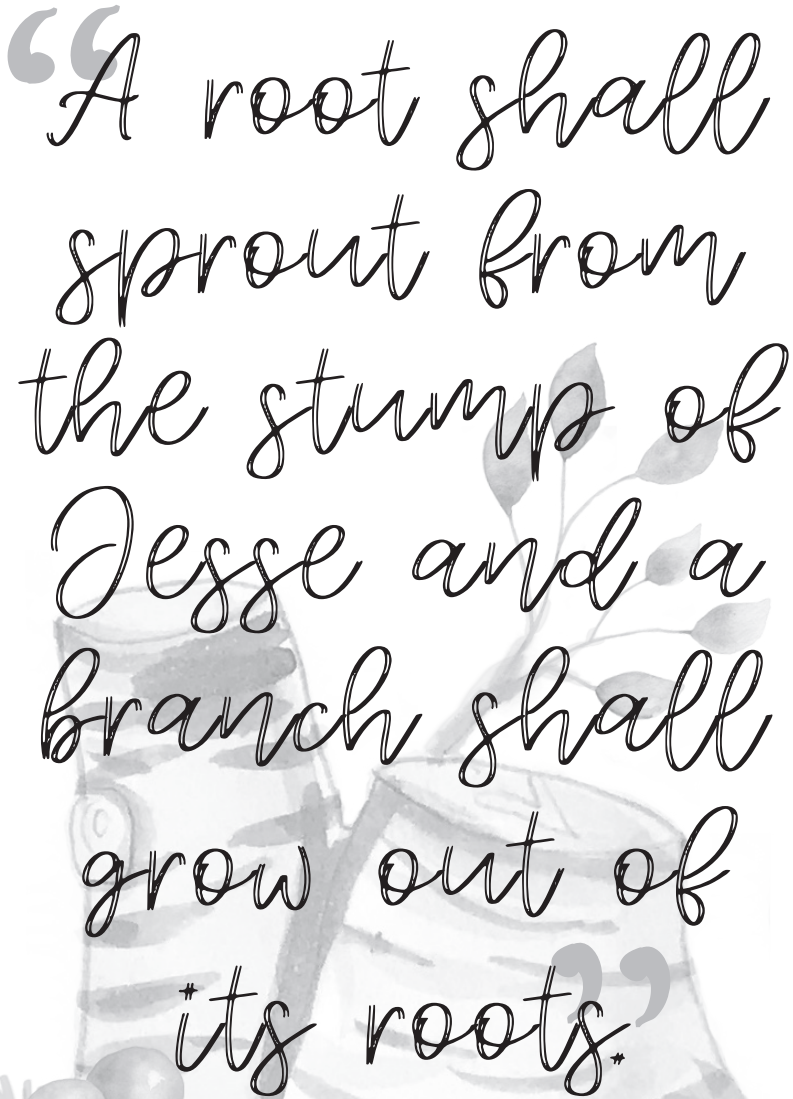




*Christmas
Advent*

JESSE TREE • 2019 •



“A root shall
sprout from
the stump of
Jesse and a
branch shall
grow out of
its roots.”

-ISAIAH 11:1-

A Season of Waiting

INTRODUCTION

The Jesse Tree is a daily devotion throughout the Christmas season, becoming a tradition that traces the foretelling and ancestry of Jesus through the Old and New Testaments. It celebrates the women and men who, like John the Baptist, prepared the way for the coming of the Lord. The Jesse Tree is named for Jesse, the father of King David. Its scriptural base is Isaiah 11:1: “A root shall sprout from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of its roots.” It is a vehicle to tell the Story of God in the Old Testament, and to connect the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God across 4,000 years of history.

This version is special because it’s coupled with special readings for Advent—a word whose root origin means “coming.” Because even though we can have peace and joy through the presence of Jesus Christ, we still long for deliverance from the oppression of sin in the world. We long for the full reign of the King, and the Kingdom of Peace that He will bring. So, while we celebrate the birth of the Branch, the new shoot from the stump of Jesse, we still anticipate with hope the Second Advent, and await the completion of the promise. Each weekly candle represents 1,000 years that humanity waited for its Savior.

The Jesse Tree tradition has already become near and dear to our own family—our kids become mesmerized each night as we light candles, read Bible stories, and sing songs. Other versions might vary slightly by Bible stories, and we’ve formatted this version based on what’s best for a younger audience. Therefore, we’ve already paraphrased the included Bible stories so that it can easily be read to preschool age and up. We encourage you to first read over it to determine how to best interpret the stories for your own family.

Preparations

SETTING IT UP

- 1 Decide how to create a **sacred space** of wondering and learning about the returning of our Savior, plus what will be required for setup. Kids thrive on social cues, such as dimming the lights or gathering at a special spot, as they build a pattern and provide rhythm for the nightly devotional.
- 2 A **Jesse Tree** can be either a banner or a poster on a wall, with the symbols fastened to it; or a small tree, with the symbols hung from the branches. The ornaments can be purchased pre-made, sketches or drawings for kids to color, or crafted pieces to keep for years (perhaps you might host an ornament swap party!).
- 3 Prepare your **ornaments**. [Purchase a set from our store](#) or create something on your own. Decide whether you'll store them with this Advent booklet, or nearby in a special place such as an ornament display box or as a countdown display on the wall.
- 4 A display of **Advent candles** is also necessary—four candles for each Advent Sunday, plus one white candle in the center to light on Christmas Day to represent Christ.
- 5 Lastly, there is a **compilation of songs** available for each day's reading. Choose the songlist for younger kids if your family enjoys Bible songs, or choose the list for older kids for just Christmas songs. Whichever you choose, be sure to save or bookmark the list!

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

YOUTUBE PLAYLIST
tiny.cc/jesstreadvent

FOR OLDER KIDS

YOUTUBE PLAYLIST
tiny.cc/christmashymns

SPOTIFY PLAYLIST
tiny.cc/adventsongs

SCHEDULING YOUR DAILY ADVENT

Determine the best time for your family to gather for the daily Advent readings! We prefer the evening right before bedtime because it creates a peaceful rhythm to our nights, but morning would work too. And don't fret if you miss a day; either let it be or do an extra one on the weekend if you'd like. As always, do what works best for your family.

To help you picture what it might look like, here's how our family completes our daily Jesse Tree Advent:

- Prepare by cueing our music video on Youtube, finding today's ornament, dimming lights, and lighting the candles before we call the kids to gather
- Read today's Bible scripture
- Gather around our TV to sing along with today's chosen song
- Allow the kids to hang the ornament
- Close by reading the included prayer
- Blow out the candles (one of our kids' favorite parts!)

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Printed booklet
- Ornaments
- Small tree or display
- Special place to gather
- 4-Colored taper candles
- 1-White taper candle
- Candle ring/holder
- Candle lighter
- YouTube Songlist

There's no better way to still busy minds during the Holiday season than stopping as a family each evening to read a devotion together by the candlelight of Advent. We hope this becomes a sacred, cherished, annual tradition in your family!

With love,

The Erbs

FOR MORE INFO: tiny.cc/jesstree

DECEMBER 1

Candle of Hope

Day 1 – First Advent Candle



SCRIPTURE: Romans 15:12-13; John 14:27

INTRODUCTION

The Advent season is a beautiful reminder to also prepare our hearts as we prepare our homes—for celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus! This is the first Sunday in Advent. Today, we light one candle. This is the candle of hope. Advent is a time of waiting and of hoping. When we look at the first candle, we remember God’s promise. God promised to send a Savior to the people. When we listen to our Scripture reading, we hear what the prophet Isaiah wrote about God. Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will spring up. He will rise to rule the nations, and he will give the nations hope.”

May God, the source of hope, fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. As John 14:27 says, “Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Let’s pray.

PRAYER

Thank You, God for giving us hope in Your faithful promises. Holy Spirit, prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ that we may anticipate His arrival, The Shepherd, who will guide us. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: This Little Light of Mine

OLDER KIDS: A Light

DECEMBER 2

Creation of Earth

Day 2 – God



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1, 26-31

PARAPHRASE

In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth, and God also said, “Let’s make man. Let him rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the wild animals and all the living things that crawl upon the ground.” And God made man in His own image. He made them male and female. And God blessed them, and said to them, “Have children, live all over the earth, rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that crawls upon the ground. To you I give every plant which grows, and every tree which bears fruit to eat as food. And to every animal and bird of the sky and to every thing that crawls on the earth and is alive, I give every green herb for food.” And it was done. And when God saw everything that He had made, He saw that it was very good.

PRAYER

Dear Creator, thank You, for making our wonderful Earth and allowing us to share in Your happiness. How amazing it is to remember that even from the beginning, You provided for our every need. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: Whole World in His Hands

OLDER KIDS: O Come All Ye Faithful

DECEMBER 3

The First Sin

Day 3 – Adam & Eve



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3:1-19

PARAPHRASE

Now the snake was sneakier than any other animal that God had made, and one day it came to the woman and asked, “Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?” The woman answered, “We may eat of the fruit of all the trees in this garden except the tree which is in the middle—He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even to touch it. If we do, we will die.” The snake replied, “That’s not true; you will not die; for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil.” The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband Adam, and he ate it too. Then everything changed, and they realized they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together and made clothes for themselves. When they heard God coming, Adam and Eve hid from him among the trees of the garden. And God called to them, “Where are you?” And Adam answered, “I was naked, and when I heard you walking through the garden, I was frightened and hid!” God asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?” Adam answered, “It was the woman you put here with me—she gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it.” The Lord God asked the woman, “Why did you do this?” She replied, “The snake tricked me into eating it.” Then God said to the snake, “Because of what you have done, you will be the only animal to suffer this curse--For as long as you live, you will crawl on your stomach

and eat dirt. I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's heel." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "You will suffer terribly when you give birth. But you will still desire your husband, and he will rule over you." The LORD said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat. And so, the ground will be under a curse because of what you did. As long as you live, you will have to struggle to grow enough food. You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again." And God made clothes for the man and his wife, and sent them out of the garden of Eden to till the ground.

PRAYER

God, thank You for planning for our failures from the very beginning. Even in a sentence uttered 4,000 years before Christ is born, You tell us that the destroyer of the snake was born of a woman (made too without a human father). Thank You for Your everlasting hope and grace. Amen.

SONG

O Holy Night

DECEMBER 4

The Flood

Day 4 – Noah



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6; 7:17; 8:4; 9:8-13

PARAPHRASE

When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, He was sad that He had made man. God said, “I’m going to destroy every person on earth! I’ll even wipe out animals, birds, and reptiles. I’m sorry I ever made them.” But Noah had won God’s favor. So God said to Noah, “Build yourself a wooden ark, because I’m going to start a flood. Take with you two of every kind of animal, then I will send rain on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights.” So Noah built an ark and waited while the earth flooded. After 40 days and 40 nights, the ark landed on dry land.

And God said, “This is my promise to you: I have placed my rainbow in the cloud as a sign of peace between me and the people who live on the earth. Whenever I bring a cloud over the earth and the rainbow is seen in the cloud, I will remember this promise; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy them.”

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for keeping all Your promises to us. May we follow Your instruction and live in Your mercy and kindness—even when it goes against what’s normal—just as Noah’s family did. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: Arky Arky

OLDER KIDS: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

DECEMBER 5

The Promise

Day 5 – Abraham



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-7; 15:3-6

PARAPHRASE

God said to Abraham, “Go from your home and family to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation; and I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you shall be a blessing.” So Abraham left when he was 75 years old. He took his wife Sarah, his nephew, and everything that they had, and started for the land of Canaan. Abraham traveled through the land to a place called Shechem. There God appeared to Abraham and said, “I will give this land to your children.”

And Abraham replied, “But I have no children.” And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “You will have a son of your own, and everything you have will be his. Look up to the night sky and tell the stars, if you are able to number them. So shall your offspring be.” And Abraham believed the Lord, and he counted it to Him as righteousness.

PRAYER

Thank You God for Your promise to make a great nation through Abraham and that through this nation the Messiah came and blessed the entire world. Help us to obey You as Abraham did, even when we can't see Your great plan. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: Father Abraham

OLDER KIDS: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

DECEMBER 6

Answered Prayers

Day 6 – Sarah



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 21:1-7

PARAPHRASE

God remembered what He had promised Sarah, Abraham's wife, that she would become a mother and have a baby, and God did as He had promised. So when Abraham was 100 years old, Sarah had a baby boy named Isaac. Sarah said, "God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for answering prayers. Only You can bring life from anything in any circumstance. Like Sarah, may we never forget the wonder, joy, and surprise of what You have done for us. Amen.

SONG

What Child is This

DECEMBER 7

God is With Us

Day 7 – Jacob



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 28:10-17

PARAPHRASE

Jacob, grandson of Abraham, left one town and headed to the next. At sunset he stopped for the night and went to sleep, resting his head on a large rock. Then he dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and the angels of God were going up and down it. God was also in the dream, standing beside the ladder and said, “I am God, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give to you and to your children this land. Your offspring will spread over the earth in all directions and will become as numerous as the specks of dust. Your family will be a blessing to all people. See, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you again to this land; I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, “Surely God is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was filled with awe and said, “This place is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for being the ladder between Heaven and earth, so that we could approach You by faith and be welcomed into the family of God. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: O Come All Ye Faithful

OLDER KIDS: Emmanuel God With Us

DECEMBER 8

Candle of Preparation



Day 8 – Second Advent Candle

SCRIPTURE: Luke 3:4-6 & Matthew 3:1-3

INTRODUCTION

Tonight we light the candle of preparation. As we prepare for the coming of Christ's birth, we remember the necessity of repentance for a right relationship with God and our neighbor. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "A voice is crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill made low, and the crooked roads will become straight, and the rough places made smooth, and all of mankind will see God's salvation.'"

Years later, John the Baptist started preaching in the Judean wilderness. His message was, "Turn away from your sins, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!" John was the one the prophet Isaiah was talking about, when he said:

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him!'"

Let's pray.

PRAYER

Dear God, we recognize our sin and our need for a Savior. Prepare our hearts to hear the joyful news of The Savior who will redeem us! Amen.

SONG

Joy to the World

DECEMBER 9

Forgiveness

Day 9 – Joseph



SCRIPTURE: Genesis 37:3-11; 18-28; 45

PARAPHRASE

The man Jacob had many sons, but the youngest Joseph was his favorite. He even gave Joseph a fancy coat made of many colors as a gift. This angered Joseph's brothers, and they planned against him and a way to get rid of him.

Like Christ, Joseph was sold for silver, but the hand of God led him to become a leader of the nation of Egypt. Later, his brothers, leaders of the Chosen People after their father Jacob, came to Egypt looking for help during a famine—imagine how surprised they were to see their brother Joseph sitting at the throne! They were scared Joseph would use his power to punish them for their wrong. But Joseph recognized his role in God's big plan, and that including forgiving his brothers and caring for them, so they settled under his rule. The many-colored coat has become the symbol of Joseph, since it was so instrumental in his life.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, like Joseph we might go through sad times and feel forgotten. But may we always remember that You are always in control. We pray You take our tough times and use them in good ways to fulfill Your promises. Amen.

SONG

O Little Town of Bethlehem

DECEMBER 10

Lamb of God

Day 10 – Israelites



SCRIPTURE: Exodus 12:1-14; 26-32; 1 Peter 1:18-19

PARAPHRASE

God had decided to punish the people of Egypt because God knew how badly they treated the Israelite slaves. Moses and Aaron, descendants of Jacob and Abraham, were chosen by God to deliver this message. They told the king, “God says, ‘Let My people go.’” The king answered, “No.” God wanted to show that He was much greater than the gods of Egypt. So God sent ten horrible plagues and the king still did not let God’s people go.

God told each Israelite family, “Kill a lamb and put some of the blood outside your front door. That same night I will pass through Egypt and death will come to all its firstborn sons and male animals. I am the LORD, and I will punish the gods of Egypt. The blood on the houses will show me where you live, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Then you won’t be bothered by the terrible disasters I will bring on Egypt.

Remember this day and celebrate it each year as a festival in my honor. Your children will ask you, ‘What are we celebrating?’ And you will answer, ‘The Passover is to honor the LORD. We celebrate to remember that night long ago when the LORD passed over the homes of our people in Egypt.’”

When God did as He had said, all of Egypt’s firstborn sons and male animals died, including the king’s own son. Then the king told Moses, “Gather the Israelites and get out of Egypt!”

And even though Jesus Christ was a man, He was called the Lamb of God. Peter, an apostle to Jesus, later wrote: “For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you learned from your ancestors. And the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.”

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we wait for Jesus to return, may we remember our need for a Savior and that it's only through the blood of Christ that we can be saved. In His name we pray, amen.

SONG

Do You Hear What I Hear

DECEMBER 11

Rules

Day 11 – Moses

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20:1-17



PARAPHRASE

While the people of Israel were wandering in the desert between Egypt and Israel, Moses received a message from God telling him to go up to the top of a mountain. On top of Mount Sinai, God gave Moses two stone tablets. Each tablet had five laws written on it, which told the people how God wanted them to behave. This is what God said: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

- 1) Don't pray to any god except Me.
- 2) Do not make idols and don't bow down and worship idols. I am the LORD your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject me and worship idols, I will punish your families for three or four generations. But if you love me and obey my laws, I will be kind to your families for thousands of generations.
- 3) Do not take God's name in vain. I am the LORD your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name.
- 4) Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy—it belongs to me. You have six days when you can do your work, but the seventh day of the week belongs to me, your God. No one is to work on that day. This special day of rest will remind you that I reached out my mighty arm and rescued you from slavery in Egypt.
- 5) Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long and successful life in the land I am giving you.

6) Do not kill.

7) Be faithful in your marriage.

8) Do not steal.

9) Do not tell lies.

10) Do not desire to possess anything that belongs to another person—not a house, a wife, a husband, a slave, an ox, a donkey, or anything else.”

PRAYER

Righteous God, thank You for giving us rules to guide us and keep us safe. May we respond to Your compassion and care with obedience out of our love for You. Amen.

SONG

Noel

DECEMBER 12

Going into God's Place



Day 12 – Joshua

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 2 & 6

PARAPHRASE

Joshua, the new leader of the Israelites, sent two spies to find out as much as they could about the town of Jericho within the land promised to the Israelites. The spies went to Jericho and hid overnight in the house of a woman named Rahab.

When Jericho's king found out about the spies, he sent soldiers to Rahab's house to arrest them. The soldiers came to her door and demanded, "Let us have the men who are staying at your house. They are spies."

She answered, "They left. I don't know where they were going, but if you hurry, maybe you can catch them." So the soldiers left. Meanwhile, the spies were hiding on Rahab's roof. Rahab said to the spies, "I know God has given Israel this land. Everyone shakes with fear because of you and we've lost our courage and our will to fight. Please promise me in God's name that you will help keep my family safe." So they promised. They left and reported to Joshua and told him everything that had happened.

Joshua's army went to Jericho to fight but the city was walled off. God told Joshua, "March slowly around Jericho once a day for six days. Tell seven priests to walk in front of it, carrying trumpets. But on the seventh day, march slowly around the town seven times while the priests blow their trumpets and everyone else will

shout. The wall will fall down, and your soldiers can go straight in from every side.”

Joshua obeyed God’s Instruction and the walls of Jericho fell flat. They took over the town and made sure to keep Rahab’s family safe during the battle of Jericho. She became the great-great-grandmother of King David, and Jesus would be born from her family line, too.

PRAYER

God, we pray we always follow Your instructions, even when they don’t make sense to us. We belong to You and You know what’s best for us. Help us always do the right thing and obey Your instructions.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho

OLDER KIDS: We Three Kings

DECEMBER 13

Taking Care

Day 13 – Ruth



SCRIPTURE: Ruth 1:15-2:13

PARAPHRASE

Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, returned to Bethlehem after their husbands died and they were poor and alone. It was harvest time, and one day Ruth said to Naomi, “Let me see if I can find someone who will let me pick up the grain left in the fields by the harvest workers.” And Ruth went to gather leftover wheat from a field so she and Naomi would have something to eat. Naomi asked, “Where did you work today? Whose field was it? God bless the man who treated you so well!” Then Ruth told her that she had worked in the field of a man named Boaz. She didn’t know that the field was owned by Boaz, a relative of Naomi’s, as well as a rich and important man.

Boaz wanted to help the women, so he married Ruth. The town leaders bared witness, praying: “that God will give your wife many children, just as he did Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob. May you be a rich man in the tribe of Ephrath and an important man in Bethlehem. May the children you have by this young woman make your family as famous as the family of Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah.”

Naomi’s friends praised God that He provided Naomi with a grandson to care for her in her old age. Naomi loved her grandson and took good care of him. His name was Obed. Obed would grow up to have a son named Jesse, who later would become the father of King David.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for taking care of us as You did for Ruth and Naomi. You redeemed her through the birth of Obed, just as our redemption came through the birth of Jesus. You always fulfill Your promises and may we serve You in gratitude as we wait for our Redeemer Jesus to return. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

OLDER KIDS: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

DECEMBER 14

New Kingdom

Day 14 – Jesse



SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-5

PARAPHRASE

Like a branch that shoots up from a stump, someone from Jesse's family will grow into a king.

The Spirit of God will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of God—
His greatest joy will be to obey God.

This king won't judge by appearances or listen to rumors.
The poor and the needy will be treated with fairness and with justice.

His word will be law everywhere in the land,
and the wicked will be put to death.

Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

PRAYER

God, may we remember how something good can spring forth from any circumstance according to Your plans. How amazing that the prophet Isaiah foretold of Christ's coming 700 years before He was born. Lord Jesus, come to the world and bring the new kingdom of God to our hearts. Amen.

SONG

Lo! How a Rose e'er blooming

Song Lyrics

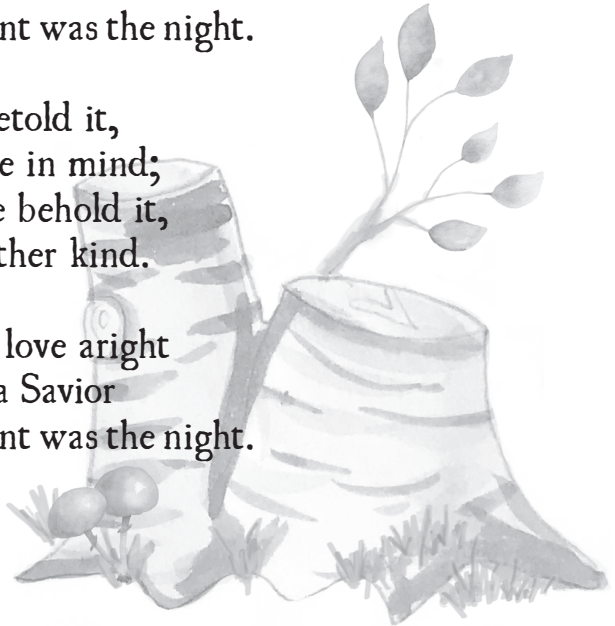
LO! HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

Lo! How a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As those of old have sung.

It came a flower bright
Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind;
And so then we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.

To show God's love aright
She bore to us a Savior
When half-spent was the night.



DECEMBER 15

Candle of Joy

Day 15 – Third Advent Candle



SCRIPTURE: Psalm 5:11

INTRODUCTION

Watch and wait for Christ's coming! We light three candles, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

God has come to save us! We will trust in Him and not be afraid.

From Psalm 5:11, we hear these words,

“But let all who take refuge in You rejoice;

let them ever sing for joy.

Spread Your protection over them,

so that those who love Your name may be joyful in You.”

Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. Let's pray.

PRAYER

We pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people. This week in our Advent journey, open our eyes to the joy that surrounds us. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: Joy Down in my Heart

OLDER KIDS: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

DECEMBER 16

Anointed

Day 16 – Samuel



SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

PARAPHRASE

God told Samuel that he had chosen a new king for Israel. “Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons.” Samuel did what the Lord directed and went to Bethlehem. When they arrived, Samuel thought the Lord would want Jesse’s oldest son to be the king and said, “Certainly the Lord’s anointed one is here before Him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because he isn’t who I have chosen. People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts.” Instead, the Lord chose the youngest son, David, who was out tending the sheep. The Lord chose David even though he did not look as big and handsome as his older brothers. Samuel anointed David as the new king but it would be many years before the time was right for David to take Saul’s place.

PRAYER

Oh God, while we often misjudge others’ character; You value only the faith, fear, and love, which are planted in our hearts. Please anoint us with the sweet presence of your Holy Spirit and fill our hearts with joy and love as we wait for Christ’s return. Amen.

SONG

Go Tell It on the Mountain

DECEMBER 17

Little Hero

Day 17 – David & Goliath

SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 17



PARAPHRASE

While Saul the king of Israel was still reigning, and while David and his brothers were still just boys, the Philistines gathered for war against Israel. The two armies faced each other, camped for battle on opposite sides of a steep valley. A Philistine giant measuring over nine feet tall and wearing full armor came out each day for forty days, mocking and challenging the Israelites to fight. His name was Goliath. Saul and the whole army were terrified of Goliath.

One day David, the youngest son of Jesse, was sent to the battle lines by his father to bring back news of his brothers. David was just a young teenager at the time. While there, David heard Goliath shouting and he saw the great fear stirred within the men of Israel.

So David volunteered to fight Goliath. Dressed in his simple tunic, carrying his shepherd's staff, sling, and a pouch full of stones, David approached Goliath, and said: "You come to me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel's armies—whom you have defied. Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down...so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword and spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will hand you over to us."

David took out a stone from his pouch, slung it and hit Goliath on his forehead and the giant sunk to the ground. Even though David had no sword, he struck down the giant. The men of Israel and Judah all shouted with joy.

When Saul had seen what happened, he asked David, “Whose son are you, young man?” “The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem,” David answered.

Whenever we do anything in God’s name, all the power of heaven is with us. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

PRAYER

God Above, we thank You for allowing us to be partakers of your Divine nature. Help us remember that since You have written out plans for each of our lives, we can step forward courageously and trust that things will turn out okay. Amen.

SONG

Little Drummer Boy

DECEMBER 18

Send me

Day 18 – Isaiah



SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 6:1-8; 7:1-14

PARAPHRASE

When God called Isaiah to help him, he gave Isaiah a dream. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. The royal robe he wore was so long, it filled the temple! In this temple, Isaiah also saw special angels called seraphs. These seraphs had six wings! Two wings covered their faces, two covered their feet, and two wings were used for flying. Isaiah smelled smoke in the temple, too. And Isaiah heard the seraphs calling, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!” Isaiah said that the seraphs’ voices were like thunder! They were so loud that the doors shook. When Isaiah saw God in the temple, he knew just how special and holy God is! He also saw how different from God he was. He knew he had done sinful things that made God unhappy. One of the seraphs flew to a table in the temple and used tongs to take a hot coal and touch Isaiah’s mouth with it to make it clean! Then the Lord asked, “Who will go to help me? Who can I send?” Isaiah said, “Here I am, Lord, send me.” Isaiah wanted to help this great and holy God.

This took place when Ahaz was king of Judah, and King Ahaz had just received news that he might be under attack. King Ahaz and everyone in Judah were so terrified that they shook like trees in a windstorm. So God told Isaiah, “Go to Ahaz and say to him, ‘Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart—I promise the attack will not happen.’”

So Isaiah told this to King Ahaz and said, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.”

PRAYER

O Lord, thank You so much for Your promises. May we be ready when You choose us to be a part of Your great plans. Amen.

SONG

Children Go Where I Send Thee

DECEMBER 19

Faith

Day 19 – Zechariah & Elizabeth



SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:5-25; 39-49

PARAPHRASE

Zechariah was a priest whose wife was named Elizabeth. They were older people and they had no children. Zechariah was chosen to go into the church temple of God and burn incense. When he did this, all the people were praying outside. Suddenly an angel of God appeared to him. When Zechariah saw him, he was scared and fearful. But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of God and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother’s womb. John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to God. He will go ahead of the Lord with the same power and spirit that Elijah had. And because of John, parents will be more thoughtful of their children. And people who now disobey God will begin to think as they ought to. This is how John will get people ready for the Lord.”

A short time later, Elizabeth’s relative, Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah’s home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, her baby moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: “God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the

child you will have. But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come visit me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises.”

Mary responded, “Oh, how my soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! God cares for me, His humble servant. From now on, all people will say God has blessed me, because the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.”

PRAYER

We believe that You, our Grace, is coming. May we share Your news with others during this season of Advent! Amen.

SONG

Angels We Have Heard on High

DECEMBER 20

Prepare

Day 20 – John the Baptist



SCRIPTURE: Matthew 3:1-6

PARAPHRASE

John the Baptist came to preach, saying, “Stop disobeying and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming! Clear the road for him!’” John’s clothes were woven from camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And, when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

PRAYER

Holy God, forgive us when we do things that displease You. May our hearts be ready for Jesus. Amen.

SONG

Away in a Manger

DECEMBER 21

Carpenter's Son

Day 21 – Joseph



SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:18-24

PARAPHRASE

Joseph from King David's family was engaged to Mary. But before they married, she learned that she was going to have a baby. Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Now all this took place to fulfill what was promised by the Lord through the prophet: "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were soon married, just as the Lord's angel had told him to do.

PRAYER

God, help us to hear Your voice when You call us. Give us courage to do as You say. Amen.

SONG

Silent Night

DECEMBER 22

Candle of Love

Day 22 – Fourth Advent Candle

SCRIPTURE: John 3:16-17



INTRODUCTION

Watch and wait for Christ's coming! We light candles of hope, preparation, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer. The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of endless love and faithfulness. Out of darkness light shines, pointing us in hope to the One who came to overcome the darkness of this world and to be our light in the world to come. It is Jesus who brings light to the world. And where there is light, there is joy and peace and assurance. When the world seems dark, scary, and frightening, we are reminded that Jesus brings light, and that brings joy.

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.” During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know that God's love for all people is the reason for this gift. Let's pray.

PRAYER

Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your one and only Son. As we prepare for our celebration of Jesus' birth, also fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know Your love and the one whom You have sent, Your Son, our Savior. Amen.

SONG

YOUNGER KIDS: John 3:16

OLDER KIDS: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

DECEMBER 23

Purity

Day 23 – Mary

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-38



PARAPHRASE

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. The angel greeted Mary and said, “You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was confused by the angel’s words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, “Don’t be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end.” Mary asked the angel, “How can this happen? I am not even married!” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God’s power will come over you. So your child will be called the Holy Son of God. Nothing is impossible for God!” Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant! Let it happen as you have said.” And the angel left her.

PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, that with Your help nothing is impossible. Thank You for Your many blessings. Amen.

SONG

Mary Did You Know

DECEMBER 24

Journey

Day 24 – Bethlehem



SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-5; Isaiah 9:6

PARAPHRASE

Mary and Joseph lived in part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Augustus wanted a list made of all the people in his empire to ensure they paid their taxes. Everyone was ordered back to their hometowns to enter their names in a census. Joseph's family was from Bethlehem, so Mary and Joseph traveled a long way from Nazareth, about 70 miles. Most people walked but some lucky people had a donkey to help carry the goods needed for the journey. Joseph and Mary traveled very slowly because Mary's baby would soon be born. As Isaiah reads, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, guide our journeys—wherever they take us—Holy One! Amen.

EXTENDED EVENING OF WORSHIP

FOR YOUNGER KIDS:

For Unto Us a Child is Born
There is a Star
One Still Night

FOR OLDER KIDS:

For Unto Us a Child is Born
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
One Still Night
Oh Light

DECEMBER 25

A Saviour is Born

Day 25 – Christ

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:6-21



PARAPHRASE

Today the Advent season ends. We wait no longer. That great event for which we waited has happened. God fulfilled His promise of a Redeemer. While they were in Bethlehem, Mary's son was born. And she wrapped him in swaddling-clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Nearby, shepherds watched their sheep at night. And an angel from God stood by them and a heavenly light shone around them, frightening them. But the angel said to them: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be for all the people. For to you is born this day in the town of David a Savior, who is God's Anointed. This will be a sign to guide you: You will find a baby in swaddling-clothes lying in a manger." Suddenly, many angels appeared singing praise to God and saying: "Glory to God on high, And on earth peace, good-will among men." The shepherds said, "Let's go now to Bethlehem to see baby Jesus." So they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph; and the baby was lying in a manger. They told everybody about baby Jesus. And the shepherds thanked God for what they had seen.

PRAYER

Thank You, heavenly Father for the most wonderful gift of your son Jesus. O Child of Bethlehem, Your birth gives us great joy. Make our joy complete so that we, like You, spend our lives looking to the interests of others. Amen.

SONG

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



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