



# Advent for FAMILIES

**TEEN EDITION**

A FOUR-WEEK GUIDE  
TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS





This Advent resource was created to help you celebrate the season of Advent with your teenagers. Whether you've observed Advent before or it's the first time you've participated, we hope this guide encourages your family as you focus on His coming this Christmas.

The season of Advent lasts for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. At the beginning of each week, we invite you to unpack one of the four themes (hope, joy, peace, and love) using Scripture as a guide, then take time throughout the week to find ways to continue the conversation with those in your household.

We break down each week into five areas to help you create custom family experiences this Christmas season:

1. **DISCUSS** – Questions to help you explore the week's theme.
2. **EXPERIENCE** – Ideas to help you discover ways that hope, joy, peace, and love are manifested in everyday life.
3. **REFLECT** – Relevant Scripture and questions to help you ponder applications for your family.
4. **PRAY** – Encouragement to help you hear from God and walk in obedience.
5. **GIVE** – Ideas to consider how you might serve, love, and give to those around you each week.

#### HELPFUL TIPS

1. **Make the most of your time.** This is a busy time of year. Decide the best time and place for your family to share this experience. Consider journaling your family's experiences and responses each week to help guide conversations and create a record of your Advent season.
2. **Be yourself.** Your children are more likely to engage when you're authentic and available to them.
3. **Have fun!** Keep it simple. Explore your family's creativity. If you're unable to find ways to enjoy it, chances are your kids won't either!
4. **Pray together.** Invite God into your family's journey this month.
5. **Don't doubt the power of God's Word!** Be sure to read Scripture together.



# What is Advent?



Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming; arrival.” In the New Testament, *Advent* is the term used for the coming of the Messiah. Today, the season of Advent for Christians is the celebration and anticipation of the “coming of Christ.”

People celebrate and anticipate Christ from three different perspectives. First is the physical nativity in Bethlehem (the birth of Jesus). Second is the acceptance of Christ in the life of the believer (our salvation). Third is the Second Coming (the return of Christ). And as they enjoy these truths, they dwell upon themes like hope, joy, peace, and love during this time of year.

## HOW DO WE CELEBRATE AND ANTICIPATE?

Christians observe Advent in a variety of ways:

- **STUDY** the Scripture to discover how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and recount all the promises of God found in the Bible.
- **WORSHIP** God in what they say and how they live. The glory of God is described in the songs we sing but is also displayed by the sacrificial love we show others.
- **DISPLAY** the symbols of His coming (lights, colors, life) and the reasons to celebrate the promised Messiah and risen King!



WEEK 1

# Hope



## WHAT IS HOPE?

Webster's definition: to cherish a desire with anticipation; to want something to happen or be true; to desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers—  
That perches in the soul—  
And sings the tune without the words—  
And never stops—at all."

*(Emily Dickinson's poem, "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers")*

## HOPE IN SCRIPTURE

In the Bible, we find that hope is more than just optimism and positive vibes. It's complete trust in The One Who has fulfilled every promise we see in Scripture. This trust both (1) fuels confident expectation that God will do what He says He will do and (2) increases our awareness of His presence and activity in our everyday lives.

**Psalms 62:5-8** - 5 Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from him. 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will not be shaken. 7 My salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock. My refuge is in God. 8 Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before him. God is our refuge. Selah

**Hebrews 11:1** - "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen."

**Romans 8:23-25** - "23 Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 Now, in this hope, we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? 25 Now, if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience."

*Note: All Scripture references are from the Christian Standard Bible.*

**Abraham** – did not doubt God's ability to provide, even when God asked him to sacrifice his only son Isaac. (Look up Genesis 22:5-14.)

**Job** - chose to hope instead of despair, even after facing great loss and his peers' judgment and criticism. (Look up Job 13:15.)

**Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego** – chose to serve God despite persecution. (Look up Daniel 3:16-18.)

## DISCUSS

- Describe the difference between hope and faith. (For example, hope may refer to a desire or confidence, whereas faith is a demonstration of trust)
- Can you experience hope without demonstrating it? Can you possess faith without demonstrating it?
- How does your faith in Christ strengthen the hope you possess?
- Describe a time when you were tempted to lose hope or give in to fear this year.
- In what ways have you and those in your



household demonstrated HOPE throughout this year?

## EXPERIENCE HOPE

### Listen and Watch

#### Songs

- Hope for Everyone by Matt Maher
- I Smile by Kirk Franklin
- Lean On Me by Bill Withers
- Smile by Nat King Cole
- The Hope of Christmas by Matthew West

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was hope described or displayed in this song?
2. Which lyrics described challenges to maintaining hope?
3. Who/what was the source of hope?

#### Movies

- The Pursuit of Happyness (2006)
- It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
- Dolphin Tale (2011)
- Finding Nemo (2003)

#### 1. Questions to Ask

2. How was hope described or displayed in this movie?
3. Which characters or circumstances presented challenges to maintaining hope?
4. Who/what was the source of hope?

### See and Do

**Top 10 List** Work together to create a list of ten reasons you have hope (or should have hope) this season. (Examples: because of what prior experiences have taught us, God's promises of what's to come, the commitment our family shares, etc.)

**Identify** individuals or organizations that may be facing difficult times. Pray for them by name. Need ideas? Ask a church leader or simply pray for the school or community center nearest you. Consider how God might use you as a source of encouragement.

## READ SCRIPTURE

"But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they

will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

"God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

"You will be confident, because there is hope. You will look carefully about and lie down in safety." (Job 11:18)

"Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; I wait for you all day long." (Psalm 25:5)

"Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God." (Psalm 42:5)

## REFLECT

- How does your life demonstrate hope in Christ?
- In what ways can Scripture transform the way we think and live with hope?
- Are there any areas of your life causing you to lose hope? Write them down. Ask God to help you walk with confidence, knowing that He's near and able to provide for your needs.

## PRAY

- Invite God into the areas where you are fearful and anxious.
- Ask Him to strengthen your faith and trust in Him to provide the hope you need to persevere.
- Pray: *"Lord, help us look to you as our source of hope in every season of life. When we are discouraged, may we rest in you. When tempted to doubt you, help us to trust in you. We look to your Word to guide us, your Spirit to fill us, and your hands to hold us as we walk by faith that you will never let us down."*

## GIVE

- Identify people that are currently struggling to have hope in your community.
- What could be the main reason they are hurting right now? How could you encourage them this week?
- Find a family in need of hope and help them with gifts for their children (you might ask a local school or church for names and suggestions).



## WEEK 2

# Joy



### WHAT IS JOY?

Webster's definition: a feeling or state of well-being and contentment. A source of great satisfaction.

*Happiness is an emotion, and joy is an attitude. Emotions come and go, but attitudes come and grow." (Robert J. Morgan)*

### JOY IN SCRIPTURE

In Scripture, we discover the only path to experiencing real and lasting joy is by trusting Jesus Christ. Only through God's Son can we receive the security and strength to possess unshakeable joy throughout all of life's ups and downs.

Psalm 33:21- "For our hearts rejoice in him because we trust in his holy name."

Psalm 68:3- "But the righteous are glad; they rejoice before God and celebrate with joy."

Romans 15:13- "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The Apostle Paul – wrote a letter to the Philippians from his prison cell after facing persecution for his faith in Christ. (Look up Philippians 4:11-13.)

The Apostle Peter – encouraged fellow believers when facing difficult circumstances by writing. (Look up 1 Peter 1:6-9.)

### DISCUSS

- Describe a time when you were tempted to lose joy or give in to frustration this year.
- In what ways have you and those in your household displayed joy throughout this year?

- How does your faith in Christ strengthen the joy you possess?

### EXPERIENCE JOY

#### Listen and Watch

#### Songs

- Don't Worry Be Happy by Bobby McFerrin
- Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy) by Chris Tomlin
- Walking On Sunshine by Katrina & The Waves
- Wanna Be Happy by Kirk Franklin
- What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was joy described or displayed in this song?
2. Which lyrics described challenges to maintaining joy?
3. Who/what was the source of joy?

#### Movies

- Elf (2003)
- Inside Out (2015)
- Mary Poppins (1964 & 2018)

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was joy described or displayed in this movie?
2. Which characters or circumstances presented challenges to maintaining joy?
3. Who/what was the source of joy?



## See and Do

**Game:** Ready, Set, Draw! Draw a picture (or find one in an album) of someone who has brought joy to your life this year. Take turns describing how that person provides joy whenever you see them. What do you think allows them to demonstrate joy the way that they do?

**Rewind:** Take turns sharing the moments that brought you the most joy this year. Find a photo or recreate the scene to help you share it.

## READ SCRIPTURE

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4)

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (James 1:2-3)

"Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer." (Romans 12:12)

"A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones." (Proverbs 17:22)

"Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises." (James 5:13)

But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people..." (Luke 2:10)

"Rejoice always, 17 pray constantly, 18 give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

"Shout for joy, you heavens! Earth, rejoice! Mountains break into joyful shouts! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted ones." (Isaiah 49:13)

## REFLECT

- How does your life demonstrate joy in Christ?
- Journal a few reasons you're grateful this Christmas. Write down the first five reasons that come to your mind. Choosing gratitude enhances our joy.
- Are there any areas of your life causing you to lose joy? Write them down. Ask God to help you walk with joy that is rooted in Him.

## PRAY

- Invite God into the areas where you may be frustrated, unhappy, or lack contentment.
- Ask Him to remind you of all that He's provided for you through Jesus. Thank God for the security you have in Him.
- Pray for those around you and in your community who may feel a lack of joy this season.
- Pray: *"God, thank you for all that you've provided for us through your Son Jesus. We ask for your help whenever we face hard times and challenges that tempt us to lose our joy. Remind us how faithful you have been. Make us mindful of your presence in every moment so that our joy may be contagious to everyone we encounter this week."*

## GIVE

- Think of three people you can thank for the way they have encouraged you this year. Whether it's a card, email, phone call, or text message – be sure to describe the specific way they have impacted your life.



## WEEK 3

# Peace



### WHAT IS PEACE?

Webster's definition: A state of tranquility or quiet: such as freedom from civil disturbance 2. Harmony in personal relations.

"The peace of God is that eternal calm which lies far too deep in the praying, trusting soul to be reached by any external disturbances." (A. T. Pierson)

### PEACE IN SCRIPTURE

Through Scripture, we understand that we'll never have peace on this earth until we first are reconciled to God. Only through reconciliation with God the Father through Christ the Son can we experience peace with others in this life. As we experience God's forgiveness and unconditional love, we can extend this same grace and compassion to those all around us.

John 16:33: "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful."

Ephesians 2: 14-18: 14 "For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh, 15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death.[a] 17 He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."

**Jesus** – As Peter described, Jesus became the ultimate peacemaker between God and man. (Look up 1 Peter 2:24.)

**Joseph** – Although sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph understood God's purposes and plans, and chose to forgive instead of remaining bitter. (Look up Genesis 45:4-8.)

**Jonathan** - The son of King Saul and best friend of young David, Jonathan sought to make peace between his jealous and angry father and the future King of Israel, David. (Look up 1 Samuel 19:6-7.)

**Paul** – Known originally as Saul, Paul went from persecuting and killing Christians to becoming the first great missionary because He witnessed and experienced firsthand the reconciliation of God through His Son Jesus. (Look up 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 and Galatians 3:27-29.)



### DISCUSS

- Describe an occasion when you lacked peace this year. Were you able to find a resolution or direction? If so, how?
- In what ways have you and those in your household displayed peace throughout this year?
- How does your faith in Christ strengthen the peace you possess?



## EXPERIENCE PEACE

### Listen and Watch

#### Songs

- Even If You Don't by Mercy Me
- I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day by Casting Crowns
- Peace by Bethel
- Peace Be Still by Lauren Daigle & The Belonging Co
- Peace Has Come by Hillsong Worship

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was peace described or displayed in this song?
2. Which lyrics described challenges to maintaining peace?
3. Who/what was the source of peace?

#### Movies

- Secondhand Lions (2003)
- Pocahontas (1995)
- Jungle Book (1995)
- Peace on Earth (1938 short)

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was peace described or displayed in this movie?
2. Which characters or circumstances presented challenges to maintaining peace?
3. Who/what was the source of peace?

### See and Do

**Languages:** "How do you say 'PEACE'?" Learn how to say "peace" in different languages and consider how peace might be displayed in other cultures and communities. (Examples: families around a dinner table, absence of civil conflict/war, benevolent work, etc.)

**Craft:** Handprint Christmas Peace Dove Art. This is a great exercise if you have little ones and teens in your home. Materials Needed:

- Paper Plates
- Hole Puncher
- Markers
- Scissors

- White Paper
- Stickers
- Paint, Crayons, or Markers
- Pipe Cleaners
- Glue Sticks
- Construction Paper

#### Directions:

1. Paint or color the paper plates.
2. Trace your hand onto a sheet of white paper. Cut it out.
3. Use a glue stick to glue the handprint onto the plate.
4. Use a marker and add details.
5. Cut out a small beak from orange construction paper and then glue it in place.
6. Use stickers or construction paper to add in extra details.
7. Punch your paper plate twice.
8. Use a pipe cleaner to create a small hanger for your paper plate dove art!

### READ SCRIPTURE

"You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you." (Isaiah 26:3)

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

### REFLECT

- How does your life demonstrate peace in Christ?
- In what ways can Scripture transform the way we think and live with peace in a world full of conflict and chaos?
- Are there any areas of life where you lack clarity? Are there any current relationships in conflict? Write them down. Ask God to enlighten you with anything He wants you to do to experience understanding, restoration, and direction.



## PRAY

- Invite God into any conflicts you are facing, decisions where you lack direction or feel anxiety, or relationships that need restoration.
- Ask Him to purify your heart and motives and fix your eyes on Jesus as the source of peace and healing. Seek God's wisdom for the next steps to take.
- Take a moment to pray for someone (or group) that is lacking peace this season.
- Pray: *"Lord, we know that in this fallen world we will experience trouble and that life will not always be free from conflict. We are imperfect people living in a broken world. As we face division or lack direction, we trust You to be our source of unity and clarity. May we be the peacemakers you call us to be, so that others might see You in us."*

## GIVE

- Provide a family with the peace of knowing they have food for their next meal. Identify a family to encourage by providing a meal or gift cards to a local grocery store.
- Identify someone currently struggling with a specific conflict or decision. Consider one creative way you could bring light into their life.
- Is there a relationship in conflict you have yet to surrender to God or seek His help? Have you sought/offered forgiveness where needed?



## WEEK 4

# Love



### WHAT IS LOVE?

Webster's definition: (1) strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties; (2) affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests.

"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." (Martin Luther King Jr.).

### LOVE IN SCRIPTURE

Jesus is the very embodiment of love. By studying Scripture and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we learn to follow His example in every area of our lives.

Romans 5:8- But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 "4 Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, 5 is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. 6 Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Jesus: "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another" (John 13:34)

**Hosea** – God called this prophet to love an adulterous woman (Gomer was a prostitute) as a demonstration of how God relentlessly pursues His people (Israel) despite their sin. (Look up Hosea 3:1.)

**Stephen** – Even while being stoned to death, Stephen did not retreat from persecution or look to retaliate against those attacking him. As a result, He saw Jesus stand and call him home. (Look up Acts 7:54-58.)

**Jesus** – As He was being crucified, Jesus prayed for those executing and mocking Him. (Look up Luke 23:33-34.)

### DISCUSS

- Recall an occasion when you felt loved over the last year. What made this so memorable and impactful?
- Take turns completing the following statement: "I feel most loved when..."
- In what ways have you and those in your household displayed love throughout this year?

### EXPERIENCE LOVE

#### Listen & Watch

#### Songs

- At the Cross (Love Ran Red) by Chris Tomlin
- Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me) by Casting Crowns
- How He Loves by David Crowder Band
- Love Has a Name by Jesus Culture
- Love Theory by Kirk Franklin

#### Questions to Ask

1. How was love described or displayed in this song?
2. Which lyrics described obstacles one might face to love people?
3. Who/what was the source of love?



## Movies

- Amazing Grace (2007)
- The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe (2005)
- It's a Wonderful Life (1947)
- Up (2009)
- Woodlawn (2015)

## Questions to Ask

1. How was love described or displayed in this movie?
2. Which characters or circumstances presented challenges to experiencing love?
3. Who/what was the source of love?

## See and Do

**Game:** "In This House" – Set a timer and challenge everyone to search your home to find items that symbolize love. When the time is up, have everyone return and share their responses to the following questions:

- How does this item symbolize love?
- In what ways does this item illustrate how we show or share love in this house?

**Send a Card:** Click here to download "God's Love Verse Cards." Print and cut out the cards. Identify a few people that would appreciate a reminder of how much God loves them. You can place it in an envelope and send it by mail, or simply deliver it in person.

## READ SCRIPTURE

"7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7-8)

"For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same?" (Matthew 5:46)

"18 There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, 'I love God,' and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:18-20)

## REFLECT

- How does your faith in Christ strengthen the love you both experience and extend to others?
- How does your life demonstrate Christlike love?
- In what ways can Scripture transform the way we think about love?

## PRAY

- Thank God for His unconditional love and grace available to you through Jesus.
- Ask Him to reveal to you how to love others like Jesus – both the lovable and those hard to love.
- Pray: *"God, we thank you for the amazing grace and love we experience through Jesus. Help us understand the depths of your love so that we never doubt where we stand with you. Create in us the willingness to love without agendas and conditions. May our lives on this earth reflect the love we've received from our Father above."*

## GIVE

Taking a cue from the 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman, here are a few suggestions to demonstrate love to others this week:

- **Physical Touch:** Who needs a tangible expression of love from you this week?
- **Words of Affirmation:** Identify three people that need to hear from you. Share with them why you love them.
- **Quality Time:** Consider one person who would appreciate the chance to connect with you this week (over coffee, over the phone, or by any means possible).
- **Gifts:** How can you demonstrate God's love to someone who has never heard it? Is there a gift that you could offer to illustrate or demonstrate it for that individual?
- **Acts of Service:** Think of one way you can serve those in your household this week. Identify one way you can serve those in your neighborhood this month. Consider one way you can serve those in your church.

*Note: We tend to show and share love in ways that speak primarily to us. Take time to ask others how they feel loved. Then consider various ways to assure them of your love this month.*