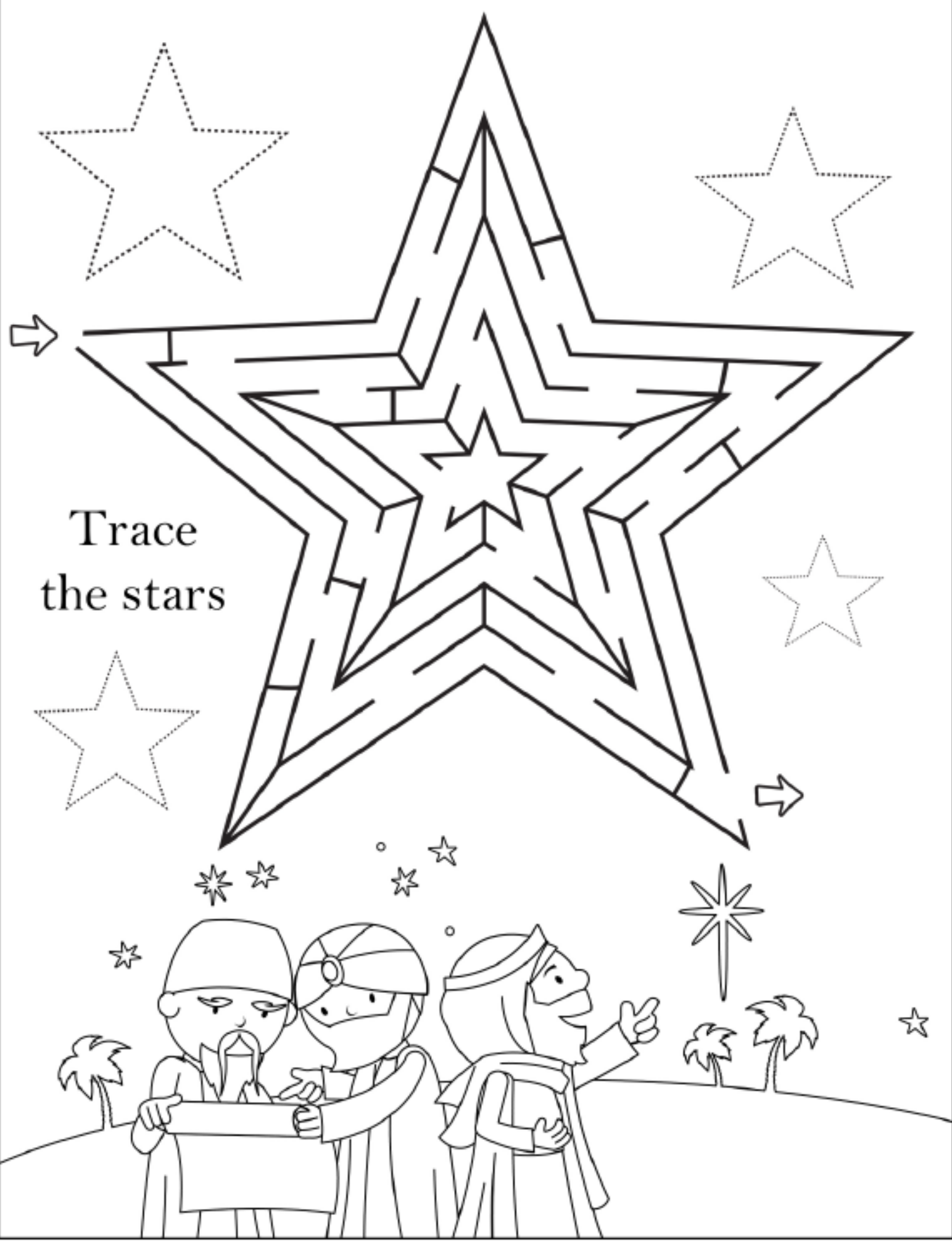
*for additional copies please visit www.northview.org/kids

Pray Together!





Christmas Star Maze





Week THREE

Study + Reflect

Read The Bible

Light the first, second, and third Advent candles and read the Scriptures below.

The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: “One of your own descendants I will place on your throne.

Psalms 132.11

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Micah 5.2

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Luke 2.1-7



QUESTION

Describe a time when you looked forward to an event for a long time. How did you feel when the wait was finally over?



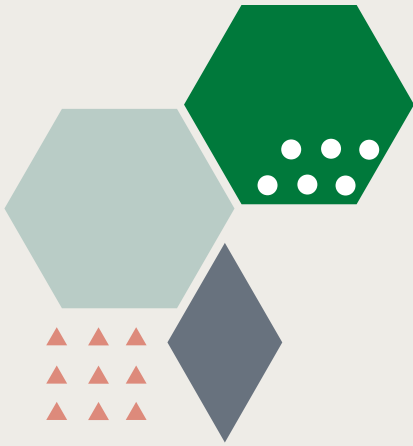
Reflection

Joseph and Mary packed their bags and traveled to Bethlehem, Joseph's hometown. Mary was about to have a baby, but not just any baby: God's own Son, Jesus, who would bring peace.

After traveling three days on a hot, dusty road, Mary and Joseph were probably really tired when they finally got to Bethlehem. Maybe you've done the Grouse Grind or a long hike with your parents or friends. How did you feel at the end of that hike? Probably really tired. Now imagine how tired Mary and Joseph would have been after three days.

When they got to where they were going, they needed to find a place to stay, but there were no rooms available anywhere in town. So many people had come for the census that every room in town had been taken.

Not only could Joseph and Mary not find a room, but Mary was about to have her baby—God's Son, Jesus, the One who would bring peace. Although He is the King of Kings, Jesus' birth was in an **UNEXPECTED** place, surrounded by **UNEXPECTED** roommates (animals). Still, His birth brought about peace and joy for all those who would receive Him!



Family Time

Begin with a simple prayer.

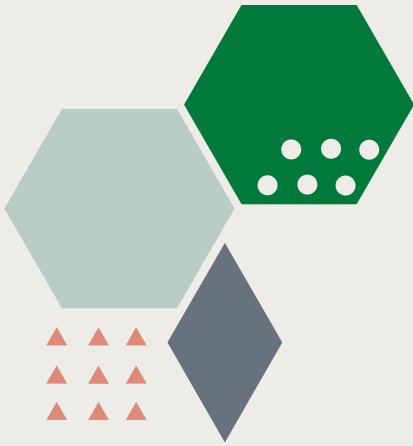
Let your kids know that the third candle symbolizes the **JOY** that comes with a life lived for Jesus. Have someone **read Luke 1.76-79**.

Joy = trusting God no matter what happens!

For younger kids: Make the funniest face you can think of! What is a face you make when you are really happy? What is a face you make when you are really sad or scared? What is the face you make when you think about Jesus? How is that like joy?

Parents/Guardians: Have you ever seen those ads where parents surprise their children with a trip to Disney World? Those moments are filled with pure happiness. But happiness is different from joy. Happiness is fleeting. With joy, a child whose birthday trip to Disney was ruined could still remain joyful knowing Mom and Dad still love, care, and value them. Happiness may make our hearts beat faster, but joy is the underlying heartbeat of stable emotions.

The fact that Christ's coming means joy for the world, then, doesn't allude to our happiness. It speaks of our salvation. The joy of Christ is something we can rest our identity in because it will never fade, betray, or disappoint. The only thing that can truly satisfy us, truly sustain our joy, is Jesus. This week of Advent we look forward to a coming Christ who brings true and lasting joy. And one day when he comes again, the line between joy and happiness will blur. We will live forever in a redeemed heaven and earth, and we will enjoy peace, hope, love, and the presence of our Savior for eternity.



Family Play

SUPPLIES

Lego or Pladoh

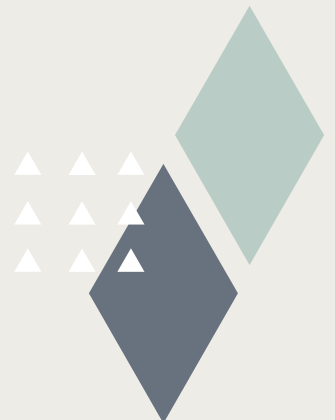
Read The Bible

Light the first, second, and third Advent candles and **read Luke 2.6-7.**

Activity:

Create a nativity scene out of Lego or Playdoh.

Pray Together!





Week FOUR

Study + Reflect

Read The Bible

Light all four Advent candles and read the Scriptures below.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2.8-20



QUESTION

When you get good news, who is the first person you share it with?



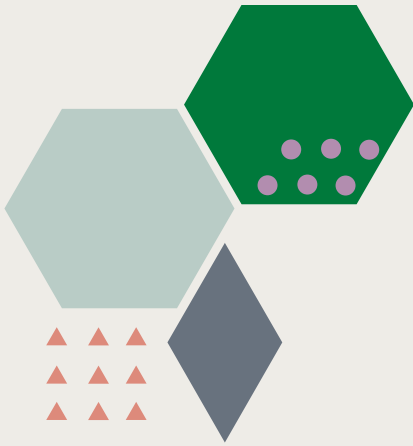
Reflection

This is especially important to note: it is not too often in the Bible we see a “multitude of heavenly hosts.” Angels often come one at a time to relay messages, but here there is a whole band of angels giving praise to God. Clearly, this was a special announcement.

If you think about it, the angels were singing about how amazing it is that God’s Son brings peace to those who believe. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again, He healed the broken relationship between God and people—He brought peace between God and people. It’s an unexpected peace because it’s a peace greater than anything else, a peace which leads to a great joy!

When we choose to trust in Jesus, we can have the peace that the angels sang about. Do you know someone who needs to know God’s peace? Or someone who may need to hear that Jesus brings peace? How might God choose to use you to share the news of the peace He brings? When we choose to trust in Jesus, we can have the peace that the angels sang about.

Who do you know who needs to experience God’s peace? Who may need to hear that Jesus brings peace? How might God choose to use you to share the news of the peace He brings?



Family Time

Begin with a simple prayer.

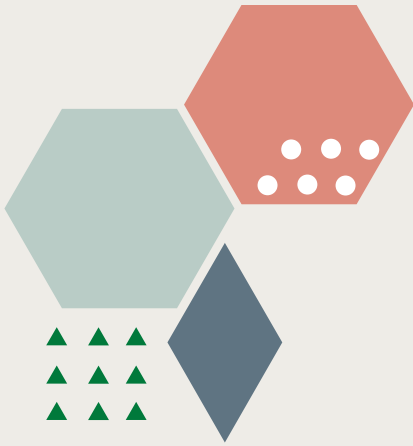
Light all four candles and have someone **read Romans 10.14-15**. Explain to the children that the fourth candle represents God's **LOVE** for us.

What does God say about the feet of the people He sends to bring the good news?

Love = Choosing to serve others and value them above myself!

How does Jesus love you? How can you love others?

For younger kids: Make an ornament in the shape of a heart! It can be made out of anything you can think of—construction paper, newspaper, spaghetti noodles. Then put it close to the top of the tree to remind you of the love of Jesus.



Family Play

CRAFT

Names of God ornament

Supplies:

ornament provided

**for additional copies please visit www.northview.org/kids*

Read The Bible

Light all four Advent candles and **read** Luke 2.13-14, 20.

Activity:

Make a batch of sugar cookies to be handed out to 3 of your neighbors!

Pray Together!

**if you want to continue building out your Lego Nativity,
keep going!*



Northview Kids

Sugar Cookies

Ingredients

3/4 cup unsalted butter, slight softened to room temperature
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg (at room temperature)
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract (optional, but adds another level of flavour)
2 & 1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

Easy Icing

1 & 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2-2.5 Tablespoons room temperature water
Pinch of salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large mixing bowl beat the sugar until smooth (about 1 minute). Add the sugar and beat on high speed until light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the egg, vanilla, and almond extract and beat on high until fully combined.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl. Turn the mixer down to low and add about half the mixture, beating until just barely combined. Add the rest of the flour and continue mixing until just combined. If the dough seems too soft, you can add 1 Tablespoon more flour until it is a better consistency for rolling.
3. Divide the dough into 2 equal parts. Roll each portion out onto a piece of parchment paper to about 1/4 inch thickness. Stack the pieces (with paper) onto a baking sheet, cover lightly, and refrigerate for at least 1-2 hours and up to 2 days. Chilling is mandatory!
4. Once chilled, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 2-3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Remove one of the dough pieces from the refrigerator and, using a cookie cutter, cut into shapes. Transfer the cut cookie to the prepared baking sheet. Re-roll the remaining dough and continue cutting until all is used.
5. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until very lightly coloured on top and around the edges. Make sure you rotate the baking sheet halfway through the baking time. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before icing. No need to cover the cookies as they cool.
6. For the icing, mix the confectioners' sugar, vanilla, corn syrup and 2 Tablespoons of water in a medium bowl. It should be thick. If it is too thick, add 1/2 Tablespoons more water. If it is too thin, add 2 more Tablespoons of confectioners' sugar. For a bit more fun, add some food colouring to your icing.
7. Decorate the cooled cookies. Once the icing has set, the cookies are ready for gifting.
8. Place cookies on a decorative plate, box, etc. and deliver them to three of your neighbours!



Week FIVE

Study + Reflect

Read The Bible

Light all four Advent candles and read the Scriptures below.

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Luke 2.21-40



QUESTION

Do you remember a time when
God asked you to have faith even
when it felt uncomfortable?



Reflection

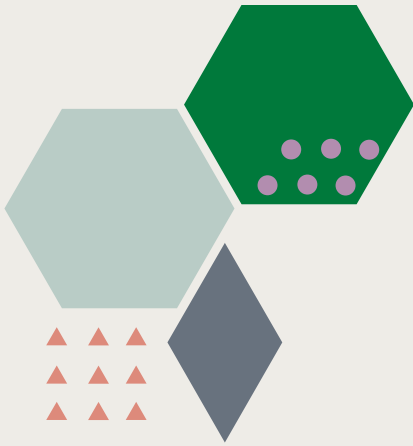
For hundreds of years, God's people had faith that the Savior would come. God sent prophets, like Jeremiah, to speak about the coming Savior. God also sent angels, like the angel who appeared to Zechariah. All of these people trusted— or believed— God's words, and they obeyed Him by doing what He told them to do. When we trust and obey God, that's a part of having faith. It's trusting Him even when we can't see what He's doing. And we do this because God honours the faith of His people.

Simeon and Anna waited a long time to meet the Savior, but they had faith that God would keep His promise. After they had met Jesus, they shared the good news with others. And it was incredible news!

This has been a year of a lot of unexpected things, yet through it all God remains faithful! Maybe you're struggling with something that you think will never get better. Or maybe you need faith for God to help someone you love. Whatever it is that you're struggling with, you can have faith to know that God will see you through!

Simeon and Anna waited a long time to see the Savior and they had faith that God would keep His promises to send Jesus. God honoured the faith of Anna and Simeon, and allowed them to meet the promised Savior, Jesus. God honours our faith today too.

Matthew 7:11 tells us that "your Father in heaven (will) give good gifts to those who ask him!" God honours our faith! What an amazing thing. Let's thank God for honouring our faith and for growing our faith.



Family Time

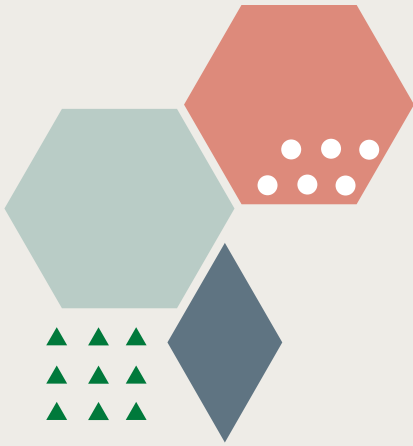
Begin with a simple prayer.

Have someone read **Psalm 145:1-9, 21.**

Say: Jesus came, just like God said He would. But God's promises don't end there. Just like God's people waited with eager anticipation for Jesus to come and rescue them from their sins, we are waiting too.

As we wait, we wait with the Hope that Christ will return. We wait with the peace His Holy Spirit gives us. We wait full of joy, knowing that we can trust our heavenly Father in all things. And we wait with a heart full of love for our Lord and Savior and empowered by His Holy Spirit to share the Good News of the Gospel with people from all nations!

Do: Write a family psalm of praise during worship. Include all the things you are thankful for.



Family Play

Craft & Activity:

Draw the Scene or Act it out.

Work together as a family to draw a picture (or act it out) of Joseph and Mary with Jesus in her arms, and Simeon standing nearby with his arm outstretched in praise to God. At the bottom of the page write the words, “A Light to the Nations.” Explain to your children that the Gentiles Simeon talked about really represent the other peoples of the world (those who are not Jewish), and that is what Isaiah meant when he prophesied the Messiah would be a “light to the nations.” This is why we can reach out to all our neighbors no matter what country or people they came from.

Read The Bible

Light all four Advent candles and **read** Luke 2.13-14, 20.

Pray Together!



Merry Christmas
from *Northview Kids*