

THE BEST OF ALL KIDS' ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



Advent is a time of preparation before Christmas.

Just like a mom and dad have to prepare for a baby that's on the way, or a host has to prepare (send out invitations, clean up the house, make food, and set the table) to throw a party, we ask God to prepare our hearts for the birth of His son, Jesus.

To get prepared, each week we'll dive into an Advent theme and story.

The first week's theme is **HOPE** (then **LOVE**, then **JOY**, and finally **PEACE**). Throughout the week, we'll read Bible stories showing us what it means to have to prepare for the birth of the baby Jesus. But you won't just read and hear the stories; you'll get to be the illustrator! Read each week's story everyday and draw and color the scene from a page or two each day. Take your time and spend all week drawing out and acting out God's Word.

Throughout the week, we'll also sing songs. This is one of the best ways to get ready for Jesus' birth, by practicing songs, lifting our voices, and learning how to worship Jesus.

Finally, with your parents, you'll spend some time praying. When we pray, we talk to God and thank Him for sending His Son. We thank Him for Advent and Christmas, because this is the season when we remember that "God has come to live with us."

Chris Breslin

Associate Pastor

Advent 2011

H O P E

The First Week of Advent

Sing!

O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lowly exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show
And teach us in her ways to go.
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law

In cloud and majesty and awe.
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

O come Thou Dayspring,
Come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

Pray!

Father, Thank you for sending Your Son. Thank you for Your plan to rescue us and to save us. Help me prepare for Jesus' birth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Operation "No More Tears!"

From Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 50, 53, 55, 60

Do you know what your name means? Well, there was once a man Isaiah, and his name meant "God to the rescue!"

That might sound like a bit of a funny name to you, but it was just the right name for Isaiah because God had a special job for Isaiah. You see, Isaiah's job was to listen to God and then tell people what he heard.

Now, God let Isaiah know a secret.
God was going to mend his broken world.
He showed Isaiah his Secret Rescue Plan:
Operation “No More Tears!”

This is the message God gave Isaiah (it was like a letter God wrote to his children)...

Dear Little Flock,

You're all wandering away from me, like sheep in an open field. You always have been running away from me. And now you're lost. You can't find your way back.

But I can't stop loving you. I will come to find you. So I am sending you a Shepherd to look after you and love you. To carry you home to me.

You've been stumbling around, like people in a dark room. But into the darkness, a bright Light will shine! It will chase away all the shadows, like sunshine.

A little baby will be born. A Royal Son. His mommy will be a young girl who doesn't have a husband. His name will be Emmanuel, which means "God has come to live with us." He is one of King David's children's children's children. The Prince of Peace.

Yes, Someone is going to come and rescue you! But he won't be who anyone expects.

He will be a King! But he won't live in a palace. And he won't have lots of money. He will be poor. And he will be a Servant. But this King will heal the whole world.

He will be a Hero! He will fight for his people, and rescue them from their enemies. But he won't have big armies, and he won't fight with swords.

He will make the blind see, he will make the lame leap like deer! He will make everything the way it was always meant to be.

But people will hate him, and they won't listen to him. He will be like a Lamb- he will suffer and die.

It's the Secret Rescue Plan we made- from before the beginning of the world! It's the only way to get you back.

But he won't stay dead- I will make him alive again! And, one day, when he comes back to rule forever, the mountains and the trees will dance and sing for joy! The earth will shout out loud! His fame will fill the whole earth- as the waters cover the sea! Everything sad will come untrue. Even death is going to die! And he will wipe away every tear from every eye.

Yes, the Rescuer will come. Look for him. Watch for him. Wait for him. He will come! I promise.

Love,

God

Poor Isaiah. He read God's letter over and over to God's people, but no one listened to him- at all. Ever. They didn't want to hear God's promise. They didn't believe it.

Did it sound maybe too good to be true? A story that ends happily ever after? Well, it does sound like a fairy tale, doesn't it? And, as anyone will quickly tell you, fairy tales aren't true.

Or are they?

LOVE

The Second Week of Advent

Sing!

The Friendly Beasts

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
Was humbly born in a stable rude;
And the friendly beasts
Around Him stood.
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the Sheep, with the curly horn,
"I gave Him my wool
For His blanket warm;
He wore my coat on Christmas morn."

"I," said the Donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried His mother up hill and down;
I carried His mother
To Bethlehem town."
"I," said the Donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the Sheep, with the curly horn.
"I," said the Dove, from the rafters high,
"I cooed Him to sleep
That He should not cry;
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I."

"I," said the Cow, all white and red,
"I gave Him my manger for His bed;
I gave Him my hay to pillow His head."
"I," said the Cow, all white and red.

"I," said the Dove, from the rafters high.
Thus every beast by some glad spell,
In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gift he gave Emmanuel,
The gift he gave Emmanuel.

Silent Night

Silent night,
Holy night
All is calm,
All is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace
Silent night,
Holy night!
Shepherds quake
At the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born
Christ, the Savior is born
Silent night,
Holy night
Son of God,
Love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

Pray!

Father, Thank You for the way You love me. Help me to love those around me like you love me. Show me little ways that I can love all of the people around me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"He's Here!"

From Luke 1-2

Everything was ready. The moment God has been waiting for was here at last! God was coming to help his people, just as he promised in the beginning.

But how would he come? What would he be like? What would he do?

Mountains would have bowed down. Seas would have roared. Trees would have clapped their hands. But the earth held its breath. As silent as snow falling, he came in. And when no one was looking, in the darkness, he came.

There was a young girl who was engaged to a man named Joseph. (Joseph was the great-great-great-great-great grandson of King David.) One morning, this girl was minding her own business when, suddenly, a great warrior of light appeared- right there, in her bedroom. He was Gabriel and he was an angel, a special messenger from heaven.

When she saw the tall shining man standing there, Mary was frightened.

“You don’t need to be scared,” Gabriel said. “God is very happy with you!”

Mary looked around to see if perhaps he was talking to someone else.

“Mary,” Gabriel said, and he laughed with such gladness that Mary’s eyes filled with sudden tears.

“Mary, you’re going to have a baby. A little boy. You will call him Jesus. He is God’s own Son. He’s the One! He’s the Rescuer!”

The God who flung planets into space and kept them whirling around, the God who made the universe with just a word, the one who could do anything at all- was making himself small. And coming down... as a baby.

Wait. God was sending a baby to rescue the world?

“But it’s too wonderful!” Mary said and felt her heart beating hard. “How can it be true?”

“Is there anything too wonderful for God?” Gabriel asked.

So Mary trusted God more than what her eyes could see. And she believed. “I am God’s servant,” she said. “Whatever God says, I will do.”

Sure enough, it was just as the angel

had said. Nine months later, Mary was almost ready to have her baby.

Now Mary and Joseph had to take a trip to Bethlehem, the town King David was from. But when they reached the little town, they found every room was full. Every bed was taken.

“Go away!” the innkeepers told them. “There isn’t any place for you.”

Where would they stay? Soon Mary’s baby would come.

They couldn't find anywhere except an old, tumbledown stable. So they stayed where the cows and the donkeys and horses stayed.

And there, in the stable, amongst the chickens and the donkeys and the cows, in the quiet of the night, God gave the world his wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. His baby Son.

Mary and Joseph wrapped him up to keep him warm. They made a soft bed of straw and used the animals' feeding trough as his cradle. And they gazed in wonder at God's Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Mary and Joseph named him Jesus,
“Emmanuel”- which means
“God has come to live with us.”

Because of course, he had.

JOY

The Third Week of Advent

Sing!

Joy to the World

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven,
and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world
With truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay
In fields where they lay
Keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night
That was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

They lookèd up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued
Both day and night.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

The First Noel

And by the light of that same star
Three Wise Men came
From country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star
Wherever it went.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made
Heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood
Mankind has bought.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

Pray!

Father, I thank You for the joy that You give me. With your Holy Spirit helping me, help me to be joyful towards You and towards others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"The Light of the Whole World"

From Luke 2

That same night, in amongst the other stars suddenly a bright new star appeared. Of all the stars in the dark vaulted heavens, this one shone clearer. It blazed in the night and made the other stars look pale beside it.

God put it there when his baby Son was born- to be like a spotlight. Shining on him. Lighting up the darkness. Showing people the way to him.

You see, God was like a new daddy- he couldn't keep the good news to himself. He'd been waiting all these long years for this moment, and now he wanted to tell everyone.

So he pulled out all the stops. He'd sent an angel to tell Mary the good news. He'd put a special star in the sky to show where his boy was. And now he was going to send a big choir of angels to sing his happy song to the world:

*He's here! He's come!
Go and see him.
My little Boy.*

Now where would you send your splendid choir? To a big concert hall maybe? Or a palace perhaps? God sent his to a little hillside, outside a little town, in the middle of the night. He sent all those angels to sing for a raggedy old bunch of shepherds watching their sheep outside Bethlehem.

In those days, remember, people used to laugh at shepherds and say they were smelly and call them other rude names (which I can't possibly mention here). You see, people thought shepherds were nobodies, just scruffy old riff-raff.

But God must have thought shepherds were very important indeed, because they're the ones he chose to tell the good news first.

That night some shepherds were out in the open fields, warming themselves by a campfire, when suddenly the sheep darted. They were frightened by something. The olive trees rustled. What was that...

A wing beat?

They turned around. Standing in front of them was a huge warrior of light, blazing in the darkness. “Don’t be afraid of me!” the bright shining man said. “I haven’t come to hurt you. I’ve come to bring you happy news for everyone everywhere. Today in David’s town, in Bethlehem, God’s Son has been born! You can go and see him. He is sleeping in a manger.”

Behind the angel they saw a strange glowing cloud- except it wasn't a cloud, it was angels...troops and troops of angels, armed with light! And they were singing a beautiful song: "Glory to God! To God be Fame and Honor and all our Hoorays!"

Then as quickly as they appeared, the angels left.

The shepherds stamped out their fire, left their sheep, raced down the grassy hill, through the gates of Bethlehem, down the narrow cobble streets, through a courtyard, down some step, step, steps, past an inn, round a corner, through a hedge, until, at last, they reached... a tumbledown stable.

They caught their breath. Then quietly, they tiptoed inside.

They knelt on the dirt floor. They had heard about this Promised Child and now he was here. Heaven's Son. The Maker of the Stars. A baby sleeping in his mother's arms.

This baby would be like that bright star shining in the sky that night. A Light to light up the whole world. Chasing away darkness. Helping people to see.

And the darker the night got, the brighter the star would shine.

PEACE

The Fourth Week of Advent

Sing!

We Three Kings

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven,
and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world
With truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay
In fields where they lay
Keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night
That was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

They lookèd up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued
Both day and night.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

O Holy Night

And by the light of that same star
Three Wise Men came
From country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star
Wherever it went.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made
Heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood
Mankind has bought.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

Pray!

Father, Thank you for making peace possible. Help our world's wounds heal. Make me be a peacemaker like you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"King of All Kings"

From Matthew 2

Far away, in the East, three clever men saw the very same star. The star that God had put in the sky when Jesus was born. They knew it was a sign. A baby king had been born.

They had been waiting for this star. They knew it would come.

"He's here!" they shouted. "He's here!" (And I'm sure if you'd been there, you would have heard them laughing and dancing and singing until the sun came up!)

At dawn, they packed up their camels and wrapped gifts for the baby. They brought their most precious treasures of all: frankincense, gold, and myrrh. Special, sparkly, lovely-smelling, gleaming things- just right for a king.

The three Wise Men (actually, if you'd met them, you'd have thought they were kings because they were so rich and clever and important looking) set off.

They rode their camels...

Across endless deserts...

Up steep, steep mountains...

Down into deep, deep valleys...

Through raging rivers...

Over grassy plains...

Night and day, day and night, for hours that turned into days, that turned into weeks, that turned into months and months, until, at last, they reached...Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was by far the most important city for miles around and, as anyone can tell you, that's where a palace would be and kings are born in palaces. So that's where they went. But they were in for a surprise.

They went to see King Herod. Surely he'd know where this baby was.

But he didn't. In fact, he didn't like the sound of a new king- it made him cross. He didn't want anyone to be king, except him.

But Herod's advisors told the three Wise Men what was written in their books- what God has said about the baby king: "Go to Bethlehem. That's where you'll find him."

Suddenly the star they has seen in the East started moving again, showing them the way. So the three Wise Men followed the star out of the big city, along the road, into the little town of Bethlehem. They followed the start thought he streets of Bethlehem, out of the nice part of town, through the not-so-nice part of town, into the really-not-so-nice-at-all part of town, down a little dirt track, until it stopped right over...a little house.

But wait. It wasn't a palace. And there weren't any guards. Or servants. Or flags. Or red carpets. Or trumpets. Or anything. Did they get it wrong? Or was this what God meant?

Sure enough, in that little house- there, sitting on his mother's knee- they found him. The baby King.

The three men knelt before the little King. They took off their rich royal turbans and gleaming golden crowns. They bowed their noble heads to the ground and gave their sparkling treasures.

The journey that had begun so many centuries before had led three Wise Men here. To a little town. To a little house. To a little child.

To the King God had promised David all those years before.

But this child was a new kind of king. Though he was the Prince of Heaven, he had become poor. Though he was the Mighty God, he had become a helpless baby. This King hadn't come to be the boss. He had come to be a servant.

CHRISTMAS DAY!

Sing!

Go Tell It On The Mountain

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.*

While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.*

The shepherds feared and trembled,
When lo! above the earth.
Rang out the angels chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth.

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.*

*Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.*

Pray!

Lord Jesus, I sing songs of Your great love for me and for this world. Help me let everyone know by telling them about You and loving them like You love me. Thank You for coming to save us! Amen.

Text is taken from Sally Lloyd-Jones' wonderfully written and beautifully illustrated [Jesus Storybook Bible](#). This book is highly recommended and available online or from most booksellers.

Cover artwork: from Linda Ruth Dickinson's "*Incarnation.*"
View more of her work at <http://www.lindaruthdickinson.com/>.

Share pictures and notes about how you've used this devotional to emily@allgather.org.



www.allgather.org

For more information about Kids at the Gathering Church,
visit www.allgather.org/kids.

For more Advent resources, including
"The Best of All is, God is With Us" Devotional,
visit www.allgather.org/advent.