



# Family

## ADVENT GUIDE

### 2023

During Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and thank God for the gifts of hope, love, joy, and peace.

This guide has a weekly activity and prayer to help your family in getting ready for Christmas.

Making an Advent wreath can assist your family to learn about the season while building Christ-focused anticipation for Christmas in a simple, peaceful way.

May your advent be full of the joy and peace of Christ this year!



# The Advent Wreath



**Advent wreaths** consist of a circle of evergreen branches, the evergreens signify continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God. Four candles are placed into the wreath, representing the four weeks of Advent. Ideally, three candles are purple and one is rose, but white candles with purple and pink ribbon can also be used.

**The purple candles** symbolise the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. Purple also signifies the 'royalty' of Jesus Christ.

**The rose candle** is lit on the third Sunday. The third Sunday is known as Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word meaning 'rejoice ye'. It is a pause in the penitential spirit of Advent. As such, the third candle, representing joy, is often a different colour from the other three.

**The light of the candles** reminds us that Jesus comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life and hope. We gradually add more light each Sunday until Christ, our Light, comes at Christmas.

**The tradition of lighting candles and praying** around an Advent Wreath offers families the perfect opportunity to pause and pray together. Through shared prayer and reflection, families encounter Jesus together while preparing their hearts for His coming. The Family Advent guide may be used at meal times or another time that suits your family.

**Let us pray for God's blessings upon us and upon the wreath.**

Lord our God, we praise and thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask for your blessing upon this wreath, may it be a reminder to us of the hope, love, joy and peace that Jesus brings into our family and the world. May we always remember the true meaning of Christmas and ask for your blessing in this time of preparation.

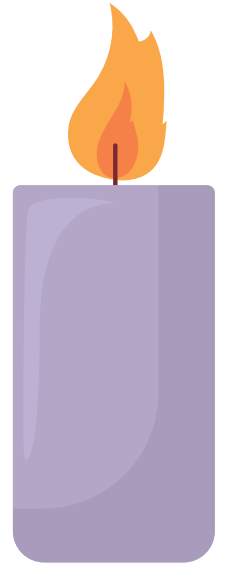
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



# WEEK 1 - HOPE

3 December 2023

“Look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration —“when I will fulfill the good promise that I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”—  
**Jeremiah 33:14**



## Look for hope

Hope is believing and longing for something and trusting that God will keep his promise. The kingdom of heaven and eternal life is promised to us. We trust in Christ and rely not on our own strength but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Hope and faith in Jesus helps us to live an authentic and holy life.

## Family activity - Christmas hope

On a large piece of paper, each family member draws what they are hoping for this Christmas.

Hint: not just presents but things far more important like peace, togetherness and growing closer to God.

## Reflection

1. What can we do in our family to build hope and faith in God?
2. How can our family share the story of Jesus' birth with our friends?

## Prayer

Jesus, as we wait for your coming, help us not to be afraid and to trust in you. As we light this candle, we remember that you bring the light of hope into our lives. We thank you for the gift of hope.

May Your word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

Amen.

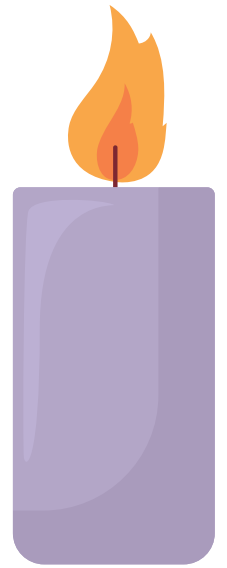


# WEEK 2 - LOVE

10 December 2023



**God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. —John 3:16**



## More than a word

Love is a word we use often. I love footy or I love ice-cream, but love is much more than like.

God loves us so much that he sent Baby Jesus to be born in a manger, knowing that one day he would die for us. This kind of love is more powerful than liking sport or food. God loves us unconditionally every day, now and forever.

## Family activity - Prayers of gratitude

Make a list of the many ways God shows His love to your family.

Gather a piece of paper and colouring pencils, fold the paper to make 4 boxes, in each box draw a picture of one way God shows his love for you and say a prayer of gratitude for each.

## Reflection

1. Who loves you unconditionally more than anyone else?
2. How can we as a family show love through service to others?

## Prayer

Jesus, John the Baptist told the people, “If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn’t have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.” As we light this candle, we remember that you bring the light of service into our lives. Help us to share Your love through service to others.

May Your word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

Amen.





# WEEK 3 - JOY

17 December 2023

**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: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”—Luke 2:10-11**



## Feel the joy

Joy is a feeling of inner gladness, delight or rejoicing. This inner gladness leads to a cheerful heart and a cheerful heart leads to cheerful behaviour. Joy is different to feeling happy. People and material things can bring happiness but joy comes from the Holy Spirit.

## Family activity - Spreading joy

As a family plan some ways that you can bring joy to someone else. You might like to make Christmas cards for relatives, bake biscuits for your neighbour, donate food items to Vinnies, or deliver a Christmas present for a sick child to your local children's ward.

## Reflection

1. Can you think of a time that our family experienced great joy?
2. How can we share the joy with others?

## Prayer

Jesus, we gather here as a family to dedicate our lives to you, as John the Baptist did. Help us to know, love, and serve you. As we light this candle, we remember that You bring the light of joy into our lives. Help us to bring joy to others. May Your word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. Amen.



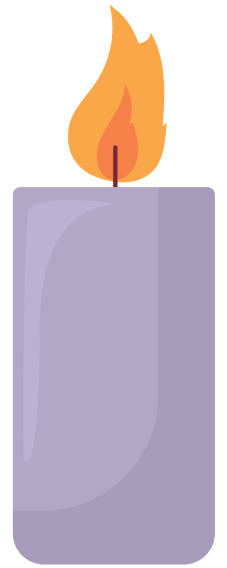


# WEEK 4 - PEACE



24 December 2023

**The Lord gives his people strength; the Lord  
blesses his people with peace.— Psalm 29:11**



## Jesus gives us peace

Peace is the feeling of being safe and secure. Children feel at peace wrapped in mum or dad's arms. Peace is trusting God to take care of our needs in any situation. God blessed the world by giving us his son Jesus, this allows us to have peace in our lives even in times of worry, fear and anxiety. Forgiveness brings us peace too because it draws us closer in our relationship with God.

## Family activity - My peace promise

Think about how you can be a peacemaker in your family. On a piece of paper, each family member writes their own 'peace promise' and then places it in the middle of the table. Say a prayer for each other, that you may keep your peace promise.

## Reflection

1. When do you feel safe, secure and at peace?
2. How can our family help others to feel at peace?

## Prayer

Jesus, your mother, Mary, is “blessed among women.” We are happy that she said “Yes!” to being your mother. As we light this candle, we remember that You bring the light of love and the gift of peace into our lives. Help us to forgive and to share Your peace with others.

May Your word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

Amen.





# CHRISTMAS DAY

25 December 2023



**As you read the scripture as a family, reflect on the first Christmas. Take time to focus on the true meaning. It really is something to celebrate - Merry Christmas!**

## The birth of Jesus

**Luke 2: 1-20**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment when Quirin'us was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child, and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*May God bless you today and fill your family  
with hope, love, joy and peace.*

