



December 2023

# CROSSROADS STUDENTS

## YOUVERSION READING PLAN:



## SERIES OVERVIEW

God has given us so much, and the birth of Jesus is a great way to focus on all of the gifts we've received this year, and to say thank you too! In this four-week series, we'll look at four classic Christmas stories to see what they can teach us about gratitude as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

## MONTHLY SERIES



# DISCUSSION AT HOME

## **After Dec 3: Be thankful for each other**

- What would it look like for you to choose to see people as gifts this Christmas?
- How frequently in a day do you feel grateful for something that happened or someone in your life?
- Who is one person you will be grateful for this week?

## **After Dec. 10: Be thankful for all God has done.**

- What is one thing that God has done recently that you are thankful for?
- What keeps you from being thankful?
- Why do you think God asks us to wait for answers to our prayers?

## **After Dec. 17: Be thankful for God's promises**

- Have you ever had a time when you felt like someone promised something but didn't follow through?
- Have you ever not followed through on something you promised?
- If you were going to teach someone else what it looked like to meditate on God's promises, what steps would you ask them to take?

**Dec 24 & 31: Students are invited to join the adults in their worship service.**

# A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

From the book, "To Light Their Way" page 175

O come, Emmanuel. We enter this time of Advent with holy anticipation. We enter this sacred season with bated breath.

O come, Emmanuel. We're prone to get tangled in sparkling lights and glittering tinsel, lost in to-do lists, swallowed in the seas of ribbons and restless hearts and weary souls.

O come, Emmanuel. Our nights have not been silent, calm or bright. We have been up late squinting at the stars, trying to make sense of the hurting world our children will inherit, and our weary hearts in it all. We see the wonder etched in our children's eyes, and we ask for our grown-up anxieties to be set free as we await the day to celebrate the God who made a way. Ignite in us the awe of a child, looking into a manger scene as we wait on the promise of the coming infant king in a humble stable.

O come, Emmanuel. The whole world waits for you. We are at war with each other and ourselves. We have clung to our idols of power and pocketbooks, and we cry out for the ways we have reflected King Herod, even as we ache for you, Prince of Peace.

O come, Emmanuel. Help us light the candles and illuminate the darkness within us. O light of the world, be with us as we recite these stories with our children - of shepherds and angels and peace for all people. Ring the bells of righteousness, of justice, of hope.

O come, Emmanuel. Help us prepare the way in our hearts and in our home, in our family and in our children. As we hang stockings and ornaments, as we frost cookies and tie bows, we know your peace can't be bought or packaged.

O come, Emmanuel. We anticipate great news that we so desperately need. Break into this world again and again and again, like you did so many years ago. Bring joy to the people, hope to the hopeless, light to the darkness. And may we and our children prepare your room so that we may be instruments of your peace.

O come, Emmanuel. We thank you for this time of anticipation and for the glimmers of your light spilling in even now among the ornaments and the candy canes. We thank you for this time of together. Help us to get quiet, to get small so we can make space in our souls for the newborn who will illuminate the darkness and change everything.

O come,  
O come,  
Emmanuel.