

HOPE | PEACE | LOVE | JOY



WAITING
HERE
FOR
YOU



ADVENT 2020 | OKC COMMUNITY CHURCH

ADVENT

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ADVENT GUIDE

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WAITING HERE FOR YOU



Advent is a season observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. The term “Advent,” is a version of the Latin word meaning “coming.” Advent is traditionally observed over a period of four Sundays and weeks before Christmas.

Celebrating Advent with family or personally is a simple and beautiful way to bring more meaning and focus to Christmas.

The traditional needs of Advent are simple: a few candles, a wreath, and a guide like this one will help you take time each week to reflect, worship, and prepare for the joy and gift of Christmas. Other wonderful guides and resources are available online if you want to go even deeper.

This simple four week guide will walk you through the four primary themes of Advent. If you are going through this guide as an individual, take the time each week to do the devotional. Additionally, you can do this with your family so we’ve provided a family guide for each week to discuss the Advent themes and scriptures along with a family activity.

Whether you are doing this as a family or an individual, choose one night weekly that works best. Parents, this is a great opportunity to create a special and fun family time. You don’t have to be an expert about Advent or the scriptures to lead this...just have a desire to make Jesus the central focus this Christmas!

In addition to this guide, at OKC Community we will take time weekly on Sundays to celebrate and honor Jesus through Advent.

Also, if you’re in a connect group, we have an Advent experience for your group at the back of this guide.

the EVERGREENS

The evergreens symbolize that God never changes and the gift of new life. The evergreens are traditionally a circle wreath to symbolize that God is eternal (God has no beginning and no end).

the CANDLES

Candles symbolize Jesus as the light of the world. Traditionally, 3 purple candles and one pink candle is used (you can also use 4 white candles). Place the candles within the evergreen. Light a candle each week, finally lighting all four on the week of Christmas Eve.

WONDERFUL
COUNSELOR,

Mighty God,

EVERLASTING
FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.

Week One

THE PROPHECY

JESUS IS OUR HOPE

SCRIPTURE:

Micah 7:7

But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (and daughters).

Psalms 40:1-5

I waited patiently on the Lord and he turned to me and heard my cry, He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire, he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him. Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.

Read Part 1 of Christmas Story:

Micah 5:2

Isaiah 7:14

Malachi 3:1

Luke 1: 1-38

DEVOTION:

from: Waiting Here For You, by Louie Giglio

Jesus didn't arrive without a wait. While you and I simply turn the page, moving effortlessly from the end of the Old Testament promises to the opening of Matthew's Gospel, it wasn't quite that easy. FOUR HUNDRED YEARS of silence spanned the gap between the final prophecies spoken in Malachi (the last Old Testament book) and the birth of Christ.

Imagine four hundred years without any recorded word from God - no voice, no

prophet, nothing. Imagine the agony of waiting, and the struggle to keep the faith in the promises given long before. You can almost hear the questions being passed from one generation to the next. Had God vanished? Was he ever really there? Was faith in Him just a waste?

Suddenly, when the time was right, Bethlehem's fields lit up like noonday as angels proclaimed, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men on whom his favor rests. The wait was over. The silence was broken. Heaven unleashed thunderous applause. And, in a feeding trough, Jesus was born. God in human flesh! The son of God had become the Son of Man, Emmanuel-God with us!

While God rarely comes at our appointed time, He always comes at the right time. We are all waiting on something or someone, often wondering if God has forgotten us. Is that where you are today? In your waiting, let the birth of Christ encourage you. Just because God hasn't come through (as far as you can see), it doesn't mean He has abandoned you. This very minute He's working for His glory and for your good. Though circumstances say otherwise, God is moving right now to fulfill His long-appointed plans for you. Don't give up. Take hope in the manger and know that you are prized by Jesus. He stepped down from heaven for you. And just as he loved you that day, He loves you right now. And Jesus is with you, even in the storm. Waiting is never wasted when we are waiting on God.

PRAYER

Father, meet me in the waiting, the place where I long for what is not fully in view. Still my heart and give me the ability to know that you are near. I believe your plans are good. I see it in the birth of your only son. But sometimes I struggle to see beyond the haze that surrounds me. Renew my confidence as I lift my eyes to you. Be glorified in my life during this season of expectation. Amen.

FAMILY NIGHT

WEEK ONE | THE PROPHECY | OUR HOPE

Create an Advent focused family night to bring greater meaning and focus to Christ this Christmas season. The act of pausing for Advent and turning our hearts to the Lord helps us stop the “patterns of this world” and worship the one who is worthy of all.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Feel free to get creative with your own ideas to have some fun with food and activities. Here are a few thoughts for this week.

1. Food: Sharing a special meal together as a family always helps increase the significance of the moment. You may want to make this a fun meal or a more formal meal (whatever works for your family). Choose a meal your family loves, plan ahead of time, and if possible include the whole family in the meal prep!

2. Activity Option 1: Play a game together. Create or find a Christmas version of charades or Pictionary (easy to find via a google search).

3. Activity Option 2: Decorate the Christmas tree if you haven't yet!

TALK TOGETHER

1. What is your favorite Christmas tradition?
2. If you are leading with kids or family who've never celebrated Advent it would be good to take the time to use the Advent overview on page four of this booklet to explain what Advent is. Make sure to encourage questions and conversation through these times.
3. Today we focus on Jesus as our hope! Share about a time in your life when Jesus was the hope you needed?
4. How can we be people of hope to a world that needs it?

CANDLES & READ TOGETHER

1. Light Advent Candles. Have someone light the first candle. If you don't have Advent candles then proceed to the reading.
2. Read Luke 1:1-38 out loud together.
3. What about the story/ scripture is meaningful or stood out to you?

PRAY TOGETHER

1. Ask everyone to share what is one thing you are grateful to God about.
2. Pray together.

Week Two

THE QUIET

JESUS IS OUR PEACE

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 7:13-14 MSG:

Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life-to God!-is vigorous and requires total attention.

Psalms 46:10:

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God"

Isaiah 30:15, 18:

In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up and show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Lamentations 3:26:

It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Read Part 2 of Christmas Story:

Matthew 1:18-24

DEVOTION:

It's easy to bail on God at the first sign of trouble. We fret, we worry, we make new plans, we settle for shortcuts. We take matters into our own hands and soon feel the weight of anxiety and worry. But there is another way-the quiet way of rest and trust. God is in control. During this advent journey, keep making the confident decision to choose God's way. Guard your heart from any voice that offers a "quick fix". Instead, say, "Jesus, I will wait on you." The best things in life take time, and the payoff of doing things God's way is always better. The enemy will always try to deceive and distract us. Don't settle for less.

Quiet moments are rare and it can be difficult to find stillness, but take a few minutes today to quietly and deeply consider the Lord. Try not to read or study, or be distracted-just be still and mediate on the person of Jesus and all he has done for you. Think about his birth, his infancy, and the dawn of light rising over a dark and weary world. Think about His death and sacrifice, and the gift of life He extends to you. Meditate on his resurrection, His power over the darkness and the grave. Drink in his presence and in the stillness seek His face.

PRAYER

Father, I am waiting here for You. Meet me in the silence. Meet me in this moment. Meet me in and through Your Son, and by your Spirit, Amen.

FAMILY NIGHT

WEEK TWO | THE QUIET | OUR PEACE

Create an Advent focused family night to bring greater meaning and focus to Christ this Christmas season. The act of pausing for Advent and turning our hearts to the Lord helps us stop the “patterns of this world” and worship the one who is worthy of all.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Feel free to get creative with your own ideas to have some fun with food and activities. Here are a few thoughts for this week.

1. Food: Create some Christmas cheer by baking cookies and having hot chocolate —or make your own family favorite Christmas treat.

2. Activity: End your family night by getting out to go and look at Christmas lights. John 8:12, “I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

TALK TOGETHER

1. Share one of your favorite Christmas memories.
2. What is one thing you are grateful for about each person here?
3. Luke 2:14, proclaims Jesus as the peace of the world. How has Jesus brought you peace this year?
4. What’s something you can do this week to rest in God’s peace?

CANDLES & READ TOGETHER

1. Light Advent Candles. Have someone light the first and second candle. If you don’t have Advent candles then proceed to the reading.
2. Read Matthew 1:18-24 out loud together.
3. What about the story/ scripture is meaningful or stood out to you?

PRAY TOGETHER

1. Who is someone we can pray “peace” over their life?
2. Pray together for others who need peace and pray peace over your family.

Week Three

THE COMPASSION

JESUS IS LOVE

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 20:35:

In the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Mark 12:30-31:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than this.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8:

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Hebrews 13:16:

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

1 Peter 3:8:

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Colossians 3:12:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Isaiah 61:1:

to proclaim good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners

Part 3 of the Christmas Story:

Luke 2: 1-21

DEVOTION:

Pause today to embrace the true spirit of Christmas. It's about the gift God so freely gave us in Jesus and in us finding ways to give that back to others.

When Jesus returned to heaven, His mission "to proclaim good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for prisoners" became ours to continue.

We may not have as much as someone else, but we have exactly what we need to continue Jesus' mission until He returns. Take time to bless others through generosity. Look for opportunities in the church and in the community to serve others. As we do, people start to see there's something special about God's people and His goodness becomes known among the nations. We bless others because Jesus blesses us.

PRAYER

Father, I thank you that you are a giver and not a taker, and you have given so freely to me. Help me see how much I have in you. Please give me the opportunity today to share with someone else what you have so freely entrusted to me. Amen.

FAMILY NIGHT

WEEK THREE | THE COMPASSION | OUR LOVE

Create an Advent focused family night to bring greater meaning and focus to Christ this Christmas season. The act of pausing for Advent and turning our hearts to the Lord helps us stop the “patterns of this world” and worship the one who is worthy of all.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Feel free to get creative with your own ideas to have some fun with food and activities. Here are a few thoughts for this week.

1. **Food:** Breakfast night! It always works to do Christmas themed breakfast for dinner! (Ideas are a simple Google or Pinterest search away).
2. **Activity:** Prior to the night, prepare/make/or purchase some Christmas treats and deliver them to a few of your neighbors. Share some love and shine your light!

TALK TOGETHER

1. Rank in order your top three Christmas movies.
2. When is a time you recently experienced/ felt the love of Christ? What amazes you most about His love?
3. Advent reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and He has called us to shine his light often by loving others! What is one practical way you can shine your light or love others this week?

CANDLES & READ TOGETHER

1. Light Advent Candles. Have someone light the first, second, and third candle. If you don't have Advent candles then proceed to the reading.
2. Read Luke 2:1-21 out loud together.
3. What about the story/ scripture is meaningful or stood out to you?

PRAY TOGETHER

1. Before praying have everyone share one thing they love about God/Jesus.
2. Pray and thank God for his love (his compassion) for us.

Week Four

THE GOOD NEWS

JESUS IS OUR JOY

SCRIPTURE:

1 Thessalonians 4:16:

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Psalms 135:13:

Your name, O Lord, endures forever, your renown, O Lord throughout all ages.

Luke 2:14:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

Isaiah 9:6:

For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Part 4 of the Christmas Story:

Matthew 2:1-23

Luke 2:22-40

DEVOTION:

Take a moment of silence to reflect on everything you have experienced on your Advent journey. This week, the church celebrates the dawn of grace in the coming of Jesus. He arrived amidst the sheep of Bethlehem as they were being raised to serve as a sacrifice at Jerusalem's temple. Thirty-three years later, and just six miles from where he was born, Jesus would be the last of Bethlehem's sheep. Crucified for your sins, dead and buried, Christ would come back to life three days later. Though we are still longing to experience everything God has promised and we wait for our ultimate redemption—one wait is already over. Christ has come. Our sins are forgiven. Death has been defeated and love has won! Celebrate that God's grace finds you wherever you are this Christmas.

God has no equal. No rivals. No shortages. No needs. He is before all things and at the end of the day, He will be the last one standing. The world is filled with little "g" gods, but our God made the heavens and the earth. No one compares. No one comes close.

So as you wait on him today, give him praise. Maybe your circumstances appear to be upside down, but continue to praise Him in the waiting. Exalt him in the wondering. So don't ask for much today, just keep lifting up the name above every name. Let that name ground your heart and still your soul. Let your praise drown out all others who contend for your allegiance and affection. When you do, your very song will lift your thoughts to the very highest place. He keeps his word, He has us.

PRAYER

Father, what shall I say to you? You have no equal or rival. My words and my thoughts are so small when compared to you. I have seen the starry night and it cannot hold a candle to your glory. Expand my faith and give me words as I seek to join the anthem of your praise.

All praise is yours, now and forever. I will walk in that truth today. I will believe it. And act like it. And pray like it. And give like it. And praise like there is none like you. Amen!

FAMILY NIGHT

WEEK FOUR | THE GOOD NEWS | OUR JOY

Create an Advent focused family night to bring greater meaning and focus to Christ this Christmas season. The act of pausing for Advent and turning our hearts to the Lord helps us stop the “patterns of this world” and worship the one who is worthy of all.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Feel free to get creative with your own ideas to have some fun with food and activities. Here are a few thoughts for this week.

1. Food: Throw a party! Make a spread of everyone’s favorite party / finger foods as we celebrate Jesus.

2. Activity: Choose one or more of the following ideas:

1. For groups with kids: throw a birthday party for Jesus. Make a cake, decorate, and sing happy b-day to Jesus!
2. End the night by watching a classic Christmas movie.
3. Serve and give to someone in need. Meet a need of someone you know or give a gift to an individual in need on the streets (an idea would be to give them a care pack with basic essentials, plus some Christmas treats).

TALK TOGETHER

1. What brings you joy?
2. How have you experienced joy given to you by God/Jesus this year?
3. What has doing Advent together meant to you this year? How has it encouraged, helped, or inspired you?

CANDLES & READ TOGETHER

1. On this last night - darken the house by turning out the lights and then light all four Advent Candles. If you don’t have Advent candles then proceed to the reading.
2. Read Matthew 2:1-23, Luke 2:22-40
3. What about the story/ scripture is meaningful or stood out to you?

PRAY TOGETHER

1. Jesus is our hope, peace, love, and joy.
2. Pray and thank God for all that Jesus has done and is doing!

A
THRILL
OF HOPE,
THE WEARY
WORLD
Rejoices.

GROUP NIGHT

Create an Advent focused group experience to bring greater meaning and focus to Christ this Christmas season. There are some ideas below on different ways that you can pause as a group to celebrate and honor Jesus this Advent season!

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Feel free to get creative with your own ideas to have some fun with food and activities. Here are a few ideas for a group activity before you do the devotion together:

1. Christmas Meal: Have a dinner party, take communion together and tell stories of great Christmas traditions that your family or friends have.

2. Christmas Night Out: Start with ice skating downtown, grab some hot chocolate at a local coffee shop or get creative and have a Christmas Light scavenger hunt (Ideas are a simple Google or Pinterest search away).

3. Serve Day: Go and serve together with a local charity like Homeless Alliance, Restore OKC or Jesus House.

TALK TOGETHER

1. Read Luke 2:1-21 aloud as a group.
2. What about the story/ scripture is meaningful or stood out to you?
3. Imagine for a moment your response, if you were one of the Shepherds in the field that night. (Take a minute, then answer questions)
 - How would you respond to the Angels?
 - How would you respond to finding the child in the manger?
 - How would you respond to knowing that child came just for you?
4. How does the Savior of the world warrant a response from you this Christmas?
5. Jesus is our hope, peace, love and joy. How have you seen Jesus be these things for you this year?

PRAY TOGETHER

1. Start with a prayer of thanks, have the group share things they're grateful for.
2. Pray and ask God to continue to move with your group, our church and our city.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
OKCCOMMUNITYCHURCH.COM