

WEEK 2

The Bethlehem Candle: Peace and Preparation

This week, we're excited to focus on the peace we have in Jesus! To help your family dive deeper, we've prepared five devotionals you can use. You will do the Advent candle lighting and devotional on Sunday and then use the rest of the week to go through the remaining 4 devotionals. You'll also find some fun activities and creative ideas designed to make this truth come alive and help your family understand what it means to have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. We're praying these resources are a blessing to your family as you follow Jesus together!

Activity Ideas

- Take a walk to reflect on His goodness.
- Create a Christmas playlist of worship music.
- Spend longer periods of time sitting in God's Word.
- Make a list of who God is or pray together as a family.

Week 2 | Sunday

Today, we light the second candle of Advent, the Bethlehem Candle. The Bethlehem Candle represents preparation and the peace that God gives us through Jesus. It reflects on Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and how they prepared for the arrival of their son, the Son of God. Everything happened just as God had planned, and the promised Messiah was born in a stable in Bethlehem. He brought peace that nothing in this world could offer. He came to save us and mend our broken relationship (broken because of sin) with God. The world can be hard and dark, but this candle reminds us that we can have peace in God, and one day He will make all things right.

Light the candle and read Isaiah 9:6. Then close this devotional in prayer. "Lord, may You prepare our hearts as we celebrate this Christmas season. May we be reminded that true peace comes only through You. The world offers temporary joy and peace, but Your peace cannot be taken away. We praise You for this, and may we trust You as we walk with You. Amen!" Blow out the candle.

Week 2 | Devotional 1 | Zachariah and Elizabeth

Scripture Reading: Luke 1

Zachariah and Elizabeth were a faithful couple who loved and served God. Elizabeth was actually Mary's cousin! One day, while Zachariah was serving in the temple, something amazing happened. The angel Gabriel appeared right in front of him! Gabriel told Zachariah that his wife would have a baby boy, and they were to name him John. This child would grow up to prepare the way for the promised Savior, Jesus. Zachariah could hardly believe what he was hearing. After all, he and Elizabeth were far too old to have a baby—at least that's what he thought. Because he doubted the angel's message, Gabriel told him that he wouldn't be able to speak until the baby was born. Just as the angel said, Elizabeth became pregnant. Later, when she went to visit her cousin Mary, something wonderful happened—the baby inside Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy! What an incredible moment for Elizabeth, knowing she was carrying the one who would prepare the world for Jesus!

Questions to Ask: What does this story teach us about trusting God, even when something seems impossible? Why do you think Zachariah struggled to believe God's promise? How can we trust God when things don't make sense to us? John was born to prepare the way for Jesus. How can we help others learn about Jesus today?

Close this devotional in prayer: Pray and thank God for always keeping His promises. Just like He gave Zachariah and Elizabeth a son named John to prepare the way for Jesus, He has a plan and purpose for each of us too. Pray and ask God to help us to trust Him even when things seem impossible. And thank Him for sending Jesus to be our Savior and for filling our hearts with joy and hope.

Week 2 | Devotional 2 | Mary and Joseph

Scripture Reading: Luke 1

Mary and Joseph were a young couple who loved God and planned to get married soon. One day, something incredible happened—an angel named Gabriel appeared to Mary! Gabriel told her that she had been chosen for a very special purpose: she would become the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Mary was surprised and a little afraid, but she trusted God completely. She said, "I am the Lord's

servant,” and she felt honored and blessed to carry God’s Son. When Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby, he wasn’t sure what to do. But one night, while he was sleeping, an angel appeared to him in a dream. The angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the baby was from God’s Holy Spirit. The angel said the baby should be named Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. Joseph obeyed God, married Mary, and together they waited for the day Jesus—the Savior of the world—would be born.

Questions to Ask: What can we learn from Joseph’s obedience to God’s message? What does this story show us about God’s plan for our lives? How can we say “yes” to God like Mary did?

Close this devotional in prayer: Pray and ask God to help us to trust Him, even when things are surprising or hard to understand. Thank God for sending Jesus to be our Savior and for showing us how much He loves us. Ask God to help us to listen, obey, and say “yes” to what He calls us to do.

Week 2 | Devotional 3 | The Birth of Jesus

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:15; Luke 2:1-7

Everything happened just as God had promised long ago. On a night in Bethlehem, Jesus was born! Because there was no room for Mary and Joseph at the inn, baby Jesus was born in a simple stable. Mary wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a manger—a feeding trough for animals. This tiny baby wasn’t just any baby—He was God’s Son, the Savior of the world! Jesus’ birth changed everything. God had sent His Son to earth to live a perfect life, to die on the cross for our sins, and to rise again, defeating sin and death forever. God’s plan to rescue us wasn’t something new—it had been in motion since the very beginning of creation. From the first moment of the world, God knew we would need a Savior, and He had already prepared the way. His plan of rescue came through one person—Jesus!

Questions to Ask: How does Jesus’ birth show God’s love for us? Why do you think God chose for Jesus to be born in such a humble place? What are some ways we can celebrate Jesus, not just at Christmas, but all year long?

Close this devotional in prayer: Thank God for keeping His promises and sending Jesus into the world. Ask Him to help us remember that Christmas is all about Jesus and the hope He brings.

Week 2 | Devotional 4 | The Shepherds

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:8-20

That same night, out in the quiet fields near Bethlehem, a group of shepherds were watching over their sheep. It was an ordinary night—until suddenly, the sky lit up with a bright light! An angel of the Lord appeared, and the shepherds were terrified. But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you—He is Christ the Lord!” The angel told them they would find the baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger. Then, in an instant, the night sky filled with countless angels singing and praising God: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased!” The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus—just as the angel had said. Their hearts were filled with joy and wonder. They couldn’t keep the good news to themselves, so they went out and told everyone what they had seen. The shepherds praised God for all He had done, and the good news of Jesus began to spread! What a wonderful sight to think about!

Questions to Ask: How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angels and then found Jesus? What are some ways we can “spread the good news” about Jesus today? How does this story remind us that Jesus came for everyone, no matter who they are?

Close this devotional in prayer: Pray and thank God for sending Jesus. Pray and ask Jesus to give you boldness and sharing Christ with those who don’t know Him in your life.