

Begin by lighting the same candle you lit last week.

Wait to light the second candle.

READER #1 (Adult): Christmas is a celebration of light. It's a story about a dark world, totally black. Until one day a single light entered the world. This light was God in the form of a baby. Now, this little candle can't light up our whole house, right? So what good does one little light in a whole dark world do? But God said this light, which was Jesus, would one day fill the whole earth.

READER #2 (Child): During Christmas we think about light a lot. What are some of the special ways we use light during Christmas?

READER #3 (Adult): We see light all around us at Christmas, and every time you see some, you can remember that Jesus coming into the world was like light coming into a totally dark house. That's why we light candles each week. Each week we'll light another candle until we have five on Christmas. That means that each week the light will get a little brighter. It's like a sunrise. You know how in the morning the sky is dark and then lighter and lighter until it's blue? That's what the arrival of God was like. In fact, one of Jesus' uncles said that Jesus' birth was like a sunrise. (Luke 1.78)



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Turn off all the lights and blow out the Advent candle. Have a strand of Christmas lights but cover all the lights with a blanket except for one. Explain how a single Christmas light may not seem special or exciting, but it can be used to create something beautiful. You may want to look at your Christmas tree with all of the lights or go on a drive to look at the beautiful things that can be done with lights.

Read: Jesus Calling Bible Storybook, "He's Here!" pp. 144-145

READER #4 (Child): God used a tiny baby to bring the whole world hope. God can use small things to make something beautiful. What are some small things in your life that God has used to make something beautiful?

Light the second candle.

And the first one again if you blew it out for the activity.

READER #5 (Child): Jesus is the light of the world, and he makes the darkness bright. This is why we light candles during Advent. It is to remind us that Jesus coming into the world was like light coming into a totally dark house.

SING TOGETHER: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” and/ or “Away in a Manger”

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

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, thank you for entering our dark world and bringing light. Thank you for bringing your peace. Help us to live in your peace. We love you, Jesus, and we're so thankful that you came for us. Amen.

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READER #1: This week we will read the story of God invading the life of a young maiden named Mary. For centuries, Christians have called this the Annunciation, which means “Announcement.” This is God’s announcement to the world that the wait is over – he’s coming! Reading this story, it’s easy to turn Mary into someone other than a normal person, but we must remember as we read accounts like this in the Bible, that Mary was like us. She had the same sort of thoughts, fears, desires, and suspicions that you and I would have in the same situation. As we read this story, work to imagine that Mary is like you. How would you be feeling? What would you be thinking?

READER #2: Luke 1.26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Light the second candle.

READER #3: This week we light what is called the “Peace” candle. In the middle of what must be the most shocking and disruptive moment of Mary’s life, the angel offers her peace. “Fear not. You don’t need to be afraid anymore.” When we live open to the intrusion of God into our “well-ordered” lives, we experience true peace. The fear, stress, and worry that drives much of our doing is washed away by the peace of living in communion with our Father. At Christmas, we remember that this is possible because the Prince of Peace was born into this dangerous world for us.

SING TOGETHER: “Angels We Have Heard On High”

Let’s sing together “Glory to God in the Highest,” which is what “Gloria in excelsis Deo” means. We give glory to God that he is the sort of God who came and who sacrificed himself to bring us into communion with him and give us his peace.

Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

READER #4: On that night when God entered the world, the angels sang out, “Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth.” This is the result of God with us—his glory is revealed, and we get his peace.

QUESTIONS:

How can you relate to this idea that God gives you his peace, even while he is disrupting your life?

How do you sense God is moving in your life right now?

Are you open to what he is doing?

Do you feel like you're listening to his voice?

What is he saying?

SING TOGETHER: “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

PRAY: Father, we give you glory and we thank you for coming for us. Thank you for invading the silence of our world with the holy Word—your Son. Thank you that this announcement made to Mary 2,000 years ago is still for us today. Make us open to your voice. Give us ears that hear and hearts that respond to you. During this loud and cluttered season, quiet us with your love and draw us into the sweet communion with you, granted to us by your Son who came and died. Thank you for Jesus. In his name we pray, Amen.