

# EASTER ADVENT ACTIVITY

A simple, one-week family devotional to prepare for Easter.

Set aside 5-10 minutes every day of Holy Week to do these devotions as a family. Each devotion will include a picture to add to the cross, a candle lighting (optional), a brief reading, and time of prayer.

## Calendar:

Sunday, April 2	Creation (Together at Family Fusion)
Monday, April 3	Sin Enters the World
Tuesday, April 4	Offerings Are Not Good Enough...God Gives Us a New Heart
Wednesday, April 5	God's Law
Thursday, April 6	The Word Becomes Flesh (Jesus is Born)
Friday, April 7	Jesus Dies on the Cross
Saturday, April 8	
OR Sunday, April 9	EASTER! Resurrection...Jesus is Alive

## Preparation:

- **Set a time and location to meet** (example: dining room table or living room). Having a routine will help you be more successful and consistent. If you miss a day, don't quit. Quickly cover the missed picture the next day.
- **Read each devotion at least once before reading with your family.** This will help you to read the devotion with more emotion and less hesitation with your family.
- **Cut out the cross and all 7 pictures.**
- **Gather 6 candles** (birthday candles, tea lights, or bath candles). This visual is optional, but can add a lot to your devotional experience. If you don't have candles, substitute flashlights.

### Symbolism of the Six Candles:

- Light of the World - the Light that was God's glory and illuminated God for us—the Light that, in the end, seemed to have been darkened.
- As we move through the season preceding Easter, the candles are snuffed out one by one, until all are dark on Good Friday, when Jesus died, and the earth was covered with shadow. Darkness seemed to have won. The Light of the world had been extinguished; it was finished.
- But NO! Easter brings resurrection! Life! Return from death! The Light has won and all the candles burn as we praise Him—the Light of the world, the Bright Morning Star, the Glory of God!

# 1. CREATION

**Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Place #1 picture (globe) on cross**

**Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:3, John 1:1-5, Romans 1:18-25**

**6 candles lit before reading**



God created the universe---from galaxies to water spiders. He created the breeze that calms us, and the hurricane that terrifies us. God created everything to show us what He is like and to display His glory and personality.

Genesis tells us the story of creation from the very beginning:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...Then God looked over all He had made, and He saw that it was very good!...So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished His work of creation, so He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when He rested from all His work of creation.

We learn in the gospel of John that God was not the only one involved in creation! In this passage, Jesus is referred to as “the Word” because He is the spoken word of God in human form.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the Light of all mankind. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

But people have let themselves become blind to the truth. Some think creation happened by accident...as if it came into existence all on its own. Others even worship things that are created rather than God Himself. Romans explains that everyone knows about God because they can look at creation and see God’s handiwork, but not everyone gives God the credit:

They know the truth about God because He has made it obvious to them. Forever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they know God, but they wouldn’t worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

**(Have kids blow out one candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

The one thing we must never forget is that God has a plan. He is in control of everything. Remember what it said in John, “The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

**PRAY:** Thank you God for creating a world that shows us how great You are! Help us remember that Your son, Jesus, is the Light of the world.

## 2. SIN ENTERS THE WORLD

**Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Place #2 picture (tree) on cross**

**Scripture: Genesis 2:8-3:19, Romans 5:19**

**5 candles lit before reading**



God created people to give Him glory, and He created a perfect place for them—a place that reflected His glory. He gave them everything they could need or want for happiness.

BUT they listened to God’s enemy. They didn’t believe God’s gifts were good enough for them, so they turned their backs on God and lost their perfect place to live and their perfect relationship with God. Now, they were experiencing pain and death for the very first time.

In Genesis we learn about how sin first enters the world:

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her. And he ate.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman You put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

To the woman He said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children.” To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.”

**(Have kids blow out another candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

Even though Adam and Eve were disobedient and allowed sin to enter the world, praise God that Jesus was obedient and made a way for us to be right with God.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous.

**PRAY:** God, please forgive us for believing the lies of this world and thank you for providing a way to be forgiven from our sins.

# 3. OFFERINGS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH...

## GOD GIVES US A NEW HEART



**Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Place #4 picture (heart) on cross**

**Scripture: Jeremiah 7:21-24, Psalm 51:16-17, Ezekiel 36:24-28**

**4 candles lit before reading**

Even before the world was created, God knew that Jesus would be the Way, the Truth and the Life for all who believed in Him. But God didn't just ignore His people, waiting until the time came for Jesus.

He provided a temporary way to atone and cover their sins. If they offered sacrifices from a heart of worship, they could renew their relationship with God as they proved their reliance on Him.

But people did not rely on God. They did not follow His way of sacrifice and worship. And there was an even deeper problem. Many followed the outward ritual, but they did not trust God in their hearts. They didn't love Him, and they didn't live lives that reflected His glory.

Jeremiah was a messenger for God and he gave this message to the people of Israel:

*This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel says, "Take your burnt offerings and your other sacrifices and eat them yourselves! When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not burnt offerings and sacrifices I wanted from them. This is what I told them, 'Obey Me and I will be your God and you will be My people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well.' But My people would not listen to Me. They kept doing whatever they wanted, following the stubborn desires of their evil hearts."*

**(Have kids blow out another candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

Even though most of the Israelites did not understand what God really wanted from them, some DID get it. King David was one of those people. He understood that sacrifices weren't enough and wrote about it in one of his Psalms.

*You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

Even though God's own people refused to obey or listen to Him, God still had a plan for them. God loves us so much that He made a way to take our stubborn heart and make it new!

*For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put My spirit in you so that you will follow My decrees and be careful to obey My regulations. And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be My people and I will be your God.*

**PRAY:** Praise to God our Father! You are a loving and gracious God and You give us gifts that we do not deserve. Thank you for giving us a new heart and Your spirit to help us follow You.

# 4. GOD'S LAW

**Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Place #5 picture (tablets) on cross**

**Scripture: Psalm 19:7-11, Daniel 9:4-8, Galatians 3:23-24**

**3 candles lit before reading**



God wants people to be happy, but the only way we can be happy is by following His instructions. So He gave us His word, His written word, to make it very clear to us where our life comes from and how we can keep it. But again and again we think our ideas are better than God's. And we choose sin and death over obedience and life.

Psalm 19 tells us how the law is good:

The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul.  
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.  
The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.  
The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living.  
Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever.  
The laws of the LORD are true, each one is fair.  
They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold.  
They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.  
They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.

Daniel recognized that the nation of Israel had wronged God by not following the law that God had given them, but he knew that God loved them by giving rules for them to live by.

O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill Your covenant and keep Your promises of unfailing love to those who love You and obey Your commands. But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against You and scorned Your commands and regulations. We have refused to listen to Your servants the prophets, who spoke on Your authority to our kings and princes and ancestors and to all the people of the land. LORD, You are in the right; but as You see, our faces are covered with shame...because of our disloyalty to You.

**(Have kids blow out another candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

The Law is a mysterious thing. It was given for our benefit, but it causes us to fail. So why then did God give us the law?

The purpose of the Law is to show us what is right and what is wrong. Once we understand the difference, we begin to see just how far from perfect we really are. We find ourselves frustrated and desperate. It is impossible for anyone to obey ALL the law! This brings us to the benefit of the law...it points us to Jesus, and we see our need for a savior!

...before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

**PRAY:** Lord, we know that Your law is good and perfect, but we also know that we cannot keep it on our own. Thank You for sending Your son to help us obey Your word.

# 5. THE WORD BECAME FLESH (JESUS IS BORN)



**Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Place #6 picture (manger) on cross**

**Scripture: Luke 2:6-7, Isaiah 53:3, Mark 10:32-32, Philippians 2:7-10**

**2 candles lit before reading**

God made sure that we could understand who He is, what He is like and what He wants for us and from us. He did this by sending His son, Jesus. Now we don't just have the written word, we have the Living Word—a real person. When Jesus was born to Mary, people were seeing God in the flesh for the very first time.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Even though Jesus' birth signaled the arrival of the Savior that was promised all through the Old Testament, not everyone believed He was the Messiah. In Isaiah, we learn that people hated Him and rejected His message from God:

He was despised and rejected—  
A man of sorrows acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our back on Him and looked the other way.  
He was despised and we did not care.

But Jesus knew what the future held for Him...Jesus knew that He was born to die.

And taking the twelve again, He began to tell them what was to happen to Him, saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him."

**(Have kids blow out another candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

Even though Jesus had a place in heaven, right beside God, He willingly came to earth as a man and laid down His life in order to pay the price for the sins of the world.

He (Jesus) gave up His divine privileges. He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being when He appeared in human form. He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

**PRAY:** Thank you, Jesus for giving up all the riches in heaven in order to become a man and take the punishment for sin that we deserve.

## 6. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

**Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Place #7 picture (cross) on cross**

**Scripture: Mark 15:22-24, John 19:28-30, Acts 7:51-53,**

**Isaiah 53:4-6, Romans 5:8, John 3:16**

**1 candle lit before reading**



The day Jesus died was the darkest day in history. The Son of God Himself was killed by people who weren't satisfied simply to reject Him: they hated Him so much that they wanted to kill Him. They thought killing Him would solve their problem.

They brought Him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), and they crucified Him.

Jesus had come, not only to fulfill the scriptures and the prophecies about His death, but also to complete the work of God and to provide the payment for sin, once and for all.

John records Jesus' last words...

Later, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scriptures come true He said, "I am thirsty." There was a jar full of sour wine there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' mouth. When He tasted the wine, He said, "It is finished." Then He bowed His head and died.

Even though Jesus' death makes us sad, we must understand that God was still in control. This was all part of His plan. In the book of Acts, many Christians were being persecuted for speaking about Jesus...but they made it clear to everyone that Jesus' death was all part of God's plan.

Hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

**(Have kids blow out the last candle. Do not light again until Easter.)**

Jesus' death wasn't like any other. He was perfect and He didn't deserve to die, but His death was necessary to accomplish God's plan. His death paid the price for sin and provided a way for us to be made right with God.

Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

One of God's greatest desires for us is that we understand just how much He loves us.

But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

**PRAY:** Lord, we pray that You will help us understand just how much You love us and that You will fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise for all that You have done for us through Your son.



# 7. RESURRECTION... JESUS IS ALIVE

**Saturday OR Sunday, April 8-9<sup>th</sup>**

**Place #8 picture (empty tomb) on cross**

**Scripture Matthew 28:5-6, Colossians 1:15-23, 1 Peter 1:3-4**

**Begin with NO candles lit before reading**



HE IS ALIVE! DEATH HAS BEEN DEFEATED! God—the Creator of the universe and the One who controls all things, has demonstrated His mighty power in raising Jesus from death to life. The true glory of God shines in the world. The Light has overcome the darkness!

**(Light all 6 candles.)**

Jesus is no longer dead, He has risen!

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen as He said. Come see the place where He lay.”

God’s power and glory were on full display when He raised Jesus from the dead. Now we no longer have to be afraid because Satan is defeated and death has lost its power. Jesus takes His rightful place beside God as firstborn over all creation.

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else and He holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything. For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through Him, God reconciled everything to Himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.

1 Peter tells us that because of Jesus’ great sacrifice we can look forward to living in heaven with God if we believe in Him as our Savior!

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

**PRAY:** God, how great and powerful you are! Thank You for bringing Your son back to life and defeating sin and death.