



# *Advent Guide*



# Advent Guide

Some inspiration for this resource was taken from  
The Village Church, *Advent Guide*  
[www.thevillagechurch.net](http://www.thevillagechurch.net)

All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the  
*English Standard Version (ESV)*, Crossway Bibles.

## **Matthew 1.21-23**

**“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus,  
for he will save his people from their sins.”**

**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord  
had spoken by the prophet:**

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”**

**(which means, God with us).**



# WHAT IS ADVENT?

## **Jesus has come and is coming.**

The first coming of Christ was long awaited by the people of Israel, having been foretold many times throughout their history. They waited for a savior who would rescue and restore them, and his anticipated coming was the hope of Israel.

Though his first coming was not as most of the Jews and their contemporaries expected, Jesus did come to rescue and restore. He came to save his people from their sins and restore them to God by his sacrificial death and resurrection. His death on the cross was the turning point in all of history, and he has saved a people for himself called the church. His birth, or his first coming, is what we celebrate at Christmas.

His second coming has yet to happen, but has been promised in Scripture. The church, the new people of God, wait with expectant longing for his final appearing, when he will conquer his enemies, put an end to all suffering and evil, and consummate his rule as king over all things.

Advent is from the Latin word meaning “arrival.” Advent is a season of anticipation and celebration of the coming of Christ. We remember the longing and expectancy that preceded his first coming, we celebrate because he came, and we look with anticipation toward his second coming. It is a season of jubilation and reflection, remembering and watching. It is a time to reflect on the fulfilled promises of God and look with faith, hope, and expectancy toward his sure fulfillment of more.

Advent officially begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues until Christmas Day. It is celebrated in a variety of ways from formal church services to families around the table. Whatever traditions and forms may be used, Advent is a season for the church to remember and celebrate the coming of her savior. It’s a season for the bride of Christ to look with longing expectancy toward the final coming of her groom.

## **Church, rejoice! Jesus has come and is coming!**

# USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to lead us together through the season of Advent. Its purpose is to remind us of the gospel, lead us to ponder and experience part of the expectant longing of Israel, and prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of Jesus, our Savior, with profound joy and hope.

## **Our Hope**

This guide is intended to help you and your family connect deeply with the celebration of Christmas, moving past the busyness and materialism that can easily distract us during the holidays. We also hope that walking through this season as a church family will lead to a stronger community and a deeper love for Jesus and the gospel.

## **A Word of Caution**

The holiday season can quickly become stressful and busy as many things compete for our time, money, energy, and ultimately our hearts. If we're not careful and intentional we can lose track of time, and, before we realize it, the holidays are over and we've missed the beauty and purpose of the season.

We encourage you to think through what you want this Advent season to be like for your family. What do you hope to cultivate in them? What things do you want them to remember? What traditions do you want to start? What things do you want them to value about the Christmas season? What plans do you need to make now to turn the focus to worshipping Jesus as we remember the gospel?

## **Plan Ahead**

To fully experience this season, we encourage you to read and plan ahead. Read through the family devotions beforehand and plan your time together. Be creative. Look for ways to engage others in your Missional Community or other friends, and look for ways to serve others. If you miss the Sunday messages, listen to the podcast.

## **Additional Resources**

We've included some additional resources at the back of this guide. Our hope is that they will be useful as you celebrate this season and will help you to remember the gospel and worship Jesus. One of the resources is a list of suggested activities to help you live on mission during this season. We encourage you to choose a few activities and intentionally find ways to engage and serve people as we experience the season together.

We look forward to this season in the life of Remedy Church. We pray God uses it profoundly.

# WEEKLY OUTLINE & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We have provided a family devotional and personal devotional for each week of Advent. The Sunday messages themselves will serve as guides for discussion in Missional Communities. We encourage you to use this guide, the messages from Sundays during Advent, and the additional resources to walk with your family and the Remedy family through this season.

## **Week 1: Promises**

God makes and keeps promises, and his greatest promise is a Redeemer who will save his people from their sins.

## **Week 2: Longing**

Israel waited with hopeful expectancy for their Rescuer, and as we remember and recount their longing, we identify with it and delight ourselves in Jesus.

## **Week 3: Anticipation**

Out of Israel's longing came anticipation, and John the Baptist personified that as the forerunner of Christ, the one who would "make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

## **Week 4: Arrival**

The one who made us has come to live with us, a Savior who is Christ the Lord, and this is good news of great joy for all the people.

## **Ways to Observe Advent**

## **Helpful Resources for the Season**

## **Advent Scriptures**

## **Ideas for Living On Mission this Advent Season**

# **Week 1: Promises**

## **Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus**

**Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free  
From our fears and sins release us  
Let us find our rest in Thee**

**Israel's strength and consolation  
Hope of all the earth Thou art  
Dear desire of every nation  
Joy of every longing heart**

**Born Thy people to deliver  
Born a child and yet a king  
Born to reign in us forever  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring**

**By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone  
By Thine own sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne**

WEEK 1:  
PROMISES  
NOV 30-DEC 6

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers --- it is to Him you shall listen. - Deuteronomy 18.15*

**Read Deuteronomy 18.15-18.** If possible, have a child read the passage above aloud to the family.

**Parents:** Our key point this week is: **God always keeps His promises!**

In this passage we see God speaking through Moses about a very important promise. Can someone find the promise from God in verse 18? God promised to send someone who would speak His words to us. God promised to put His words in this person's mouth.

Who could this person be? What do we know from God's word about someone God sent to us, who lived on earth among us, and spoke God's words to us?

Jesus is the one God sent. God kept His promise!

Can someone find a command from God in verse 15? Who should we listen to?

**Have someone else in the family read 2 Corinthians 1.20.** God always keeps His promises through His son, Jesus Christ!

**Activity:** Talk as a family about how you feel when someone makes a promise, but doesn't keep it. Ask each person in the family if they have ever broken a promise? We know, because of Jesus, that God is not like us. He is perfect and we can trust Him. He always keeps His promises.

Have each person write our key point, **God always keeps His promises**, on a blank sheet of paper with crayons. Have each person add their own decorative touch. Display each sheet of paper in prominent areas throughout your home. Use these sheets as a reinforcement and reminder during Advent that God always keeps His promises.

**Scripture Memory:** *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen. - Deuteronomy 18.15*

Have a different person in the family read this verse each night this week. Have fun practicing it together by using motions or singing it as a song.

**Pray:** Use each night this week to thank God that He keeps His promises. Thank Him for sending Jesus to us. Pray for your child(ren) specifically by name. Ask God to reveal Himself to them, and pray that they would repent of their sin and trust in Jesus

**Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.**

WEEK 1:  
PROMISES  
NOV 30-DEC 6

# PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL

Many people don't realize that the first announcement of Jesus' coming was not from an angel to Mary, Joseph, or the shepherds. In fact, it was not in the New Testament at all. The first announcement of the gospel, what is known as the proto evangelion, happened way back in the Garden of Eden, shortly after Adam and Eve had first brought sin into the world.

**Read Genesis 3.14-15.** Because of the serpent's role in causing Adam and Eve to sin, God promises his destruction. He addresses him before Adam and Eve and says that one will come from their line who will crush his head. We now know this to be Jesus, and that coming is what we anticipate and celebrate during Advent, but think for a moment about this scene.

The serpent tempts Adam and Eve with the fruit that God had forbidden them to eat, they buy his lies and eat the fruit, and they are immediately ashamed. Then God comes walking through the garden wanting to talk, and as part of this talk we get Genesis 3.15.

We often remember other promises throughout the Bible, including those that promise a Messiah would come to rescue his people from their sins. But we often overlook this first promise of the gospel and its place in the litany of promises that God has given. The power of sin was massive and its effects so devastating, yet God did not allow centuries or even years to go by before he announced its coming defeat. Right here, in the third chapter of the Bible, we get God's promise to defeat sin and Satan by sending his own son to deliver the crushing blow!

We see this promise echoed in one of the most well-known Christmas passages. **Read Isaiah 9.6-7.** This passage was a reminder from God to his people that he would save them, restore them, and bring them into a Kingdom that would not end and would be ruled by a Wonderful Counselor, a Prince of Peace.

As we move into this Advent season, spend a few minutes reading and reflecting on the promises contained in these verses.

**Reflection:**

- What do you think it meant to Adam, Eve, and God's people for thousands of years to have a promise that one day he would rescue and restore them?
- What does it say to you about God, knowing that he made this promise and kept it? How does this affect your confidence in God's other promises?
- How do these things affect your heart this Advent season?

**Response:**

- What is one hope that you have for yourself, your family, or your Missional Community this Advent season? What do you need to do to make it a reality?
- Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.

# **Week 2: Longing**

## **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**O come, o come Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear**

**Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, oh Israel**

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of Hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave**

**Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, oh Israel**

**O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits to Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight**

**Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, oh Israel**

WEEK 2:  
LONGING  
DECEMBER 7-13

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

*The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. - Lamentations 3.25*

**Read Lamentations 3.24-26.** If possible, have a child read the passage above aloud to the family.

**Parents:** Our key point this week is: **God is our only hope!**

In this passage we see the writer saying that the Lord is his portion. This means that God is all-satisfying to him. God is enough for Him. God fills his soul, just like a big meal fills your stomach. Because God is enough, he says that he will hope in God.

Can you find a promise from God in verse 25? What does God's word say to us as we wait for God and hope in Him?

God is good to us! He is good to those who wait for Him.

What does God tell us in verse 26 about waiting quietly for Him? Why is it good that we should wait?

Waiting for God reminds us that **God is our only hope.**

**Activity:** We learned that God is good to those who wait for Him. Parents, lead your children in remembering how God has been good to your family. Have your child(ren) write these reminders of God's goodness down on blank sheets of paper. Have fun coloring and decorating the sheets together. Display each sheet of paper in prominent areas throughout your home. Use these sheets as a reinforcement and reminder of the goodness of God during Advent.

**Scripture Memory:** *The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.*  
*Lamentations 3.25*

Have a different person in the family read this verse each night this week. Have fun practicing it together by using motions or singing it as a song.

**Pray:** Use each night this week to discuss different requests that your family is waiting for God to answer. Pray for a different request each night. Remind your child(ren) as you pray that God is always enough, and our only hope.

Talk with your family and invite someone to Remedy's Christmas Service on December 21st.

**Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.**

WEEK 2:  
LONGING  
DECEMBER 7-13

# PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL

We saw last week that God made some specific and powerful promises to his people. What we know from looking back is that, while God did keep his promises, it took thousands of years. Not a few years, a decade, or even a century. In God's wisdom it took multiple thousands of years for him to fully make good on the promise he had made to send a Messiah, a redeemer, a rescuer who would save his people.

What do you think that waiting must have been like? Years turned into decades. Decades turned into centuries. Centuries turned into thousands of years. Generation after generation after generation was born, grew up, married, had kids of their own, and died, passing on the stories and promises to the next generation. And still they waited. As the years went by, their conditions changed, their geographic location changed, their rulers changed, and they experienced loss, discouragement, suffering, and frustration.

**Read Psalm 69.1-3.** This is a Psalm written by David in response to his own personal circumstances, but it is a picture of the kind of waiting Israel was in the midst of. The last line of verse 3 says, "My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God." What powerful imagery! This entire section, and especially verse 3, give us a pretty good idea of what longing feels like.

The people had received the promises of God, but they were unfulfilled. They waited, hoped, and believed (sometimes probably more than others), but the more the years passed, the more waiting turned into longing. They longed, they ached, for their Redeemer to come and for God to fulfill his promise.

Well, he did come, and he did fulfill his promise. What do you think it would have been like for those alive in the days when angels started appearing, predicting the birth of the Rescuer? What would it have been like to be part of this people who longed for this for centuries to actually see it happen?

**Reflection:**

- What does it do to you to have to wait a long time for something you've greatly anticipated?
- How does the waiting increase your desire for things you have your eyes set on?
- Do you experience that same sense of longing for Jesus to rescue and restore? How does that play out in your own heart and life? Your relationships?

**Response:**

- How do these things affect your heart, your love for Jesus, and your approach to this Advent season? What do you need to do in response to that?
- Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.

# **Week 3: Anticipation**

## **O Holy Night**

**O, holy night!**  
The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of our dear savior's birth  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn

**Fall on your knees**  
**Oh hear the angel voices**  
**Oh night divine**  
**Oh night when Christ was born**  
**Oh night divine, Oh night divine**

**Truly he taught us to love one another**  
**His law is love and his gospel is peace**  
**Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother**  
**And in his name all oppression shall cease**  
**Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we**  
**Let all within us praise his holy name**

**Christ is the Lord! Then ever, ever praise we**  
**His power and glory ever more proclaim**  
**His power and glory ever more proclaim**

WEEK 3:  
ANTICIPATION  
DECEMBER 14-20

FAMILY  
DEVOTIONAL

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed His people. - Luke 1.68*

**Read Luke 1.67-79.** Read this passage aloud to your family.

**Parents:** Our key point this week is: **God has a plan to save us!**

Many people in the Bible were just like us. They knew they needed a savior because they had disobeyed God's laws. These people also knew that they could not pay for their sin by doing good things. They needed a savior, just like we do.

This passage of Scripture tells us about God's plan to save us. John would prepare the way for God's rescue plan.

What does verse 77 tell us about how John did this? He was telling people how God would save them by having their sins forgiven.

Who has the power to forgive sins? Who could live a perfect life and bring us back to God?

Can you imagine how excited and nervous everyone must have been when they heard about this true story? They were looking forward to who was coming after John. Hearing this story reminded them that **God has a plan to save us.**

**Activity:** Parents, lead your child(ren) in thinking about the ways they have disobeyed God. Participate with them, and each of you write down 4-5 ways you have sinned against God. Write them in a black pen or crayon. Example: I have sinned against God by: lying to my mom. Across the bottom of the sheet of paper in a bright color, write "But, God has a plan to save us." Display each sheet of paper in prominent areas throughout your home. Use these sheets as a reinforcement and reminder that God has a plan to save us because of our sin.

**Scripture Memory:** *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed His people. - Luke 1.68*

Have a different person in the family read this verse each night this week. Have fun practicing it together by using motions or singing it as a song.

**Pray:** Use each night this week to confess sins to God and each other, knowing that God is faithful to forgive us of our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1.9). Parents, lead the way in this, modeling it for your kids.

**If you haven't already, think about 2-3 friends you can invite to celebrate God's rescue plan at the Remedy Christmas service on December 21st with you. Pray for them by name and invite them.**

# WEEK 3: ANTICIPATION DECEMBER 14-20

# PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever heard of the intertestamental period? It's not something many people talk about, but it refers to the time between the Old and New Testaments. It was 400 years of no words from the Lord. No prophets, no books of the Bible written. Nothing. These people who had received the promise from God, and who were used to hearing from him and having his words revealed through miracles and prophets, went 400 years without hearing a single word from the Lord. Talk about a dry time spiritually.

Then we have the stories of Matthew 1 and Luke 1. **Read Luke 1.5-56.**

After 400 years of silence from God, angels started appearing. Angels appeared to Mary, Joseph, and Zechariah announcing the coming birth of Jesus and his cousin, John the Baptist. When Mary went to see Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, John leapt in Elizabeth's womb at the presence of his cousin, Jesus. Then Mary breaks into song, praising God that from now on all generations will call her blessed because God had chosen to send his son, their Rescuer, through her!

After thousands of years of waiting, longing for God to fulfill his promise, and 400 years of silence from God, the people must have been wondering if the promise had been lost. But then some movement comes. Angels begin appearing, announcing the birth of the Christ, the son of God. These people, part of a long heritage—generations who had waited for this promise—were about to see it fulfilled. What do you think Mary and Joseph must have been thinking? What about others who heard about these things? What would they be thinking watching Mary's belly grow?

I was recently at a wedding with my restless 3 year old, so we spent most of the ceremony standing in the back. What this afforded me was a unique view of the room. We watched as the groom entered, the parents were seated, and the bridesmaids and flower girls walked down the aisle. Then there was a stillness. Everyone knew what was next. People started to stir. Heads started to turn back and forth. But nothing happened. You could sense a restlessness coming over the crowd. They were looking for the one they had all been waiting for, anxiously awaiting her arrival.

I wonder if a moment like this is just a glimpse into what it must have been like as the anticipation and excitement for the coming of the long-awaited Messiah drew near and things started to move. As we approach the celebration of Christmas, do you find the anticipation growing in your own heart?

### **Reflection:**

- As you read and reflect on these verses and events, how do they affect your love for Jesus and your anticipation of Christmas? What things do you find your heart most anticipating about Christmas?
- Are there any ways you feel a similar anticipation about things God is doing in your own life?

### **Response:**

- Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.

# **Week 4: Arrival**

## **Hallelujah! What a Savior**

**(Christmas Version)**

**Shining star in heaven so bright  
Lowly tend their flocks by night  
Could this be our faith now sight  
Hallelujah, what a Savior**

**Gift of gifts in manger lay  
Hope of man no more delayed  
God the just his love displayed  
Hallelujah, what a Savior**

**Hallelujah, Praise to the One  
Whose blood has pardoned me  
What a Savior, Redeemer, and King  
Your love has rescued me**

**Eternal Word made flesh was he  
The promise prophets longed to see  
Jesus Christ our mystery  
Hallelujah, what a Savior**

**Now the church his praises bring  
Blood-bought bride and matchless King  
Heaven and Earth now join to sing  
Hallelujah, what a Savior  
Hallelujah, what a Savior**

WEEK 4:  
ARRIVAL  
DECEMBER 21-27

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. - Luke 2.10-11*

**Read Luke 2. 1-14.** Read this passage aloud to your family.

**Parents:** Our key point this week is: **Jesus is our Savior!**

Can you imagine how the shepherds felt when they saw the angel? What message did the angel have to tell them? Who did the angel say the message would be for?

The coming of Jesus brings us good news, because Jesus saves us from our sin. Knowing Jesus gives us great joy because we experience the joy God has given Him (John 15.11).

Think about how great God is. He always keeps His promises, he is our only hope, he has a plan to save us, and he sent His son, Jesus, to be our savior!

Do you believe that Jesus has the power to forgive your sin? Are you confessing your sins to Jesus? Are the actions of your life showing your family, the Remedy Church family, and others that you are repenting (or turning away) from your sin and are trusting in Jesus?

**Activity:** Have each person in your family draw a picture of the shepherds in the field with the multitude of angels saying, "Glory to God in the highest!" Include the words "Good news" and "Great joy" in your picture. Display each sheet of paper in prominent areas throughout your home. Use these sheets as a reinforcement and reminder of what God has done by sending Jesus to be our Savior.

Act this story out as a family on Christmas eve!

**Scripture Memory:** *And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. - Luke 2.10-11*

Have a different person in the family read this verse each night this week. Have fun practicing it together by using motions or singing it as a song.

**Pray:** Use each night this week to thank God for all He has done! Pray for a different person in your family each night. Ask God to show them how great Jesus, our Savior, is this week!

**Choose an idea from the "Suggestions for Living on Mission" resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.**

WEEK 4:  
ARRIVAL  
DECEMBER 21-27

# PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL

Most of us have either had a baby or have close friends who have. Can you remember what it was like waiting in those last few weeks and days? As the due date drew closer, the discomfort grew, and the anticipation really started to build, what was that like? Was it excitement, agony, or nervousness? It was probably a mix of all of that over what was to come and when. Who knew what life would be like? Would it change? Would it ever be the same again? Lots of wondering and waiting.

And then that little baby arrived and everything changed. There was no more wondering when it would happen, or what it would be like, or what he or she would be like. No more waiting. No more imagining. No more hoping. Anticipation and longing gave way to arrival, and it was glorious. “That day” you’d been talking about was finally today.

**Read Luke 2.8-11.** Think about the promises we’ve talked about. Think about Israel’s longing for those promises to be fulfilled and how long they waited as generation after generation lived and died, never having received the promise. Think about how bad things got, sometimes for centuries at a time, and how much they must have hoped and longed for everything to change.

And then one day it did. No more prophets promising a Messiah. No more being reminded to be faithful and trust God to keep his promise. No more wondering. No more hoping. “That day” was finally today.

It took the next 33 years for God’s plan of salvation to play out fully in Jesus’ life on earth. We remember significant events in that process, observing days like Good Friday and Easter. But at Christmas we celebrate because God sent his son into the world to save his people from their sins, and that is good news of *great joy!*

**Reflection:**

- As we enter this last week before Christmas, what things are you most excited about?
- What moves your heart most about God sending his only son to save us from sin?

**Response:**

- How do you need to go about these last few days so that your heart (along with your family and/or Missional Community) is moved to pause, reflect on the good news of the gospel, and worship?
- Choose an idea from the “Suggestions for Living on Mission” resource at the back of this guide and do it with your family or Missional Community this week.

## **1 Peter 1.8-13**

**Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

**Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.**

**Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

# WAYS TO OBSERVE ADVENT

There are a number of ways to observe and celebrate Advent. The most important thing is to find ways that make sense for your family, remind you of the gospel, and help you reflect on the hope that Jesus brings. Here are a few suggestions:

## **Advent Wreath and Candles**

An Advent wreath is typically made of evergreen branches, either real or fake, arranged in a circle. Both the evergreens and the circle represent the never-ending nature of God, his constant presence with us, and the never-ending life that Jesus offers.

There are typically five candles, four arranged around the circle and one in the center. Three of the candles are traditionally purple and represent royalty. The fourth candle is pink and represents joy. The fifth candle, in the center, is white and represents purity.

The first candle is typically lit on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and another candle is lit each week to represent the growing light that Jesus brings into the world. This helps us to remember and reflect on the growing hope and anticipation that preceded Jesus' first coming. The white candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and represents Jesus' coming into the world. Just as the white candle represents Jesus' purity, so we too, in Jesus, are purified of our sins and given his perfect righteousness.



You may choose to read a scripture each week and light the candles as a family. You might also want to light the candles during dinner and eat with nothing but the candlelight, giving a visual picture of the growing light that Christ brings. Kids will enjoy lighting the candles.

Noel Piper, in her book *Treasuring God in our Traditions*, suggests also using a nativity as part of the setup if you have smaller kids. She notes that the symbolism of the candles could easily be lost on smaller kids, and the nativity will help them to remember the reason for the celebration.

Using a nativity or not, what you use for the wreath, how many candles, or what color aren't as important as the symbolic reflection and the reminder that it brings.

## Advent Calendars

Many families use Advent calendars to count down the days to Christmas. Most calendars start the first day of December and lead up to Christmas Day. They usually include 24 windows, pockets, or drawers that are opened to reveal a scripture, story, picture, or small gift.

There are many kinds of Advent calendars, some Christian and some secular. You can find several at [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com). The point of the calendar is that as each window is opened, the anticipation of Christmas grows, similar to the anticipation and longing for the Messiah that Israel experienced. If you decide to do your own scriptures, you can choose scriptures that start with prophecies about the Messiah and lead up to the birth of Jesus. You can also choose scriptures that talk about Christ's power to save his people from their sins.

## Advent Tree or Jesus Tree

Some families set up an Advent tree in addition to or in place of a traditional Christmas tree. (Christmas trees are a cultural part of celebrating Christmas, and we are not advocating that you not set one up. An Advent tree is simply another option and a way to draw the focus of the Christmas season to Jesus intentionally).

You can get a regular tree, a small tree, or even a tree branch from outside. Anything will work. The idea of an Advent tree is that you decorate it over the course of the month with reminders of who Jesus is and the hope he brings.



You may choose to read scripture together or have a family devotion related to the Advent season and afterward allow the kids, (and the parents, if you're so inclined), to add something to the tree that reminds them of Jesus or God's salvation. Some examples are things that represent the Christmas story (manger, shepherds, stars), things that relate to Jesus' life (carpentry tools, a fish, bread), symbols of who Jesus is in scripture (a lion, a lamb, a father), or anything else.

This is a great way for kids to be creative. You can use actual Christmas ornaments, items you find around the house, or you can make your own ornaments. Ask the kids to say what it is about the item that reminds them of Jesus before they hang it. It could even be something light-hearted, like a man snoring to represent Jesus sleeping in the boat. The Advent tree is a great way to reflect and have fun with your family.

John and Noel Piper have some good ideas for items to put on the Jesus tree in their blog post at Desiring God. It can be found here: <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/jesus-tree>.

# HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR THE SEASON

## **Playlists**

If you have a Spotify account you can search for RemedyChurch and find two playlists we have created to help you observe this season. One is called “Songs for Advent” and is filled with songs that will help you worship and reflect on the truths of the Advent season. Many of the songs are favorites that you will recognize.

The other playlist is called “Advent at Remedy” and will feature songs that we are singing on Sundays at our worship gathering during the Advent season. Becoming familiar with these songs will help you participate when we gather.

## **Albums**

Glory in the Highest, Chris Tomlin  
Holiday!: A Collection of Christmas Classics, Crystal Lewis  
Christmas From the Realms of Glory, Bebo Norman  
All I Really Want For Christmas, Steven Curtis Chapman  
Rose of Bethlehem, Selah  
Oh For Joy, David Crowder Band  
Songs for Christmas, Phil Wickham

## **Songs**

Oh Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
Oh Holy Night  
What Child is This?  
Come Thou Long Expected Jesus  
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing  
Hallelujah! What a Savior (Christmas Version), by Aaron Ivey  
Oh Little Town of Bethlehem  
Joy to the World  
Go Tell It on the Mountain  
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day  
Oh Come All Ye Faithful

## **Books**

Treasuring God in Our Traditions, Noel Piper  
Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story, Sally Lloyd-Jones  
Jesus Storybook Bible, Sally Lloyd-Jones  
Jotham’s Journey: A Storybook for Advent, Arnold Ytreeide  
Bartholomew’s Passage: A Family Story for Advent, Arnold Ytreeide  
Tabitha’s Travels: A Family Story for Advent, Arnold Ytreeide

# ADVENT SCRIPTURES

## **Promises**

Isaiah 7.10-14; 9.2-7; 11.1-16; 52.13-53.12  
Jeremiah 31.31-34; 33.14-16  
Ezekiel 36.22-32  
Micah 5.1-5

## **Longing**

Psalms 69.1-3  
Isaiah 64.1-9  
Hebrews 11.13-16  
1 Peter 1.10-11

## **Anticipation**

1 Samuel 3.1  
Amos 8.11-12  
Matthew 1.20-23; 2.1-10  
Luke 1.26-38, 39-56; 2.8-15

## **Arrival**

Matthew 1.18-25; 2.11  
Luke 2.1-21, 22-38  
John 1.1-14  
2 Corinthians 8.9  
Philippians 2.5-11  
Colossians 1.15-22

## **Awaiting the Second Advent of Christ**

Acts 1.6-11; 17.30-31  
Romans 7.24-25; 8.18-25  
1 Thessalonians 3.11-13  
Hebrews 10.23-25; 11.39-12.3  
1 Peter 1.3-9  
2 Peter 3.1-14  
1 John 2.28

# SUGGESTIONS FOR LIVING ON MISSION

These are a few suggestions for living on mission this Advent season. These ideas can be done as individuals, with your family, or with your Missional Community. Our challenge to you is to choose a handful of ideas from this list, or come up with your own, and put them into action during the weeks of Advent as ways to build community, have gospel conversations, and show people the love of Christ as we look toward Christmas.

1. Adopt a family in need - buy gifts, clothes, food, etc.
2. Put up Christmas decorations for an older or a busy family.
3. Rake leaves for a neighbor.
4. Take Christmas cookies to neighbors, co-workers, or friends.
5. Recruit some neighbors to go caroling in your neighborhood or at a local nursing home.
6. Invite friends or neighbors over for coffee and dessert.
7. Host a cookie exchange - 5-6 people make cookies, get together, and exchange cookies.
8. Provide gifts for foster kids through Empty Stocking (info at [Remedy-Church.com](http://Remedy-Church.com)).
9. Hand deliver Christmas cards rather than mailing them.
10. Invite friends with kids to watch a kids' Christmas movie together. Make hot chocolate or cider and let the kids wear their pajamas.
11. Invite friends and neighbors to watch an appropriate adult Christmas movie.
12. Organize a night to go look at Christmas lights with friends and neighbors. Carpool or walk together.
13. Host a Christmas-themed dinner party and invite 1-2 couples from your Missional Community and 1-2 couples who are not part of your Missional Community.
14. Serve at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or some other needs-focused ministry. Invite neighbors and friends to join you.
15. Invite a family or friend to join you for Christmas dinner.
16. Invite a friend to join you on the Candlelight Tour of Homes in Waxahachie. Buy their ticket.
17. Invite a friend to Bethlehem Revisited in Waxahachie and to coffee afterward.
18. Host a football watching party and invite people from your Missional Community and other friends and neighbors.
19. Host a s'mores party in your front yard. Set up a fire pit and provide hot chocolate and/or coffee.
20. Invite family, friends, and neighbors to be your special guest at our Christmas service and to dessert or coffee afterward to discuss their thoughts about the service.