The Best Part Is Jesus!

A 4-Week Family Advent Devotional



NEW CITY CHURCH

New City Families!

We are SO excited for you to begin this special Christmas experience together! **The Best Part Is Jesus!** is a four-week Advent devotional designed to help your family discover the people, places, animals, and moments God used to tell the greatest story ever told—the birth of Jesus!

Each week, we'll explore a different part of the Christmas story and discover how God was bringing His perfect plan together.

Along the way, we'll learn something wonderful:
The stable wasn't the best part. The animals weren't the best part.
The shepherds and angels weren't the best part. Even the bright star wasn't the best part.

JESUS was, is and always will be the BEST part of Christmas!

What's Inside Your Advent Kit?

We've packed everything you need to learn, create, and have fun together!



4 paint strips
One for each week



4 paintbrushes
Ready for your creations



1 no-spill water cup
To rinse your brushes



1 painting mat
To protect your workspace



1 wooden Nativity set
Divided into four weekly bags



1 Advent Devotional Book
Your guide through the Christmas story

Ready? Let's Get Started!

Turn the page to see 5 simple steps your family can do each week to make the most of this special time together!

5 Ways to Make the Most of Your Advent Devotional

Each week, set aside some time to go through these five simple steps together!

1 Get Cozy!



Bring your family together and find a comfy spot.

2 Read!



Open your devotional and discover this week's part of the Christmas story.

3 Find it in the Bible!



Open your Bible, read the Scripture together, and talk about what God is teaching you.

4 Pray!



Take a moment to thank God and talk to Him as a family.

5 Make It!



Open your weekly Nativity bag, grab your paints and brushes. As you paint, listen to the special weekly Christmas playlist we've created just for you!

Remember:
JESUS is the BEST part of Christmas!

WEEK 1

A Place for Jesus

Ready for The King

The greatest moment ever was about to happen! Jesus, just as God had promised, was coming to save His people. But how would He come? What would He be like? What would He do? Would mountains bow down? Would the seas roar? Would Jesus come as a mighty King? Would He be born in a beautiful, grand palace worthy of a King? **No.**

This first week of Advent sets the scene for the birth of Jesus. The Bible tells us that people were traveling from all over to Bethlehem because the king ordered a census. This meant everyone needed to be counted with their family. So many people had come to Bethlehem that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in any of the guest rooms. They asked and asked until they found a place to stay — **a stable? Yes!**

It certainly wasn't a palace. It wasn't fancy or beautiful. God had prepared this humble place for something extraordinary. It may have seemed like a very unusual place for a King to be born. Imagine the most important King in the entire universe was about to be born. Where would you expect Him to be born? A giant castle made of gold? In a beautiful room? A soft, royal bed?

On the very first Christmas, the greatest miracle ever didn't happen in a palace. **It happened in a humble stable.**

Find It in the Bible

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register.

Luke 2:1, 3

Imagine the Stable

- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- What would it feel like?
- What would it smell like?

You might see hay, dust, and animals. You might hear donkeys, cows, and sheep making noises in the dark. You might smell hay, and the earthy barn.

The Manger

A manger was a feeding trough.

It was a simple box where animals would eat their food. But on this special night, the manger had a very different purpose . . . It held Jesus, the Son of God.

Talk About it

1. Where would you expect a king to be born?
2. What was a manger?
3. What do you think the stable might have smelled and sounded like?
4. Why do you think Jesus' birth was so different from what we might expect?
5. What does the stable teach us about God's plans?

Make It: Paint the Stable

This week, you will begin building your own Christmas Nativity!
Use the paint and paintbrushes from your "Week One" bag to paint the stable, where Jesus was born. Lay out your painting mat, listen to the week one playlist, create and have fun! As you paint, think about the stable and God's plan.



Prayer

Dear God,
Thank You for sending Jesus into the world. Thank You that Your plans are always perfect. Help us remember that You can use ordinary places and ordinary people to do extraordinary things. We love you, Jesus!

Amen

Listen

Week 1 Playlist — "Silent Night"

WEEK 2

Mary & Joseph

A Big Yes to God

God chose Mary and Joseph for a very special purpose — to care for His Son, Jesus. God asked them to trust Him, and Mary and Joseph said a **big YES!**

Mary was a young girl living in the small town of Nazareth. She was an ordinary person — but God had an extraordinary plan for her because she loved God with all her heart! One day, something incredible happened. **An angel appeared to Mary!** Can you imagine that? Suddenly — WHOOSH! — an angel appears! Mary was afraid. Why was an angel talking to her? What was happening?

The angel Gabriel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is really happy with you. You're going to have a baby boy, and His name will be Jesus. He will be great! He'll be called the Son of the Most High." WOW! God had chosen Mary for something incredible! Gabriel explained that this would be a miracle from God and reminded her: **"Nothing is impossible with God!"** So, Mary bravely said **YES** to God's plan. She told the angel, **"I am the Lord's servant,"** and chose to follow God.

God had a job for her that no one else in the entire history of the world would ever have. Mary would be the mother of Jesus, the Savior of the world!

But Mary wasn't the only one who needed to give God a big YES. There was also **Joseph**. Joseph was engaged to Mary, which meant they had promised to marry each other. When Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a baby, he didn't understand what was happening. Then one night, while Joseph was sleeping, **an angel appeared to him in a dream.** The angel told Joseph, "Don't be afraid. The angel explained that Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit and was part of God's plan. Joseph was to name Him Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. Even Jesus' name tells us why He came! **Jesus means "The Lord saves."**

When Joseph woke up, he didn't waste any time! He obeyed God. He married Mary and became the earthly father who would protect and care for Jesus.



Mary gave God a BIG YES! Joseph gave God a BIG YES! Together, they trusted and followed God.

God keeps His promises. God is with us. God has a plan.

Can You Give God a Big Yes!

Imagine the Road to Bethlehem

Mary, Joseph, and the donkey had been traveling for days! They finally arrived in Bethlehem, the place where Jesus would be born. They needed to find somewhere to stay. They searched the crowded town, but there was no room for them. Finally, Mary and Joseph found a humble stable.

- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- What would it feel like?

Talk About it

1. What do you think it means to trust God?
2. Why do you think Mary and Joseph said YES to God's plan?
3. What can help you trust God when you don't know what will happen next?
4. Can you think of a time when you obeyed God even when it was hard?
5. Can you give God a big YES?

Find It in the Bible

"Nothing will be impossible with God."
— Luke 1:37

Read Luke 1:26–38 and Matthew 1:20–21

Make It: Paint Joseph, Mary & Baby Jesus

Keep going! Your Christmas Nativity is coming together! Open your Week Two bag and get ready to paint Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. Lay out your painting mat, turn on the Week Two playlist, and have fun creating! As you paint, remember how Mary and Joseph gave God a BIG YES! Piece by piece God's amazing plan was coming together!



Prayer

Dear God,
help me trust you like Mary and Joseph did. Give me courage to say YES to You, even when it is hard. Thank You for loving me and always being with me.

Amen.

Listen

Week 2 Playlist

WEEK 3

The Angels & The Shepherds

The Night Heaven Sang

The third week takes us outside Bethlehem to the fields where shepherds were watching over their sheep. Imagine the scene. It was nighttime. The shepherds were in the fields, watching their sheep and expecting another quiet night. Then suddenly, everything changed!

The darkness was filled with the bright glory of heaven! An angel appeared and gave the shepherds the most incredible news they had ever heard: **"A Savior has been born!"** Then the sky filled with angels praising God: **"Glory to God in the highest!"**

Why did God choose shepherds? They weren't kings or powerful leaders. They weren't considered very important people. They spent all their time outside with smelly animals, and some people looked down on them. But God thought differently about the shepherds and invited them to be part of His wonderful story.

Suddenly, without any warning, the night sky **EXPLODED** with light! An angel of the Lord appeared to them. The shepherds were TERRIFIED! But the angel had the most incredible news!

"Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy that will be for ALL people! Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born!" He is Jesus and the One you've been waiting for! You'll find the baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger."

Then the sky filled with thousands of angels singing together, **"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those He loves!"**

After the angels went back to heaven, the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem!" They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger, just as the engel had said! The shepherds couldn't keep quiet. They went everywhere telling everyone what they had seen and heard.

God's greatest gift had arrived. And just like the shepherds, **we can share the good news of Jesus with others.** Because **the greatest news ever told is good news for EVERYONE!**



Find It in the Bible

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, **which the Lord** has told us about."

Luke 2:15-18

Imagine the Night Heaven Sang!

Imagine standing in a quiet, peaceful field under a dark sky. Suddenly, a bright light fills the darkness! An angel appears with the most wonderful news ever told — **Jesus, the Savior has been born!**

- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- How would you feel?

And there's MORE! The sky fills with angels praising God, singing. **"Glory to God in the highest!"** Imagine the sound of heaven echoing with joyful praise as the angels celebrate the birth of Jesus! **That was the night heaven sang!**

Talk About it

1. Why do you think God chose the shepherds?
2. How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angels?
3. What did the shepherds do when they heard about Jesus?
4. Who is the good news of Jesus for?
5. Who can YOU tell about Jesus?

Make It

Paint The Shepherd, Angel and Sheep

Your Christmas Nativity is coming to life, one piece at a time! Open your Week Three bag and get ready to paint a shepherd, an angel and a sheep. Lay out your painting mat, turn on the Week Three playlist, and have fun creating! As you paint, fill your home with joyful praise, just like the night Heaven sang! Piece by piece, God's great plan was coming together!



Prayer

Dear God,
Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior!
Just like the angels,
we want to praise You.
Thank You that the good news of Jesus is for everyone.
Help us tell everyone we know how much You love them!
In Jesus' name,

Amen!

Listen

Week 3 Playlist – "The Night Heaven Sang"

WEEK 4

The Wise Men

Searching for THE King

We are getting closer to the best day ever; the day we celebrate Jesus' birth. Only one more week to go! This week we'll read about the Wise Men! Who were they? What did they see? Why did they travel so far? And what were they looking for?

The Wise Men were men who studied the stars. They lived far, far away from Bethlehem. One night they spotted something extraordinary in the sky—a new, extra-bright star! They knew it meant something BIG: A new King had been born! They packed up expensive gifts and began a long trip that might have taken months or even years. They traveled across deserts and through mountains, following that bright star. Nothing was going to stop them from finding this King!

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they asked everyone, "Where is the new king? We saw His star, and we've come to worship Him!" When King Herod heard about a "new King," he became very mad. Wait, a NEW king? But HE was the king! Herod was so jealous he wanted to get rid of anyone who might threaten his job.

Sneaky Herod called the wise men to his palace. Herod told the wise men, "Go search for the child. When you find Him, come back and tell me where He is, so I can worship Him too." Herod was lying! He didn't want to worship Jesus. He wanted to hurt Him!

The wise men kept following the star until it stopped right over the place where Jesus was! When they went inside and saw Jesus with His mother Mary, they knew He was the King they were looking for! These important men bowed down and worshiped Jesus. Then they opened their gifts for Jesus: Gold, a special gift for a king; frankincense, an expensive perfume used in worship, showing Jesus was God; and myrrh, spice used for burial, pointing ahead to how Jesus would die for us and rise again.

After spending time with Jesus, the wise men got ready to go tell Herod. But God spoke to them in a dream: "Don't go back to Herod! Go home a different way!" The wise men obeyed and traveled home in a different direction.

The Wise Men remind us that Jesus is worth searching for!
We don't need to follow a star or travel across deserts to find Him.
When we seek Jesus, we will find Him, because He promises
to lead us closer to Him.



TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why did the Wise Men travel so far to find Jesus?
2. What did the Wise Men do when they found Jesus?
3. What gifts did the Wise Men bring Jesus?
4. What can YOU give Jesus?
5. How can we look for Jesus and grow closer to Him?

FIND IT IN THE BIBLE

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him." ... they saw the young child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod."

Matthew 2:1–2,11–12

IMAGINE: Searching for THE King!

Imagine traveling on a long journey to find Jesus, following a bright star across deserts and mountains! What would you see? What would you hear? Now imagine finally finding Jesus! How would you feel? What would you say to Him? The Wise Men gave Jesus their most valuable treasures. What can YOU give Jesus?



MAKE IT: Paint Three Wise Men & a Camel

It's week four, and you know what that means? We're almost done! Open your last bag and bring the three Wise Men and their sleepy Camel to life! Lay out your painting mat, turn on the Week Four playlist, and have fun creating! As you paint, think about what you can give Jesus! Piece by piece, God's perfect plan was leading everyone to Jesus!



LISTEN:

Week 4 Playlist

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us and for being the greatest King of all! Help us to seek You every day, we love You with all our hearts, and worship You with our lives. Thank You for always being near to us. In Jesus name! Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Jesus

The Best Part of Christmas!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!! The day we've all been waiting for is finally HERE! For the past four weeks, we've been discovering the people, places, animals, and special moments that were all part of the very first Christmas. And today, we finally, get to celebrate the **BEST part of the entire story!**

Remember where we started? We stepped inside a stable and discovered a humble place where The King would be born. We saw the manger where a very special baby would sleep. We met Mary and Joseph, who trusted God even when His plans were different from what. they expected. We met the shepherds, who were watching their sheep when angels told them the greatest news ever! And we followed a super bright star that led the Wise Men to worship the newborn King.

WOW! What an AMAZING story! But did you notice something? Every person we met, every place we visited, and every wonderful detail we discovered was pointing us to someone. **Can you guess WHO? JESUS!!!**

The stable was the place where Jesus was born. The manger was where Jesus would sleep. Mary and Joseph were chosen to care for Jesus. The angels announced the birth of Jesus. The shepherds hurried to see Jesus. And the star led the Wise Men to worship Jesus.

Every person. Every place. Every little detail. It was ALL pointing to JESUS!

The One who made the stars, the mountains, the oceans, and everything in the world came to earth as a tiny baby. But Jesus wasn't just any baby. **He was God's Son! Our Savior! The greatest gift the world would ever receive!**

And do you know WHY God sent Jesus? **Because God LOVES us!** The Bible tells us in John 3:16 that God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son. Jesus came to show us what God is like. He loved people, healed the sick, welcomed children, forgave sins, and taught people how to follow God. He did something even more amazing than all that! He died on the cross for our sins and rose again so that everyone who believes in Him can be with Him forever! **THAT is why Jesus came. THAT is why we celebrate Christmas!**



Christmas isn't just about a baby born long ago. It's about a Savior who came for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him. And THAT is what makes Christmas so wonderful!

JESUS was, is and always will be, the BEST PART!

FIND IT IN THE BIBLE

"The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of"David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Luke 2:11-12

PRAYER:

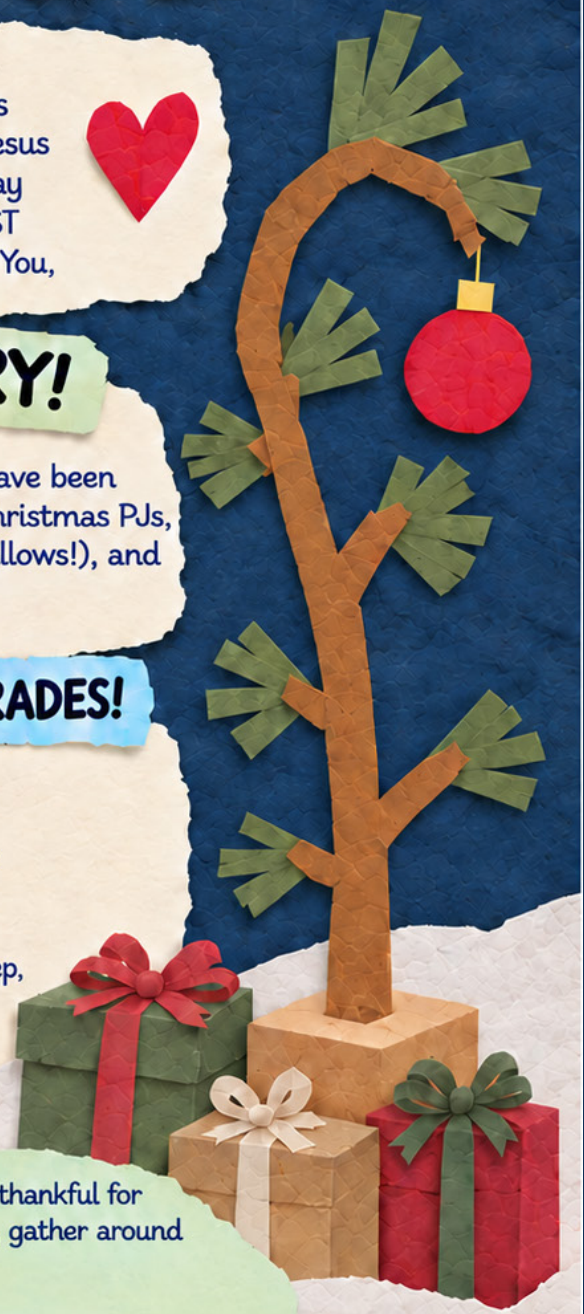
Dear God, Thank You for sending Jesus to show us how much You love us. We are so thankful that Jesus came to be our Savior! Help us love others the way Jesus loves us and never forget that He is the BEST part of Christmas! In Jesus' name, Amen! We love You, Jesus!

LET'S MAKE A MEMORY!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Now that all the presents have been opened, let's keep the fun going! Stay in your cozy Christmas PJs, grab some hot chocolate (don't forget the marshmallows!), and gather the whole family around the Christmas tree.
It's time for a little Christmas **FUN!**

First up... CHRISTMAS STORY CHARADES!

Remember all the amazing people, animals, and special moments we've discovered over the past four weeks? Well, now it's your turn to bring them to life! Take turns acting out something from the Christmas story while everyone else tries to guess. But here's the catch—**NO TALKING!** Maybe you're a shepherd watching sheep, an angel announcing good news, a donkey walking to Bethlehem, or a Wise Man following the star!
Don't forget to give Mom and Dad a turn!



Before the fun ends, have everyone share one thing they're thankful for about Jesus. Then, while you're still in your Christmas PJs, gather around the tree and snap a silly family Christmas picture!
Make it a special Christmas tradition to remember that

JESUS is the BEST part of Christmas!

Christmas Car Ride Scavenger Hunt

Put on your pajamas, grab some hot cocoa and a blanket, hop in the car with your family, and turn up the Christmas tunes!

Let the Christmas hunt begin!

Explore your neighborhood and see how many things on this list you can spot along the way!

- ☐  A giant Christmas tree
- ☐  A reindeer
- ☐  A snowman
- ☐  A house with colorful Christmas lights
- ☐  A candy cane
- ☐  A house covered in white lights
- ☐  A giant wrapped present
- ☐  A glowing snowflake
- ☐  Christmas bells
- ☐  An angel
- ☐  A sheep
- ☐  A nativity scene with baby Jesus

FAMILY CHALLENGES



Christmas Carol Karaoke

Sing a Christmas song together as loudly as you can!



The Brightest House Award

Everyone votes for their favorite decorated house!



The Christmas Thankfulness Challenge

Take turns sharing one thing you're thankful to God for this Christmas.


SCAN TO LISTEN
to the Playlist!
Scan with your phone to play while painting or reading together!
Scan To Listen
Merry Christmas


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