

EAST TEXAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

CHRISTMAS JOYS

ADVENT FOR CHILDREN



Advent is a historical Christian and Christmas tradition that dates back 1,000 to 1,500 years ago. It is a time of preparation, or getting ready for, the birth of Jesus. The word advent actually means “coming” or “arrival”, so we get ready for Jesus’s birthday. It begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

The centerpiece for the advent season is a wreath that is normally composed of three purple candles which symbolize royalty. There is one pink candle in the wreath that reminds us to ask God to forgive us for the things we have done wrong or the good things we should have done. It also reminds us that Jesus came as a baby to live and become a man who would ultimately die so that we could have a full eternal life with God. These four candles are significant because they remind us of the four centuries that prophets, like Isaiah, had to wait until the arrival of the Messiah. In the center is a white candle for Christ, and it is lit on Christmas Day. Usually, families light one additional candle for each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 7:14

Have you ever needed help looking for a place? A good thing to do is look for a sign. Signs tell us where we need to go, and they tell us how to get there. Today we will be looking at a time in the Bible when God gave a sign.

In the book of Isaiah, God tells Isaiah about a sign. Isaiah is a prophet, which is a person who tells other people about God. God told Isaiah about a sign He was sending, and that sign was the special birth of Jesus. Jesus was born in a one-of-a-kind way. Isaiah then told others about this sign, knowing that he may not get to see Jesus' birth himself. Regardless, Isaiah still wanted to help out by telling them about God's sign through the special birth of Jesus. Isaiah was able to help out many people by telling them this good news!

PRAY IT!

Say a prayer thanking God for the story of Isaiah, and that He was willing to tell others like us about this sign given to us from God. Pray that you may tell others about this same sign like Isaiah did. Also pray for missionaries, and that God would bless them and the people they meet.

DO IT!

Send a text message to a friend telling them about the good news about Jesus, or something that will make them smile!



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 9:6

Have you ever made a promise? Did you keep that promise? God made a promise that sounded perfect for everybody. You are told to wait for the promise. Can you wait for God to make the promise come true? No matter how long it takes?

Isaiah was excited to tell everyone about the birth of Jesus. The message was good news and could give hope to the people of Israel during a hard time. Isaiah tells them that Jesus will be a wonderful counselor, meaning a teacher. Jesus will teach God's word of salvation and eternal life. His Son would be born as a new baby. Isaiah calls Jesus "The Prince of Peace." This means that Jesus will be the leader that brings peace to His people. Jesus wants to unite everyone. Jesus taught us how to create a relationship with God. He would rule God's kingdom. God did not tell Isaiah when it would happen. Isaiah wrote about it for others to know many years later. Isaiah used words like "Wonderful," "Mighty," and "Everlasting" to describe Him so everyone would understand that Jesus is awesome.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionaries Eric and Cindy who are in Argentina growing their new church ministry to change lives and build community faith in God.

DO IT!

Count the days until Christmas, take a long piece of ribbon and tie a bow for each of those days. Every day, say a prayer and untie one bow leading up to Christmas.



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 42:1-4

Has your mom or dad told you it was going to rain, or maybe you thought a day was going to be a good or bad day? Well, in the reading, God gave Isaiah a promise. Only it is not called a promise; it is called a prophecy. A prophecy, given by God, means the event has not happened yet—it is a promise for the future.

Isaiah was a prophet. A prophet is someone God used to tell people what they needed to hear. In this passage, Isaiah not only says that Jesus is coming, but also tells us who He will be. God chose Jesus to bring justice to the world and that He will be a hope to everyone. Isaiah tells us that Jesus will not raise His voice or blow out a burning candle. God will be pleased with Him and put His Spirit upon Him.

PRAY IT!

Thank God for Isaiah and for using him to tell us more about His Son, Jesus. Pray that God will help you as you listen to Him and use you like He did Isaiah.

DO IT!

Play hide and seek! The people knew Jesus was coming, but they had to be patient just like you had to be patient for the seeker to find you.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 9:1-2

Have the lights ever gone out in your home, and you had to walk around in the dark? It is hard to see where you are going when there are no lights on in the house. Imagine what might happen if the lights went out in your home.

Isaiah was a follower of God. He was called to share the promises that God has for His people. The Bible is a book that tells us what God wants us to do and how He wants us to live. When we do not read our Bibles, it can be hard for us to see what He has in store for us; but when we read our Bible, it is like someone turned on a light and we can see where God wants us to go. When the people started listening to the things that Isaiah was telling them, they started to see the goodness of God.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionaries in Superior, Montana starting churches in their area. Pray that the people in the area will get to know God and have a relationship with Him.

DO IT!

Set up an obstacle course around your house with things like pots and pans, books, or even your favorite stuffed animals. Blindfold one of your family members and have another member guide them around the course with spoken directions. This will help you understand how the people felt when they were walking in the darkness.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 11:10

Do you have a hero? My hero was my grandpa. I always thought he was the bravest and strongest person ever. No one was cooler than my grandpa. That is how the people of Israel felt about King David.

King David was the son of a farmer named Jesse. He grew up to do all kinds of amazing things for the people of Israel. The prophet Isaiah was a man who spoke the words of God to the people. God gave him a message of hope for all the people. Isaiah used the story of King David to tell the people that God was sending someone who will do even more amazing things than King David. He will be a Savior that was for all people. This man will make a way for all people to come to Him. The man God was sending will be beyond amazing.

This man is Jesus. He calls all kinds of people to follow Him. Jesus calls people from every city and country to come to Him. Jesus gives the people who come to Him rest. We can trust Him because He came to save us.

PRAY IT!

God,
Help us to remember that
the man You sent was for all
people. We thank You that You
sent people into the world to
tell others about Jesus. Help us
to rest with You in our lives.
Amen

DO IT!

Draw a picture of your hero
and of Jesus. Compare and
contrast your hero to Jesus.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

The Prophet's Candle

READ ISAIAH 40:3-4

Have you ever heard someone calling your name, but you did not know who it was? In the book of Isaiah, the people are told that one of the signs of God's Son coming will be a voice crying in the wilderness. The prophecy brought the people hope and comfort during uncertain times because it reminded them that God would always be with them and be on their side. In the gospels, we learn that the voice crying in the wilderness belongs to John the Baptist. John's message was to prepare the way for the Lord. In order to prepare, John told the people that they must admit to God that they have disobeyed Him and turn around and do right. As we prepare for Advent, like the people who heard Isaiah and John the Baptist, we must admit that we have disobeyed God and do right as we prepare for Christmas day. God wants us to have confidence in faith and His promise.

PRAY IT!

Heavenly Father, thank You for the many prophets who proclaimed the coming of the Savior, and please forgive me where I have failed to obey You.

DO IT!

Write the words of the Bible verse Isaiah 40:3 on different note cards. Shuffle the note cards and turn them face down. Turn them over one by one and put in order. Work to memorize the verse together. Remind everyone that the verses says John was making a way for Jesus.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

The Prophet's Candle

READ HOSEA 11:1

Have you ever been excited to share something? Maybe it was a gift you bought or made for someone you love.

Hosea was excited to share God's love. He was a preacher, and he lived in the northern kingdom of Israel a long time ago. People lived during a time of wealth but were not loving God. The people of Israel used to live in a land called Egypt, where they were treated badly. Because God loved them, He helped them leave. Hosea talks about God's love of Israel. God's love is not just for the people of Israel-He loves everyone! God loves us so much that He wants to get to know us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth as a baby. Every year at Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus was born.

PRAY IT!

Missionaries Roland and Ingeborg Bahozi in the country of Congo located in Africa, pray that they would be able to show the love of God to others.

DO IT!

Show God's love for others by writing a Christmas letter to someone your family knows. Have each person write words of encouragement to that person (if you have small children, they can each decorate a Christmas card instead of writing in it) then pray for that person as a family.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

The Bethlehem Candle

READ RUTH 4:11

How many of you were born in a city? That's kind of a silly question because, chances are, we all were born in one. Some of us were born in big cities, and others might have been born in small towns. What city were you born in? What city do you live in now? These places are special because they are where we come from! These places are important because our families are from them. Bethlehem is also a special city because a lot of people in the Bible are from there! Ruth was from a place called Moab, a different country from Israel. Because Ruth was kind to others and trusted in God, He blessed her with a loving husband. Ruth had a son named Obed. Obed had a son named Jesse, who then had a son named David. David became the king of Israel. King David was very important to Israel for a long time. God wanted Jesus to be born in the same town that King David was born in. This family continued to grow for many years in Bethlehem. When the Roman government told everyone to go back to their hometown so they could count all of their people, Joseph returned to his family's hometown of Bethlehem. Because of this, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just like the Bible said He would be.

PRAY IT!

Pray for all the missionaries in other countries who can't be with their family for Christmas. Pray that they have peace and comfort while they are away.

DO IT!

Give the kids each a big piece of paper. Have them draw a map of their town. Draw their favorite places, their school, their church, their house, etc. If they can't think of what their town is like, have them draw a map of their house. They can pretend their house is a city, and even give it a name! Talk about the similarities between these towns and Bethlehem.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

The Bethlehem Candle

READ 1 SAMUEL 16:1

Where is your favorite place that you have traveled to? This place can be a specific city or state. This place can be your favorite spot to eat. This place can be a giant theatre or stadium. Whatever this place is for you, it is important that it is very special to you now that you have been there and experienced it. Bethlehem is a very important and special city. The reason Bethlehem is so important is because something happened there that changed our lives forever. But this city was not always so significant. Something had to happen before Bethlehem became the Bethlehem that we know today. The event that made Bethlehem so important was that it was the birthplace of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Savior. Jesus was the Son of God. How cool is that? What is also very cool is that Jesus was sent by God so that we can all have a relationship with Him through Christ. Jesus was a leader who never sinned and taught all the people He came across how to live. Now you have an opportunity to have a relationship with Him. Think about how your favorite place ever became your favorite place ever. An event had to take place in order for you to love that place. In the same way, Bethlehem, without the birth of Jesus Christ, is just another city. But because Jesus was born there, it now has significance.

PRAY IT!

Pray for peace, love, and joy to be filled throughout Earth. Pray for a relationship with Christ for you and your family. Lastly, pray for Jesus to come into your heart and be the Lord of your life.

DO IT!

The Hebrew meaning of Bethlehem is “bread of life.” Grab a loaf of your favorite bread. You can put jelly, butter, honey, or anything of your choice on the bread and cut it into pieces and put it on a big plate. Sit in a circle around the plate in a group and start with one person picking a piece off the plate. Share your favorite place in the world and why, and then finish with saying something you are thankful for before moving on to the next person.



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

The Bethlehem Candle

READ MICAH 5:2

Do you know where you were born? Everyone is born in a city; some are big, and some are small. Bethlehem is a small town but still a special place. Do you live in a special place? Families live in different towns, and some move and some stay. Do you have a big family or a small one? Bethlehem had special families live there.

King David was a great king. The people of Israel loved him so much. King David was born in Bethlehem. That made Bethlehem pretty cool that it got the nickname of the city of David. See, Bethlehem was a small city filled with farmers and shepherds. Even though it was a small town, the greatest king was going to be born there. This king is greater than David. Do you know who it is? God told the people that Jesus would be born in the small town of Bethlehem. God often uses the smaller, less likely choice to carry out His plans.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem from a long line of godly people. God had Jesus' family to carry out His plan. Long before Mary and Joseph, Jesus had relatives who played a part in bringing Him into the world so that we could have a relationship with Him. Jesus has a huge family that goes far back. When Jesus was born, He had completed the promise that God had made to those people who loved Him. Jesus came into this world through a big family tree and a small town, but He came to do great things.

PRAY IT!

Pray for the missionary group 61 Isaiah, they are located in Gracias, Honduras. Pray for helpers to come forward and relationships with the Honduran people grow.

DO IT!

Make a tent in your living room and tell stories about family members. Show pictures for the different generations of your family. Sing *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

The Bethlehem Candle

READ JEREMIAH 23:5-6

What comes to mind when you think about a king? You may picture a big gold crown or a fancy robe. You may also think about someone who is strong, mighty, and powerful. Kings rule their people and their nation. Today we will learn about when God promised to send His own king.

In Jeremiah 23, God is making a statement to the people of Israel. God is promising that one day a righteous king will come. God declares that this king will come to help others in a mighty way. This king that He is talking about is Jesus. Jesus is the King of Kings. Jesus came to help others in a mighty way. God is promising that He is going to send Jesus to be the ruler of all people and all nations. When God's promise was made, Jesus proved to be the greatest king to ever live!

PRAY IT!

Say a prayer thanking Jesus for being the best King ever! Thank Him for being such a great leader. Also thank God for sending Jesus to be the King of Kings! Also, be in prayer for the world, and that our leaders can lead like Jesus did.

DO IT!

Using paper and something to hold it together (glue, tape, etc.) make your own crown. On the inside of the crown write "Jeremiah 23:5-6" as a reminder that Jesus is King!



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

The Bethlehem Candle

READ LUKE 2:1-6

Have you ever been on a family road trip? How long was the trip? Joseph and Mary took a family trip to Bethlehem. The trip to Bethlehem had to be done and played a big part in the great plan where Jesus was born.

The king of all the lands made a rule that everyone had to be part of a record that would show how many people lived in the area. Joseph and Mary traveled a long way from Nazareth and went through many places to reach the City of David, which is called Bethlehem. This is the city where Joseph's family lived. Mary was going to have a baby. When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus. The promise God made many years ago came true.

PRAY IT!

Pray for the missionary groups in Madagascar that are spreading and teaching the word of God across the island. Allow them to continue to aid the people in the country that need water and proper healthcare.

DO IT!

Draw a map of the trip Joseph and Mary took to Bethlehem. Use a crayon or pencil to draw the map and draw a star for each place they went to on the journey. The star for Bethlehem should be the biggest and brightest on the paper because this is where Jesus was born.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

The Bethlehem Candle

READ MATTHEW 2:1-6

Have you ever been excited to see one of your friends when they came to town? Or maybe, you knew one of your friends was going to be at school and you could not wait to see them? That is kind of how the wise men felt about going to see baby Jesus. The wise men heard about the birth of Jesus and knew they had to go see Him. God put a special star in the sky for the wise men to follow and find Jesus. So, the wise men went on a journey to find Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, but there was a mean king who lived there. His name was King Herod. When King Herod heard that Jesus was going to be born in Bethlehem, he was not happy. This meant that the promise God made was coming true (the promise that Jesus was going to be the King of Kings). So, the mean King Herod told the wise men to find Jesus and to tell Him where He was. The story will continue tomorrow.

PRAY IT!

Thank God for putting the special star in the sky so that the wise men could visit Jesus.

DO IT!

Just like how the wise men had to travel to find Jesus, let us play a game where we have to travel too! Scavenger hunt: Draw a map to find hidden items around the house: toys, stuffed animals, or a baby doll to represent Jesus.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

The Bethlehem Candle

READ MATTHEW 2:7-12

Has someone ever told you to do something, but you knew it was wrong? This is what happened to the wise men when King Herod told them to go and find baby Jesus.

King Herod was a man that loved being king so much that he would do anything to stay king. When he heard that Jesus was going to be born, he sent the wise men to Bethlehem to find Him, but they knew that he did not want to find Jesus to worship Him. The wise men were smart and studied the stars in the sky. This journey that the wise men went on to find Jesus was long. It probably took them two years to find Him. The wise men knew that what King Herod wanted was wrong, so they found Jesus, gave Him gifts, and worshipped Him. They never told King Herod that they found Jesus.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionaries in Uganda while they teach Terranova academy. Pray that their needs will be met and that they are able to teach the families there about Jesus.

DO IT!

Have an adult in your family hide an object in your home and have the rest of the family try and find it. Act like you are the wise men trying to find Jesus in Bethlehem. Use a timer on a phone to see how long it takes to find the hidden object.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

The Shepherd's Candle

READ PSALM 23

Do you like animals? My favorite animal is a dog. What is your favorite animal? This week we are learning about shepherds. Shepherds were people that watched over sheep. They took care of them. They would feed them and keep them safe.

Before David became a king, he was just a shepherd. David knew all about being a shepherd. He knew that shepherds would lead the sheep. They make sure that other animals do not hurt the sheep. The sheep were safe with the shepherd. David knew that God is the same way. God cares about His people. He gives His people food when they are hungry. God keeps his people safe. Even in the darkest places, God is there for His people.

There was a man God was sending that took care of God's people in a new way. Jesus showed God's people how to live with God again. Just like a shepherd, Jesus walked with the people and took care of them. He taught them and showed them how to live. He protected the people. We can trust Jesus to show us those things too.

PRAY IT!

God,
Thank you for taking care of me and my family. Thank you for giving us the things that we need. Thank you for keeping us safe. Help us to live with you and trust you with our lives.
Amen

DO IT!

Draw a sheep and glue cotton balls onto the sheep as a reminder that God is our shepherd that takes care of us.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

The Shepherd's Candle

READ ISAIAH 40:11

Do you have any pets? Having pets requires you to take care of them. It takes a lot of work, but you love your pets. Shepherds were men who took care of the sheep as a job. Sheep need someone to take care of them like you have to take care of your pets, also like how your family takes care of you.

Isaiah was a prophet, and a cool guy, who had a special relationship with God. He often told God's chosen people what God had for them. God brings judgement on the people on earth. The people often saw God as a warrior. Although Isaiah was telling them that God is more than just a warrior, God is like a shepherd too. Shepherds are often seen as underdogs, but God still sees them as important and uses them. Shepherds work hard caring for their flock. God cares even more for His people. He loves them, and God wants to help His people with their needs. That is what He does with you. He takes care of you and your family's needs. You are like God's lambs, He loves you, and like a shepherd, He will keep watch over you.

PRAY IT!

Pray for the Spannagel family, who are field missionaries in Senegal, in Africa, as they help people in the village and help other missionaries in villages around them.

DO IT!

Help someone in your family with a chore today or something they find hard to do.



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

The Shepherd's Candle

READ LUKE 2:8

Do you have a favorite story that you love to hear or read? There are a lot of great stories in the world, but the best is the story of Jesus's birth.

In the Bible verse you just read, the author, Luke, is telling part of the story of Jesus's birth. Luke most likely never met Jesus, but he had heard a lot about Him. In this part of the story, we learn who the shepherds were. They were people who took care of animals like sheep. They had to stay up late and make sure nothing bad happened to the sheep. Sometimes other people or animals try to steal their sheep. Shepherds worked very hard to take care of them. The shepherds were some of the few people that got to see Jesus the night He was born. Jesus was a very special baby. The Shepherds were a part of Jesus's story. It is important to remember Jesus's story and tell other people about it.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionaries Josh and Val Manthe and the ministry work they are doing in the Philippines.

DO IT!

Let's tell the story! Write the verse on a piece of paper, cut out all of the words and mix them up. Then as a family try to put the words in the right order.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

The Shepherd's Candle

READ LUKE 2:9-12

How many people here have taken care of an animal? Taking care of animals can be pretty messy. You have to clean up after them, feed them, and take care of them. That is what shepherds would do during Jesus's time. Shepherds were avoided by many people because they took care of all the sheep, which were very stinky. They traveled from place to place with their sheep, making sure they were fed and clean. But God chose the shepherds to be the first people to hear about Jesus's birth.

The Bible tells us that an angel appeared to them. This angel was surrounded by God's glory, and the shepherds were terrified. Why do you think they were scared? Of course, they have never seen an angel, but imagine going to a friend's birthday party, but you were covered in mud. The shepherds felt that way because they were dirty in God's presence. But the angel told them to not be afraid because he has good news that will bring joy to everyone! Jesus has been born, and He is the Savior promised by God. We now have joy because Jesus has come so we can have a relationship with God!

PRAY IT!

Pray for all the missionaries who are sharing the Gospel with people for the first time. Pray for Hiway 80 Rescue Mission in Longview, Texas as they share the gospel with and feed people who don't have homes.

DO IT!

Using a non-breakable ornament, pass it around the circle from person to person. Say "Glory to God in the Highest!" at the end of the third time. Stop. Whoever has the ornament is out. Repeat until only one person is left.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

The Shepherd's Candle

READ LUKE 2:13-15

Has someone ever told you something and you had to go see for yourself? Maybe someone told you they could eat twenty chicken nuggets and you had to see it for yourself. Whatever it was, you wanted to see for yourself because the information just blew your mind.

Angels appeared to the shepherds to inform them about what had happened in Bethlehem. In the same way that you wanted to see for yourself, the shepherds also wanted to go see newborn baby Jesus. Shepherds were leaders who guided their sheep to good land. Shepherds were the ones who were trustworthy. They sacrificed their own needs for the good of others. Shepherds were loved by God. In the same way that shepherds were told by angels about the birth of Jesus Christ, you are also invited to go on a journey. See, the shepherds going to see Jesus in the manger was not the end of the story; rather, it was just the beginning. You, too, can be just like a shepherd and meet, know, and follow Jesus. You are invited.

PRAY IT!

Pray for those who have not yet heard the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray for God to appear to those who have not heard of Him. Pray for your heart to know God and for your heart to love God.

DO IT!

Have an adult dress you and your friends up to look like shepherds. Have the adult read the nativity story about the birth of Jesus. Every time the reader reads the word "shepherd" make the noise a sheep makes.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

The Shepherd's Candle

READ LUKE 2:16-19

Do you like to play tag? What happens when someone runs up to you and says, "Tag, you are it!" Do you stand there and look at the ground? Do you jump up and down, or do you run around? Probably not. Well, this Bible story is just like a big game of tag. The shepherds were the very first people to hear the good news about Jesus. In a sense, the angels said, "Tag, you are it!" to the shepherds.

The shepherds did not stand around looking at each other. The Bible says, "they hurried." This really means that they not only ran but they took shortcuts like hopping fences, climbing hills, and jumping ditches. They did not take the easy way. They were looking for the fastest way to see baby Jesus.

They did not just run. They ran and told people all along the way that God's Son was born today. The Bible says that the people in the countryside were amazed at the excitement of the shepherds and the good news they were sharing. These were just shepherds, and they were running all over the place talking about baby Jesus. When these men and women who cared for sheep arrived to see the baby in the manger, it made Mary very happy. The Bible says it was a special memory she would treasure forever. The shepherds did not stop there. They continued to share the good news of Baby Jesus.

PRAY IT!

Thank God for the shepherds who heard the good news first. Thank God that we know the good news today and can share it just like the shepherds.

DO IT!

Go outside and play Tag. Instead of saying, "Tag." Say, "Tell the Good News!"



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

The Shepherd's Candle

READ LUKE 2:20

Shepherds had a hard job. They took care of their sheep, they often lived outside of town, and much more. Being a shepherd was not a job that people wanted to do. They were outcasts, but God does not see it that way. Today we will look at why God sent a message to the shepherds when Jesus was born.

Out of all the people, God could have sent an Angel to tell the good news, but He chose shepherds. He could have chose royalty, townspeople, and armies, but He chose shepherds. This was no accident. God chose them to show us that all have a place. No matter what the world tells us, every person matters to God. It does not matter where you come from or what you look like; God has a purpose for all people! Through the shepherds, we can see that God will use any and all people for His plan.

PRAY IT!

Say a prayer thanking God for the shepherds! Also, be in prayer for those working during the holiday season. Pray that God will bless them for all the hard work they do!

DO IT!

Go tell somebody "thank you" for their hard work! Write a note, send a text, leave a tip for a waiter, do something to show thankfulness for those who work hard. Be bold and say thanks to someone you may not know!



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:11-17

Did you have a bad or great week? What kind of week is it if an angel visits and tells you your prayers are heard and going to come true? God gave a gift to Zechariah and his wife that they would have never imagined possible. All things are possible with God.

An angel appeared to Zechariah, and he was afraid. The angel told him not to be afraid that he was sent from God with a message. He was told his prayers had been heard and that he and his wife would have a baby, and his name would be John. He will bring his parents lots of joy, and many people would be happy for them. John would be a great prophet for the Lord, and there will be lots of people that will begin to believe in God. Zechariah did not think he and his wife could have a baby. They were too old. The angel said that since he did not believe him, he could not speak until after the child was born. Zechariah did as he was told.

PRAY IT!

Pray for the many missionaries in Taiwan to maintain their faith and do the work they were called to do. Let the church spread the words of the Bible and continue to help the community.

DO IT!

Play the silent game. Everyone must remain quiet. There can be no talking, not a whisper, and no laughing or giggling. If you make a sound, you are out of the game. The last one to make a sound is the winner.



MONDAY DECEMBER 19

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:19-25

How do you think you would react if an angel appeared in front of you right now? Zechariah was scared. When Zechariah was in the temple (the temple was a special place for people to talk to God), God sent an angel named Gabriel to tell Zechariah that he and his wife, Elizabeth, were going to have a baby. He could not believe it! Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old, so they did not think they could have a baby. Because he did not believe, God took Zechariah's voice. He was not allowed to speak until Elizabeth had the baby. When Zechariah left the temple, the people there quickly found out that he was visited by God. When Zechariah went home, Elizabeth knew she was going to have a baby. She believed God. Elizabeth knew that God made a promise to her and her husband that they would have a baby.

Do you think you are like Zechariah? God sent an angel to deliver good news, but he did not believe Him. He thought it was too good to be true. Do you think you are like Elizabeth? Though she and her husband were old, Elizabeth believed God's promise that they would have a baby. Sometimes, we believe God and His news is too good to be true, but we need to be like Elizabeth and believe.

PRAY IT!

Pray that God will use Zechariah and Elizabeth's story to deepen your faith and understanding of Him.

DO IT!

Play: Red Light, Green Light.
In this game, you'll need to listen for the "lights," like how Zechariah needed to listen to Gabriel and God.



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:26-38

Have you ever been told something was going to happen, but it made you a little nervous or scared? I'm sure Mary felt scared when Gabriel told her she was going to have a son and that He was going to be Jesus.

God sent Gabriel to go and tell Mary that she was going to be the mother of Jesus. When Mary heard this news, she was scared, but she was very faithful, and she decided to follow God's plan. Sometimes the plan that God has for our lives makes us nervous, but if we listen to what He has to say and trust in Him, everything will turn out for our good. If Mary did not follow God's plan for her life and she did not put her faith and trust in Him, then we might not have the story of Jesus that we have today.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionary Scott Belmore while he starts college ministries around the world. Pray that God would provide for him so that he can share God's word with college students.

DO IT!

Create a bowl of fun tasks to do around your home. One member of the family draws a task while the other members are wandering around waiting to be tagged by the member drawing the task. Once a task is drawn, that person will run and try to tag another person. Once a person is tagged, both people will do the task together.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:39-45

Have you ever gotten really good news and wanted to share it with someone else? Who would you tell first? I think I would tell my mom first. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she was going to have a baby, she went to see her family. Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth who was also having a baby.

When Elizabeth saw Mary, her baby jumped for joy. Even the baby knew that Mary's baby was special. Elizabeth got excited and told Mary that she is favored by God. Elizabeth also says that Mary is blessed because she believes that God keeps His promises.

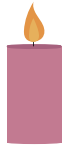
When the angel told Mary about baby Jesus, God made Mary a promise. When Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy, it was proof to Mary that God was keeping His promises. God always keeps His promises. How amazing is that? We can trust God to keep His promises because He has never broken a promise before. God will never break a promise.

PRAY IT!

God,
Thank you for the family you gave me. Thank you for the good news of Jesus. Please be with all the children and their families. Thank you for always keeping your promises. Help us grow together with You.
Amen

DO IT!

Draw a picture of your family. Label the members of your family. How has God kept his promises to them and you?



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:46-56

Have you ever been happy or maybe blessed? The word blessed means that you have been made special by someone else. In Luke 1:46-56, Mary is blessed and overcome with joy because God has chosen her to have His Son, Jesus. The words you are reading are a song that Mary sang to God because she was happy and she felt that God was pleased with her. Mary was not from a wealthy family. She lived in the very small village of Nazareth. Mary praised God for choosing her even though she lived in a small village and was poor. She knew that for many, many years, people would know about her, not because she was rich or famous but because she obeyed God when He selected her to have Baby Jesus. Mary shared this good news with her cousin Elizabeth who had a son named John the Baptist.

PRAY IT!

Pray for children like Mary who live in countries and may not have all the things you have. Remember that God does not look for outward things like clothing or how we look. God looks at our hearts, how we talk, and how we act.

DO IT!

Write each letter of the word, "Blessed" on post-it notes. Gather around your refrigerator. As you put the notes on the door, invite each person to say how they are blessed by God.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23

The Angel's Candle

READ LUKE 1:57-66

Do you like to see your family? Family is very important. They are meant to care for and love you.

An angel told Zechariah that he and Elizabeth will have a family. Angels are messengers for God. It is their job to tell other people the things God wants them to know. After many years of waiting, Elizabeth was able to have a baby. At first, people wanted to name her baby after Zechariah. In this period of time, kids were named after family members. Elizabeth told everyone “no,” and that she would name her baby John. The angel had told Zechariah and Elizabeth to call their baby John. John was a part of Jesus’s family. They were cousins! God chose John to be special, and He was with him. John was born a few months before Jesus, and he had an important mission. It was his job to tell other people about Jesus’s coming.

PRAY IT!

Pray for missionaries Dylan and Molly Fila in the country of Sri Lanka in south Asia.

DO IT!

Go back in your own family’s tree and talk about what your grandparents did for you and how your life would be different without them.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

The Angel's Candle

READ MATTHEW 1:18-24

Angels were used by God to send messages. He would often send his angels to comfort people and to tell people what God plans on doing. In the books of Isaiah and Revelation, we see that the angels are in heaven to worship God, and to share the message that God is good. God sent an angel to Mary to tell her she was going to have a baby. He sent one to the shepherds when Jesus was born to let them know that we have a Savior. And God sent one to Joseph when he found out that Mary was going to have a baby. Joseph didn't believe Mary at first. He wanted to call off the engagement, but when he went to sleep that night, he had a dream from God. In the dream, an angel comforted Joseph by telling him that the baby was from God and that this Son will save people from their sins. When Joseph woke up, he did what God wanted him to do and married Mary because he loved God.

God sent Jesus to us because He loves us and wants to know us. Joseph and Mary listened to God and obeyed Him because they loved Him. We can show our love for God and love for others by doing what God tells us to do.

PRAY IT!

Pray for all the missionaries who are doing what God tells them to do. Pray for their safety and encouragement.

DO IT!

Draw a picture of someone you love! It could be a mom, dad, grandparent, sibling, or anyone! Tell three reasons you love this person. Then everyone sings *Go Tell it on a Mountain*.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

The Christ Candle

READ LUKE 2:1-20

You know that you are important, don't you? Do you know that you are loved and can change the world? You were born in God's image and are God's prized possession. You have great qualities and do great things if you use your abilities for good, just like Jesus.

Joseph and Mary were the parents of Jesus. They traveled to Bethlehem, where David was born and raised. There, Christ was born and placed in a manger because there were no rooms available to them. Angels appeared and told the shepherds of the birth of Christ, and the shepherds quickly went to see for themselves. Word was spreading of the birth of the Messiah. Messiah means "the chosen one," and Jesus Christ was chosen by God to be our Savior. Jesus went on to perform miracles and show us how to live. Because of Jesus's life here on Earth, you now have meaning and a great leader to follow. You are capable of growing just like Jesus did. All it takes is a relationship with God by accepting that Jesus is our Savior.

PRAY IT!

Read John 3:15 and thank God for Jesus.

DO IT!

Gather up Christmas bows.
Make a cross from a gift box.
Tape the bows on the cross.
Remember that Jesus came for us.

EAST TEXAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

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