

ADVENT GUIDE



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Some inspiration for this resource was taken from
The Village Church, *Advent Guide*, 2011.
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 intended to lead us through the season of Advent together. Its purpose is to remind us of the gospel, leading 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 take full advantage of this guide, we encourage you to read and plan ahead. Read through the family devotions beforehand and plan your time together. Be creative. As you prepare for discussion in your Missional Community, think through the message from Sunday. If you weren't there, listen to the podcast. Ask yourself questions, and be prepared for discussion.

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 people as we observe 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

Each week contains a family devotional guide and a Missional Community discussion guide that go along with the message from the preceding Sunday. Use these guides to walk with your family and Missional Community through this season. If your Missional Community does not meet one week, use the guide that week for personal reflection or as a conversation starter with someone.

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

The anticipation that accompanied Israel's longing brought with it excitement and holy speculation about the coming of Christ.

Week 4: Arrival

The God who made us has come to live with us, and his promise of a Redeemer is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

Ways to Observe Advent

Helpful Resources for the Season

Advent Scriptures

Ideas for Living On Mission this Advent Season

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
DECEMBER 2-8

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Jesus Christ). That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 2 Corinthians 1.20

Read Ezekiel 36.25-28. What makes us unclean (dirty) before God?

Activity: Have everyone in the family go outside and get their hands dirty. Talk about how each person's sin makes them unclean before God, who is holy, and thus separates each person from Him. (Isaiah 59.2)

Have each person wash their hands, and discuss how only clean water can do the job of getting the dirt off. Talk about how Jesus' death and resurrection made a way for each person to be brought back to God by faith in Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9.14; 1 Peter 3.18)

Who is the one doing the cleaning, providing a new heart and a new Spirit? Do we have the power to make ourselves clean before God or to come back to Him on our own? (Ephesians 2.1-5)

Who alone has the power to forgive our sins? (Ephesians 1.19-21)

Discuss how God kept His promise in Ezekiel 36.25-28 by sending Jesus. Talk about why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to convict the world concerning sin and to help those who believe in Him. (John 16.8-15)
Parents, share how Jesus saved you by making you clean before God and giving you a new heart to obey Him.

Close with prayer. Parents and kids, ask how you can pray for each other. Who are you praying for by name, asking God to save? Pray for those people together as a family. Invite someone this week to Remedy's Christmas Service on December 23rd.

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 DECEMBER 2-8

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONGUIDE

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Jesus Christ). That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 2 Corinthians 1.20

How have promises, kept or broken, affected your life? How do we view those in our lives that have kept promises? What about those who have broken them?

Read Jeremiah 33.14-16. What promises does God make to His people?

Paul quotes Isaiah in **Romans 15.12** by stating that the Gentiles will also hope in the root of Jesse. God's word clearly testifies to the fact that he has promised to redeem people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation through faith in the "righteous Branch" and "root of Jesse," Jesus Christ. His promise was not limited only to the house of Israel, but was also for the Gentiles, thus fulfilling the promise to Abram in **Genesis 12.3** that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed.

What is your immediate response to knowing that these promises were made and kept by God? What confidence does this give us in His word?

As a child of God, what promises from His word are you looking to concerning the current circumstances in your life? What promises from Scripture can we encourage each other with as a Missional Community?

Are there any promises that you have made that you haven't kept to your spouse, child(ren), family member, or friends? What is at stake for us as disciples of Jesus when we don't keep our promises to those in and around our lives?

Read Acts 2.39. Who immediately comes to mind when you read this verse? Do you know anyone who is far from God? Realizing that the promise of a Redeemer is not just for us, we must continually ask ourselves individually and collectively as a church, "Who is God calling to Himself around my life and our Missional Community?"

Questions for Response:

- How do these things affect your heart this Advent season?
- What is God saying to us?
- What do we need to do in 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.

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 9-15

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

Activity: Before you do the family devotion, promise your kids something exciting and let a few days go by before you keep it. Then fulfill the promise and use it as a teaching point in the family devotion, talking about what it is like to wait and hope for something.

Scriptures and Discussion:

What does it mean to long for something? What is something you have longed for?

Read Hebrews 11.13. Explain that this is talking about people who had heard the promises that Jesus would come and save them and spent their whole lives looking for him, waiting and watching.

Many times in life we have to wait for things. It may be waiting your turn, waiting for a special day to come, like vacation or your birthday, or waiting for a promise to be fulfilled. Waiting can be hard. If we are looking forward to something, we want it NOW! The longer we wait, the harder it gets. Talk as a family about a time it was hard to wait for something. How did you feel? Why was it hard to wait?

It is usually also true that the longer we wait, the more excited we get. How did you feel the longer you waited?

Read Romans 8.24-25 and discuss the difference between having something and hoping for something that you do not yet have. Which one is harder to do? Which one gets you more excited as the days go by: having or hoping?

It can be hard to wait for things God tells us he will do, but he uses times of waiting to strengthen our trust in him and to increase our desire for the things he promises.

What do you think it was like to know Jesus was coming, but not know when, and to just have to wait? How do you think that would make you feel? How would you have felt when he finally did come?

Talk about some promises that God has made and kept and some that we are still waiting for him to keep. What are some things we can do while we wait? (Remind each other of his promises, pray and ask him to do those things, tell others about his promises). Look for ways to do these things together this week.

Close with prayer. Parents and kids, ask how you can pray for each other. Who are you praying for by name, asking God to save? Pray for those people together as a family. Invite someone this week to Remedy's Christmas Service on December 23rd.

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 9-15

MISSIONAL
COMMUNITY
DISCUSSIONGUIDE

What is something you have longed deeply for? How did it affect you while you waited?

Read Isaiah 64.1-7. What were the people longing for? In what ways can you identify with that?

There is a Messianic promise made in **Isaiah 7.14** that is repeated and expanded in **Matthew 1.21-23**. It said that there would be a child, who is “God with us,” and that he would save his people from their sins. Though most people didn’t fully understand the nature and weight of this promise, they did understand that a Redeemer was coming from God to rescue them, and they waited and looked forward to that day with great longing. **Hebrews 11.13-16** and **1 Peter 1.10-11** talk more about this waiting and looking.

What do you think it was like to know a Rescuer was coming, but not know when, and to just have to wait? What would the waiting have been like?

Do you experience that same sense of longing for Jesus to rescue you? What does that look and feel like in your own heart and life? What affect does that have on your affections for Jesus and his kingdom?

Why do you think God gives us desires that go unfulfilled? What is something that God has done in you because of an unfulfilled desire?

What are some promises that God has made and kept and some that we are still waiting for him to keep? What are some things we can do while we wait? (Remind each other of his promises, pray and ask him to do those things, tell others about his promises). Look for ways to do these things together this week.

Questions for Response:

- How do these things affect your heart this Advent season?
- What is God saying to us?
- What do we need to do in 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.

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 16-22

FAMILY
DEVOTIONAL

Discuss as a family how it feels when you are looking forward to special days like Christmas, birthdays, family vacations, etc. Our excitement is usually tied to the knowledge that something good is coming our way.

What are you looking forward to this Christmas? Why?

Read Luke 1.26-38. What was Gabriel's message to Mary? Why was this so important? What emotion did she have after first hearing the message?

Activity: Have your child(ren) draw and color a picture of the scene described in Luke 1.26-38, writing verse 37 somewhere on the page.

Read Matthew 1:20-25. This describes how Joseph received the same message. Here Jesus is described as the one who will "save his people from their sins."

Discuss as a family why every person is dead in their sin (**Ephesians 2.1**), separated from holy God (**Isaiah 59.2**), and in desperate need of a savior (**Isaiah 53.6a**). Talk about why the promise of Jesus is still good news today.

We see Joseph and Mary both obeying and trusting God's word as they looked forward to the promise of Jesus coming. Discuss as a family why it is important for us to both obey and trust God's word.

As we look forward to celebrating Christmas this year, how can our family trust and obey God's word today?

Close with prayer. Parents and kids, ask how you can pray for each other. Who are you praying for by name, asking God to save? Pray for those people together as a family. Invite someone this week to Remedy's Christmas Service on December 23rd.

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
DECEMBER 16-22

MISSIONAL
COMMUNITY
DISCUSSIONGUIDE

In your life, what is on the horizon that you are most looking forward to? What emotions are wrapped up in your anticipation?

Read Luke 1. 26 - 45.

Discuss what emotions are described around the message Mary received and her encounter with Elizabeth. What stands out to you about the people and the promise in this story?

Read Matthew 1. 18-25. This tells Joseph's side of the story. What do we learn about the promise and the man from his encounter with the angel?

What can we learn from Joseph and Mary, and how does it help us today?

Read Luke 1. 67-79. This tells of Zechariah's prophecy for his son, John the Baptist. Knowing what the angel has already said to Joseph and Mary, and seeing what God had done by giving Elizabeth a son in her old age, how do John's birth and Zechariah's prophecy add to the growing anticipation of the coming of the promised Messiah?

In the context of this story, the Jewish people were longing for the promised Messiah. They had been given promises and had seen God's hand throughout their history as a people. They had been waiting, and now God was sovereignly putting things into motion that would culminate in the incarnation—Immanuel, God with us.

Discuss how you typically celebrate Christmas as a family and with your faith family as a local church? Is there a growing excitement and anticipation that builds up to celebrating together all that God has done in sending Jesus? How can we lead our families well toward this end as we live in an ever-changing culture where Christmas is made into so many other things?

Questions for Response:

- How do these things affect your heart this Advent season?
- What is God saying to us?
- What do we need to do in 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.

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 promised 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 23-29

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

Optional Activities:

- Turn off all the lights and talk about the darkness. Then turn on your Christmas tree lights and talk about how Jesus is the light in the darkness in Isaiah 9.2 and John 1.5.
 - Play hide and seek and talk about how Jesus came to seek and save the lost who were hiding from him.
 - Act out the Christmas stories from Luke 2.1-7, 8-20, and Matthew 2.1-12.
-

Scriptures and Discussion:

In week two we talked about longing. Think again about something you longed for. It could be a gift you knew you were getting, a special day like a vacation or birthday, or to see a family member or friend you love. The longing was hard, but what was it like when you finally received what you were waiting for?

Read Isaiah 7.14 and Matthew 1.21-23. Explain that God made his people a promise a long time ago to send someone to save them. In Matthew 1.21-23, God is reminding his people of that promise and telling them that Jesus is the fulfillment of it. Think about receiving something you've waited a long time for, like what we talked about above. After waiting for so long, how do you think the people waiting for Jesus must have felt when he finally came?

Read Matthew 1.21 again. What does it say that Jesus came to save his people from? What is sin? Why do we need to be saved from it? How can we be saved?

At Christmas, many people give each other gifts. Talk about a favorite gift you've been given. We don't remember this sometimes, but the reason we give gifts is to celebrate and remember that God gave us the greatest gift ever when he gave us Jesus. Christmas is a great time to celebrate by giving gifts, being with family, and having fun together. But the most important reason to celebrate, and the reason we do all those other things, is to remember that Jesus came to save us from our sins.

What are some things that will help us remember that Jesus came to save us? What are some fun ways that we can celebrate? What are some things we can do to remind others that Jesus came to save them, too?

Close with prayer. Parents and kids, ask how you can pray for each other. Who are you praying for by name, asking God to save? Pray for those people together as a family. Invite someone this week to Remedy's Christmas Service on December 23rd.

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 23-29

MISSIONAL
COMMUNITY
DISCUSSIONGUIDE

In week two we asked about something you have longed for greatly. How did you feel when it finally happened? If it hasn't happened yet, how do you think you will feel if and when it does?

Read Colossians 1.16-17, 19 and John 1.1-3. What are some things that stand out from these passages? Notice in particular that Jesus is fully God, he existed before the world was created, and he participated in creating it.

Read Luke 1.30-35, John 1.14, and Philippians 2.5-8. What are some things that stand out from these passages? Notice in particular that Jesus was fully human. He was born to a woman named Mary and lived an earthly life, just like all of us. How do the truths of these three passages fit with what we saw in the previous two?

Jesus is fully God and fully human. He existed before the world was created, yet began his earthly life as a baby. He participated in creating the world, then was born into it like every other human. In the words of a children's book, "The one who made us has come to live with us." That's pretty significant, so a logical question to ask is, "Why?"

Read Matthew 1.21, John 1.12, and Colossians 1.20-22. Why did Jesus come? He came to save us from our sins and reconcile us to God. This is the promise that was made long ago, was longed for and anticipated throughout generations, and was now finally being fulfilled. The one who made us did come to live with us, but he didn't just come to live. He came to die for us and to save us.

This is what we celebrate at Christmas. We celebrate the fulfillment of a promise made long ago, by God himself, to deliver us from our sins and restore us to fellowship with him. Jesus was and is the fulfillment of that promise, and at Christmas we worship because God has not left us wanting. He has come through, and he has provided a way for us. His name is Jesus.

Imagine being one of the Israelites, suffering, hearing promises and stories of a rescuer for generations, always hoping, always looking, but never seeing an answer. Then one day, things start to change. Things start to feel somehow different, and then finally, the Rescuer comes. How does it make you feel, knowing that he has come? How does it impact your life today?

Questions for Response:

- How do these things affect your heart this Advent season?
- What is God saying to us?
- What do we need to do in 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.

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. 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

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

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 missionally 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 in to action during the weeks of Advent, looking for ways to develop 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 2012 - info at Remedy-Church.com
9. Hand deliver Christmas cards rather than mailing them
10. Host a Christmas get-together for neighbors and friends
11. Invite friends with kids to watch a kids' Christmas movie together. Make hot chocolate or cider and let the kids wear their pajamas.
12. Invite friends and neighbors to watch an appropriate adult Christmas movie.
13. Organize a night to go look at Christmas lights with friends and neighbors. Carpool or walk together.
14. Host a Christmas-themed dinner party and invite 1-2 couple from your Missional Community and 1-2 couples who are not part of your Missional Community.
15. Serve at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or some other needs-focused ministry. Invite neighbors and friends to join you.
16. Invite a family or friend to join you for Christmas dinner.
17. Invite a friend to join you on the Candlelight Tour of Homes in Waxahachie and buy their ticket.
18. Invite a friend to Bethlehem Revisited in Waxahachie and to coffee afterward.
19. Invite a friend to Enchanted Pines E-Z Glide Ice Skating in Waxahachie.
20. Host a football watching party and invite people from your Missional Community and other friends and neighbors.