



Between *Two* Advents



A Christmas *Devotional*

BY STONEGATE CHURCH





BETWEEN TWO ADVENTS



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WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent is the season dedicated to anticipating the celebration of the Incarnation of Christ at Christmas. This season starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues to Christmas Day. Churches across denominational lines have adopted the practice of lighting candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to celebrate the work of Jesus in the gospel. The final candle (the Christ candle) is lit on Christmas Eve as the church celebrates Jesus' birth.

But this is a fairly new way of celebrating Advent. For centuries, the church's primary focus in Advent was not the first coming of Christ but rather His second coming. Advent was not focused on Jesus' birth but his return. It was a season straddling the tension between God's coming judgment and the rescue of His waiting Bride. For example, the iconic song "Joy to the World" by Isaac Watts was originally written not as a Christmas carol but rather as a celebration of Christ's second coming as king over the whole world.

The word "advent" simply means "arrival." As Jesus-followers, we are equally shaped by both arrivals: Jesus' first coming as a baby and His second coming as a reigning King. Living between these Advents places us in a tension - the tension of "already and not yet." God's great and precious promises have already been granted to us in Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, but the fulfillment of all those promises has not yet come. The season of Advent invites us to engage with that tension and be transformed by remembering Jesus' first Advent and longing for His second.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is written to serve you through the 5-week Advent Season. Each week is themed according to the 5 Advent candles: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Christ.

In each section, you will:

<i>READ</i>	a Bible text and short lesson
<i>THINK</i>	through questions for personal consideration or group discussion
<i>SING</i>	a familiar Christmas Hymn for singing or listening
<i>PRAY</i>	a short prayer for candle lighting
<i>PRACTICE</i>	simple activities to bring what we're reading into our everyday life

There is an appendix created for families with children. Each week you will find kid-friendly questions and activity suggestions that require little-to-no preparation.

We hope this guide can be used individually to guide personal scripture reading, meditation, and journaling during the Advent season. It is also written so that it can be used in a group setting where group members read scripture, consider the lesson, discuss questions, and engage in the weekly activities and candle lighting. We encourage families to use this guide in one dinner moment each week and utilize the family activities in the appendix.

This guide was written to be accessible. Our hope is that all readings and activities are not additional burdens but gracious invitations to meet with Christ in the bustle of the Christmas season. We're inviting you to approach this season of Advent with purpose by taking at least one moment each week to cultivate a greater love of Jesus and an awareness of the Spirit's work in us and the world.

Together, may we remember Jesus' first coming to awaken a longing for His second.



BETWEEN TWO ADVENTS





Jesus, *Our Hope*

WEEK ONE | LUKE 1:5-24



READ

LUKE 1:5-24

The arrival of the Messiah came like a lone, dim candle in the darkness. For over 400 years the temple stood in silence with no word from God and no visible sign of His presence. For decades Rome ruled over Israel with an iron fist, confiscating their income, their land, their people, and their worship. The people of God cried out like their ancestors thousands of years before, “Oh Lord, hear, and see, and deliver.” Among this nation of people crying out, one couple was crying out for an answer in the gloom of childlessness. Zechariah and Elizabeth hoped for a child as Israel hoped for a Messiah. Both longed to see the fulfillment of the day a son would be given.

Into this dark landscape, God sent a glimmer of light to this elderly couple with the visitation of an angel, a muted father, and a supernatural pregnancy. Against all odds, God was on the move. Despite His silence, despite the people’s chronic unfaithfulness, despite Rome’s occupation, and despite life-long barrenness – God sent a forerunner, preparing the way for the Messiah and announcing the long-awaited Son.

And this is how God moves into our lives: in the silence, in the darkness, in our unfaithfulness, in our barrenness. God sends the One who is Light and Life to us. This is our hope. Hope is a confident expectation that God will bring about good. Jesus’ arrival proved God is faithful and still hears. He proved that although Rome ruled, God still sees. He proved that although Zechariah and Elizabeth were too old to conceive, God still delivers. The arrival of Jesus demonstrated that all hope in God is well-placed, no matter how bleak the circumstance.

At this time of year, we are littered with hopes: hope for gifts, hope for rest, hope to connect with ones we love.

All our hopes are preceded by a season of waiting: gifts wait under our trees, we wait for school and work responsibilities to end, we wait in airports and driveways. Hope imposes waiting.

But waiting tends to bring out the worst in us. As a culture we wait very little. Food can be delivered in minutes. We bypass lines with exclusive apps. If we must wait, we have instant productivity and entertainment at our fingertips with our devices. We hate waiting and will avoid it at all costs.

But the Bible sees waiting as a place of great strength.

“He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:29-31

We wait for what we hope for, and what we hope for reveals what we trust in. To wait for God reveals that we trust Him to bring about good. Waiting on God exalts Him as our only solution and refuge.

None who wait on, none who look for, none who hope in or expect things from the Lord will be a fool for doing so.

In our lifetimes we will wait for many things: graduation, a spouse, children, a child’s recovery, our own healing. No one is a fool who brings these waitings to the Lord, expectantly hoping in Him and seeing Him as the only solution.

This expectant hope is the posture of God’s people between Advents. Since Jesus ascended to heaven, His people have been waiting and expectantly hoping for his return. When we wait on God for things in this life, we rehearse the fact that we are waiting on Jesus’ second coming where all hopes will be fulfilled and waiting will be no more.

WE WAIT FOR WHAT WE HOPE
FOR AND WHAT WE HOPE FOR
REVEALS WHAT WE TRUST IN.



THINK

- What was the last thing you remember waiting a long time to receive? How did you feel beforehand, and how did you feel when your waiting was over?
- What are you hoping for this Advent season?
- What is one thing you are anxious about this season? As honestly as you can, talk to God about this and remember Him as the only solution in prayer.

SING

- *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

PRAY

- As we light this candle, we remember Jesus is our hope, and no one who waits on Him will be put to shame.

PRACTICE

- This week, if you find yourself waiting on anything (in line, in traffic, at an airport, etc.) resist the urge to entertain yourself immediately; put devices down to turn down any noise and embrace the waiting. As you do, invite the Spirit to teach you about waiting on Him and hoping in Him in your everyday life.





Peace in *Surrender*

WEEK TWO | LUKE 1:26-38, 67-80

READ

LUKE 1:26-38, 67-80

After John is born, his father, Zechariah, prophesies words reminiscent of the prophet Isaiah who said:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. For to 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. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end...” Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The forerunner’s birth is a precursor to the age of peace. John would grow up and proclaim the One who would bring harmony, wholeness, and rest to the world.

Even the great host of angels who appeared to the shepherds and announced the birth of Jesus gave a proclamation of peace: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” Luke 2:14*

Jesus is the Prince of Peace whose government is one of expanding “shalom”. Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace that means much more than tranquility; it carries with it the idea of completeness, perpetual safety and prosperity, and an enduring state in which all things are right. How would this One establish a government of perpetual shalom? No doubt God’s people imagined a leader like Joshua, David, or Solomon who silenced their enemies in war, creating peace on all their borders. But as Jesus came and preached, He never amassed military power but instead won peace through sacrificial surrender.

The peace Jesus accomplished wasn't between Israel and Rome; it was between man and God. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to heal the greatest conflict ever known by humans: separation and hostility with our Creator. Like an emissary, Jesus was sent to negotiate terms of peace with God's enemies. His diplomatic solution was to surrender His rights, sacrifice Himself for the wrongs of His enemies, come back from the dead, and offer those enemies terms of peace in His name. The peace treaty of God is the gospel of Jesus. To any who wants peace with God, entry into not only God's kingdom but also His family, that person needs only to surrender to God's terms and believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for them.

For all who have taken God's terms of peace, we become ambassadors, proclaiming God's peace treaty in the good news of Jesus. Paul writes,

"In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:19-20)

We are ambassadors, proclaiming God's terms of peace in Jesus to the world and calling for their unconditional surrender. We are the conquered subjects joyfully encouraging others to put down their arms, abandon their kingdoms, and come into the kingdom of Jesus because He is coming soon.

Our world is a conflicted world. We do not have to search far to know our world is hostile and violent. Even our holiday festivities with family are stained with clashes. The Prince of Peace comes into that hostility. We remember how He willingly surrendered and sacrificed His life that we might have peace with God.

We mimic God's peacemaking work by being sacrificial people who surrender. This is why peacemakers are called the children of God in Matthew 5:9. When we come into hostile places and willingly sacrifice for the sake of peace, we mimic our Father's peacemaking work. We rehearse the future reality of His shalom-saturated kingdom by living as subjects now, proclaiming the gospel of peace and making peace in the face of opposition.

At His second coming, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will govern the Kingdom of God which will spread over the world. Greater than Joshua, David, or Solomon, He will conquer not only all human power but man's greatest enemy, death. His peace will spread and His rule will undo the curse and stain of sin over the world. Until that day we proclaim Jesus' gospel peace treaty and encourage all to be reconciled with God, mindful of the words of Psalm 2: "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry and you perish in the way, for His wrath will soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"

THINK

- What places of your life lack peace?
- Are there any tense situations in your life where you can be a peaceful presence?
- Who in your life needs the peaceful good news of Jesus?

SING

- *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

PRAY

- As we light this candle, we remember Jesus who secured peace with his own blood.

PRACTICE

- Buy a gift for the person in your life who needs to know the peaceful good news of Jesus, and use this gift to share how God gave the greatest gift of His Son, Jesus, for you and for them.





Joy in Jesus

WEEK THREE | LUKE 2:8-20

READ

LUKE 2:8-20

Like an exuberant father, God joyfully announced the birth of His Son. The angel that appeared to the shepherds announced “good news of great joy which will be for all the peoples.” Jesus’ coming meant great joy for everyone; even the innumerable host of angels erupted in delightful song over Jesus. The Father sent the Son not only in great joy but also for our joy.

When He was born, Jesus was placed in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. It’s a curious setting for the Son of God to make His earthly introduction. Perhaps the image of Him in the same space where food is placed could remind us that Jesus was given like food for our satiation, satisfaction, and enjoyment. Jesus later referred to Himself as the source of Living Water and the Bread of Life. After feeding thousands miraculously, Jesus explains: *“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”* (John 6:33).

Jesus offers to satisfy not only our bodily hunger but to fill the hunger of our souls. We are creatures made by God, in His image, for His glory. Our joy is inextricably linked to Him. Humans for millennia have tried to create joy and satisfaction without Him, but those joys have come up dry and left us still starving. We were fashioned to say like the Psalmist *“in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* (Psalm 16:11). Because Jesus gave Himself up for us, we have an unbroken and unhindered relationship with the Father through Christ and the presence of the Spirit. Christ then is not just a means to worldly joy - He is our joy.

But even with Jesus as our joy, we are not immune to sorrow. We are not excluded from suffering. Every day we are buffeted by decay, death, and the presence of sin that has not yet been swept away. If Jesus is our joy, what do we do with the suffering and sorrow of our lives? James says,

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-3

Present suffering cannot change our relationship with Christ. No amount of difficulty can keep Christ from being our joy and satisfaction. Having Christ as our joy means we can endure suffering. Endurance in suffering comes with a weighty promise in James – it makes us complete, lacking nothing.

This season is filled with both great joys and aching sorrows. We enjoy beautiful feasts with friends and carry the sting of loved ones who aren't with us anymore. We enjoy gifts given and lament ones we haven't yet received yet. This mingling of joy and sorrow is not foreign to Jesus' followers. The Savior was crucified on a cross for the joy of all peoples and, in His joy, He endured it (Hebrews 12:2). Until His second coming, our joys and sorrows will live together as we learn to take Jesus as our joy and, like Him, endure.

But these earthly joys give us an opportunity to rehearse an important reality. Every earthly, temporary joy points to the day when all sorrow and suffering will give way to unending, unbridled delight. Joys today, taken in thankfulness to God, are like beacons pointing to the abundant nature of God who gives liberally!

The Bible repeatedly uses feasting imagery to describe the final coming of the Messiah. Like a good meal that forever satisfies hunger, God's joy will fill the earth and take away sorrow. Our present sorrow is the greatest pain we will ever experience because bright, unending elation is coming.

"On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, to rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

*And he will swallow up son this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.*

*He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the
earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day,
'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might
save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"*

Isaiah 25:6-9

*Joy to the world /
the Lord is come /
Let earth receive
her King / Let every
heart prepare Him
room / And Heaven
and nature sing.*

THINK

- What brings you the most joy in life?
- Do you enjoy Jesus? Do you think Jesus enjoys you?
- How do you feel about past or present suffering in your life?
What thoughts do you have about God and about yourself?

SING

- *Joy to the World*

PRAY

- As we light this candle of joy, we declare that you, Jesus, are our joy, and all our fountains of joy are in you!

PRACTICE

- Eat a meal you really enjoy (homemade or fast food, you just have to really like it) and savor every bite! Thank God as you enjoy it and let meal remind you of how God satisfies and gives joy to our souls.





Love *Gave*

WEEK FOUR | LUKE 2:1-7,
MATTHEW 2:13-15, 19-23



READ

LUKE 2:1-7, MATTHEW 2:13-15, 19-23

Joseph is the quiet hero in the Christmas story. Mary's husband was a righteous man who faithfully sacrificed and obeyed in the face of suffering and great peril. No doubt Joseph was also the recipient of village gossip, condemning whispers, and family's questioning. Whatever Joseph's life plan was, it was side-barred, and he spent the first several years of Jesus' life living as a political refugee in a foreign land to protect the boy's life. Mary received the calling to carry Jesus, but Joseph received the calling to care for Mary and Jesus.

Joseph's sacrificial faithfulness typifies the generous nature of love. Love quietly, persistently, and sacrificially gives of itself for the good of another. The Heavenly Father demonstrates His love in the same way: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."* (John 3:16). In love, God gave Jesus.

When the Father sent the Son to take on human form and then be crushed in humanity's place, God was making a statement about His love.

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:9-10

God's love is so great and generous that while we did not love Him, He loved us first and sent His Son to pay for our sin. This sacrificing love is not merely a characteristic of God but is His very essence: *"God is love."* (1 John 4:8). There is no greater treasure or assurance than being loved by God.

Since God's nature is sacrificial love, we, who are being transformed into His image, are called into that same love. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11)."

While love sounds nice on Christmas cards, in real life it's inconvenient and messy. To love another person sacrificially means it will cost us something. It will use up our time. It will spend our money. It will side-bar our plans as we care for the good of someone else. Sacrificial love means listening more than speaking, giving more than receiving, and responding to evil with good. This is the nature of the love of the Father who gave His Son. It is the nature of the love of the Son who laid down His life. And it is the pattern set out for us, the beloved of God.

In a world primarily occupied with self-love, a community of people occupied with loving others is beautifully peculiar. The gospel of Jesus is a message of unprecedented love. And Jesus' followers, the church, are the ones now manifesting the love of God in the world.

John, the Beloved disciple, received a vision of Christ's return in Revelation. At the end of that vision, after war ceases and death dies, he sees a wedding. A wedding is a powerful image of holy, loyal, and eager love. This is the kind of love Christ has for us and the love that will be revealed to us at His second coming. This love is like a groom who has longed for his bride and a bride who waited for her groom. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said: *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."* (John 14:3). And speaking of those who would believe in Him later, *"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world"* (John 17:24).

The coming of the kingdom of God will be a like a jubilant wedding with a rejoicing groom and a victorious, shining bride who have longed to be with each other forever. Jesus is eager for that day. Jesus is waiting and anticipating the day when He will dwell with His people fully. And we, His people, wait with longing like a bride praying “Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus.”

LOVE QUIETLY, PERSISTENTLY,
AND SACRIFICIALLY
GIVES OF ITSELF
FOR THE GOOD OF ANOTHER.

THINK

- What are the top 3 ways you've experienced God's love lately?
- Do you see God as self-sacrificing? Why or why not?
- Where is God calling you to inconvenient, self-sacrificing love with others?

SING

- *O Holy Night*

PRAY

- As we light this candle of love, we remember, God, you *are* Love, and in love Jesus was sent and sacrificed; now You send us in love to sacrifice.

PRACTICE

- Pay for someone's coffee, gas, groceries, or meal anonymously this week.





Christ, One Worth *Waiting* For

WEEK FIVE | LUKE 2:21-38



At Jesus' first coming, only a small handful of people were granted clarity about who they were waiting on.

Zechariah, after the birth of John, proclaims the One coming is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, the Sunrise from on high, and the One who will guide Israel's feet into peace. Elizabeth knew the baby in Mary's womb was Lord. Mary knew this miracle was God's remembrance of Israel and the One whose coming meant the humbling of all exalted rulers. Simeon saw the infant Jesus and proclaimed that this baby was the salvation of God, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of all His people. Anna saw the newborn and believed He was the redemption of Jerusalem.

Perhaps no one saw Jesus so clearly as John the Baptist. If Jesus is the Anticipated and Coming One, John is the looking, waiting, and preparing one. John knew Jesus was greater than him because Jesus existed before him, and the One who baptized with the Spirit and the Lamb of God. John's entire existence centered around this One who would come.

What one person could carry all this anticipation and expectation? What person could fulfill centuries of hoping, groaning, and prophesying? Is there any one person who could fulfill all these expectations? No one but Jesus, our great hope, peace, joy, and love.

Jesus is our hope, sent by God against all odds. In the darkness and in our unfaithfulness, He is our light and life. He is our confidence that God will bring about good. He is our assurance that all hope in Him is well placed, no matter the circumstance.

Jesus, our Prince of Peace, who resolved the greatest conflict ever known by ending the separation from and hostility with our Creator. He is the emissary who surrendered His rights, sacrificed Himself for the wrongs of His enemies, came back from the dead and offered those enemies terms of peace in His name.

Jesus, our joy, the satisfier of our souls. He is the One whose life was poured out like wine and broken like bread to feed those who have no life in themselves. In His presence is fullness of joy. For us, joy is not a feeling. It's a person.

Jesus is the full expression of God's love for us. Jesus showed us God's love in that although we did not love Him, God loved us and sent Jesus to pay for our sin. In Jesus we see the true nature of God is love.

Jesus does more than bring us hope, peace, joy, and love. He Himself is our Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

In this Advent season we are reminded that when God responded to our hopeless longing, our violent rebellions, our despairing hunger, and our hardened selfish hearts – He sent a warm, loving, tender, sacrificial person to relate to us. In the truest sense of the meaning, God's response to our problems was personal.

It was at the cross and in the resurrection that Jesus' identity was put on full display. His atoning death showed He was the lamb provided by God and the sacrificial servant who brings redemption. His victorious resurrection showed He was God, more powerful than sin and death, and now He has the power and authority to raise anyone who would believe in Him.





Now we are the ones who have been given remarkable clarity about the One who came from heaven and is coming again. We are now like Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna, and John – proclaiming the great Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of Jesus Christ, the reason we celebrate Advent. We are now the waiting ones whose lives are shaped around His future coming. In the wilderness of this age, we are the voices calling out “Repent, the kingdom of Our Lord and His Christ is coming!”

As we live between the Advents, we remember the promises purchased in the past, and we rehearse the fulfillment of all promises in the future. We remember that Jesus already secured our hope, won our peace, is our joy, and loves us sacrificially. We rehearse the “not yet”, where every hope will be fulfilled, every enemy thrown down, every joy amplified, every sorrow comforted, and all love unveiled.

In the “already, not yet”, we heed the words of Jesus’ friend and disciple, Peter, who wrote:

“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation.” 2 Peter 3:11-15

May we live between these Advents, waiting and hastening His coming, looking to the new heavens and earth where Righteousness dwells with us. Amen, come, Jesus, come.



As we live between
the Advents, *we remember*
the promises purchased
in the past and *we rehearse*
the fulfillment of all promises
in the future.

THINK

- Think about your salvation. How did God bring you to embrace Jesus and become follower of Jesus?
- What's one way God has been revealing Himself to you in this Advent season?
- What's one practical way you can live as someone getting ready for Jesus to come back?

SING

- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

PRAY

- As we light this last candle, we proclaim you, Jesus, are our hope, peace, joy, and love. Come quickly, Jesus, come quickly.

PRACTICE

- Journal attributes or names of God and how you've experienced Him in these ways in your life.



Families With *Younger* Kids Appendix

HOPE

Questions

- When's the last time you had to wait for something? How did it feel?
- Have you ever hoped for something but then were disappointed?
- When Jesus comes again He is going to make all things new, all sicknesses go away and nothing dies! What's something you're excited to have or never have when Jesus comes back? Use your imagination! Do you want to fly? Have a pet leopard? Eat only dessert?!

Activities

- Bake something that smells amazing like frozen dinner rolls or premade cookie dough and as the smell grows read your lesson and talk about how hard it is to wait on something that smells so good!
- Light one candle and turn off the lights in your house, notice how the darkness seems to make the light even brighter! Thank Jesus for being the hope in the darkness!

PEACE

Questions

- When do you feel anxious, worried or afraid?
- Have you ever thought about Jesus as a King who is coming to conquer the world? What kind of King do you think He is?
- Do you know anyone who doesn't know Jesus? How could you tell them about Jesus?

Activities

- Buy a gift for someone in your life who needs to know Jesus and use this gift to share how God gave the greatest gift of His Son, Jesus for you and for them.
- Draw a picture of what you think Jesus will look like as a King ruling everything.

JOY

Questions

- What are your favorite foods? How do they taste, how do they make you feel? Did you know Jesus wants you to enjoy Him like good food?!
- Does Jesus seem serious to you or fun? Do you think He's joyful?
- What's something in your life that is hard right now? Can you picture Jesus being with you in it? How does that make you feel that Jesus is with you?

Activities

- Share or write 3 things that made you joyful today and take time to thank God for giving all these things!
- Take time to do one thing you enjoy as a family: a movie, board games, or playing outside. Enjoy it, soak it in and together take time to acknowledge and thank God for His enjoyment of your family and your time together.

LOVE

Questions

- How do you know your parents love you? How do you know God loves you?
- When is it hard to love other people?
- Can you think of ways you can show love to your family?

Activities

- Pay for someone's coffee, gas, groceries, or meal while out as a family.
- As you wrap gifts this season, make a few from Jesus.

CHRIST

Questions

- What did you feel about preparing for Christmas? Was it exciting, difficult, boring? What do you think it would look like for us to prepare for Jesus coming back?
- What is one question you'd like to ask Jesus when He comes back?
- What is one thing you're looking forward to at Jesus' return?

Activities

- In anything you're preparing for Christmas like wrapping gifts, decorating the house, cleaning up, involve your kids in preparation. While preparing or after, ask them about what it felt like to prepare for what was coming.
- Create ornaments or a paper chain garland with names and characteristics of God.





a special thank you

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