

WEEK 3

The Shepherds Candle: Joy

This week, we're excited to focus on the Joy 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 true joy in Jesus. We're praying these resources are a blessing to your family as you follow Jesus together!

Activity Ideas

- This week, focus on the joy that Christ brings. Here are some great ideas on how to do that:
- Go ice skating with friends.
- Worship together.
- Look at Christmas lights and talk about all the blessings God has given you.
- Host a family game night.
- Share your favorite Christmas memory.

Week 3 | Sunday

Today, we light the third candle of Advent, the Shepherds Candle. This candle represents joy! The shepherds experienced great joy with the birth of Jesus. They were the first to hear the great news that a Savior had been born. Joy is more than just a feeling. We can have joy, even in hard times, because God is always with us. He promises to never leave us, and through Jesus, we have salvation! We can have joy no matter what because He is our joy! One day, we will be with God forever, and there will be no pain and peace that never ends! Light the candle and read Philippians 4:4. Then close this devotional in prayer. "Thank you, God, that we can have joy no matter what we are facing. We love You and worship You because You are God." Blow out the candle.

Week 3 | Devotional 1 | Joy in Every Circumstance

Scripture Reading: Phil 4:4; James 1:2-4

Joy isn't something we have only when everything is going our way. True joy stays with us no matter what is happening around us. It's choosing to trust God in every circumstance and leaning on Him through both the good and the hard moments. We can have joy because God never changes. He promises to be with us through it all. Even in our trials and tough seasons, God is at work—shaping our hearts, building our faith, and making us more like Jesus.

This kind of joy doesn't mean we ignore pain or pretend everything is fine. It means we look at life through a different lens—knowing that God uses challenges to strengthen our faith and remind us that we are never alone. The Bible says that through these moments, God makes us “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” So even when life feels heavy, we can hold on to joy—because we know that every moment, God is working for our good and for His glory.

Questions to Ask: What's something hard you're going through right now? How can you still find joy in God? What are some things that make you joyful because of who God is? Can you think of a time God used something hard in your life for good?

Week 3 | Devotional 2 | Joy in God's Presence

Scripture Reading: Psalm 16:11

Ultimate joy isn't found in things—it's found in God's presence. We might feel happy for a little while because of something new or exciting, but that kind of happiness doesn't last. True and lasting joy comes only from being close to God. Nothing in this world can fill our hearts the way God can. When we draw near Him, we experience the abundant life He has promised—one filled with peace, purpose, and joy that never fades. So how do we stay close to God? By living a life that's rooted in Him. We spend time in His presence through worship, prayer, reading His Word, being part of a community of believers, and practicing habits that help our faith grow stronger. The closer we walk with God, the more we discover that He alone is our greatest joy.

Questions to Ask: What does it mean that real joy is found in God's presence? Which of these helps

you feel close to God—worship, prayer, or reading His Word? Why? How can you stay rooted in God when life gets busy or hard?

Close this devotional in prayer: Pray and thank God for being our source of Joy. Thank Him for giving us the gift of His presence. That we can have a relationship with Him. Thank Him for the Holy Spirit living inside of us!

Week 3 | Devotional 3 | Joy for All People

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:6, John 3:16

He came to bring hope to the hopeless, peace to the weary, and joy that never ends. Jesus offers the greatest gift we could ever receive—salvation and a relationship with our Heavenly Father. Because of Jesus, our sins are forgiven, and we can have eternal life with God. The Bible reminds us that “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) What an incredible gift. The joy of Christmas is meant to be shared—with our family, our friends, and everyone around us. Jesus is the reason we celebrate, and He is the source of joy that lasts forever.

Questions to Ask: How can your family spread joy to those around you this Christmas season?

Close this devotional in prayer: Thank God for the gift of Jesus and that He invites us all to be a part of His family.

Week 3 | Devotional 4 | Joy in Sharing the Good News

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:17-18, Matthew 22:36-39

The shepherds couldn't keep quiet—they had to tell everyone about Jesus! After seeing the Savior lying in the manger, their hearts were overflowing with joy. They ran to share the good news with everyone they met, praising God for all they had heard and seen. The message of Jesus' birth was simply too wonderful to keep to themselves! When we experience the joy of knowing Jesus, we should want to share it too. Telling others about Jesus brings joy not only to them, but to us as well. It reminds us how amazing God's love truly is and how deeply He cares for every person. Jesus said the greatest commandments are to love God and love others. One of the best ways we can love others is by helping them know the hope and peace that come from Jesus. We are called to be His witnesses—to shine His light and speak of His love to those who don't yet know Him. Just like the shepherds, we can share the joy of Jesus with our words, our kindness, and our actions. When we do, the joy of Christmas keeps spreading—heart to heart, home to home, and generation to generation.

Questions to Ask: How are you loving God and loving others? What are some ways your family can share His love and joy with others? Who can you share the love of Jesus with this week?

Close this devotional in prayer: Talk about who you know in your life who needs to hear about God's love for them. Spend time praying for them. Then pray for those who don't know Him that are in your neighborhood, schools, workplaces. Pray that God would give you boldness and opportunity to share His love with them!