

Advent

Guide



LAKE COUNTRY

Advent Guide

Every year during the month of December we take time to celebrate a holiday that has come to be known as Christmas. Initially this time began with a desire to celebrate the birth of our savior two thousand years ago but has over time, like many things, become more man centered rather than Christ centered. It is our desire as a church to redeem the meaning of this time and celebrate the coming of the most notable person of all, our God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

What is advent?

Advent: the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.
- Derived from a latin word *adventus* meaning “coming”

Which coming or arrival of Christ do we celebrate?

The goal of our Advent study is to remember the greater story of God and how the past arrival of Jesus and His future coming play climactic roles in the purpose of God. So often we like to begin and end the Christmas season celebrating Jesus in a manger but it really is much bigger than that scene, the script goes much further back and will come to fruition further in the future. The Advent of Jesus, both past and future, provide us with hope not only in what God has done but also in what will be done.

As church history would have it, the celebration of advent began with the anticipation of second coming of Christ in judgment to release His children from the clutches of this world, but, in time the season began to be accompanied by the celebration of Christ first advent in Bethlehem. The celebration of the birth of Christ with his anticipated second coming are both part of God's greater picture of redemption and should not be separated from each other during the Christmas season. Just as the cross and the empty tomb are equally important within the resurrection season.

In these next four weeks we will celebrate the Christmas season by being reminded of God's greater story and what role the first and second comings of Christ play in this beautiful redemption plan of God.

Using this Guide

This advent guide is made up of 4 weeks of personal and family devotionals to help you and or your family celebrate Jesus during the month of December. If you are leading your family through this guide, you are encouraged to first go through the personal devotional then lead your family through the family devotional. The family devotional piece is written with younger kids in mind. Either the personal or family devotionals can be used with an Advent wreath or candle display. *We have some simple examples of Advent candle displays on our Advent Pinterest Page.* These guides are designed to be used once a week for a simple time of reflection and meditation on what the Christmas season is about.

Resource Guide

We have provided two resources to go along with this guide as you lead your family through the Advent celebration.

1. A Spotify Playlist

- We have put together a selection of songs to help us celebrate Advent. This can be found at our website lakecountrybaptist.com/advent or in the Lake Country App

2. A Pinterest Page

- We have put together a Pinterest page with ideas for family activities during the Advent season as well as ideas for Advent candle displays. You can also find a link to this page at lakecountrybaptist.com/advent or in the Lake Country App.

Weekly Topics

Week #1 - The Hope of Christmas

Week #2 - The Love of Christmas

Week #3 - The Joy of Christmas

Week #4 - The Peace of Christmas

Week #1

The Hope of Christmas

Personal Study

And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” - Genesis 3:15

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. 3 You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian. 5 For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire. 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. - Isaiah 9:1–7

Scripture Context

Paradise Lost

The story of Christmas doesn't begin in a manger, it doesn't even begin with Mary speaking to an angel. The story of Christmas goes all the way back to the beginning, the time when man lived in the garden at peace with himself, with the creation and with his creator. God had created all things good and given man great freedom to enjoy all that God had made with one exception. There was a tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil that man was forbidden to eat from for in his disobedience if he ate of that tree he would surely die. As we now know and experience man ate of that tree and the peace he enjoyed with himself, the creation and with God was now gone and death was now inevitable.

Promised Hope

If you do not plan on using the family devotional but would like to light advent candles then now would be a good time to light your first advent candle as you meditate on God's provision of hope.

So, where is hope found in this tragic situation? Genesis 3:15 has been labeled by many scholars, “the first gospel.” God never leaves man without hope, He promises to always make a way. Though man blatantly disobeyed, God faithfully extends mercy promising to restore what was lost.

From the time of man’s sin to the first advent of Jesus the fulfillment of God’s promise will be foreshadowed again and again.

Numbers 24:17

“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Micah 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”

Personal Response

These questions are designed more for meditation to encourage us to think on the reason for the Advent season.

God makes promises and God’s promises are fulfilled in His timing. All through Israel’s history they had to wait on God. How does one deal with the doubt that accompanies waiting?

What opportunities might present themselves during the waiting process?

When you are called to wait on or hope in God how do you maintain your faith in it all?

Personal Prayer

Spend time thanking God for giving us hope through the Advent of Jesus Christ.

Song(s) for the Season

Take some time to listen to and or sing along with the following carols of Christmas.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Week #1

Family Time

Light the Candle

Have one member of your family light the first of four candles of Advent.
The Hope of Christmas

Scripture Reading

Have one member of our family read the following passage(s) of scripture.

*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” - **Genesis 3:15***

*For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - **Isaiah 9:6***

The Hope of Christmas

Have an adult read the explanation below...

In the beginning God created the world perfectly and everything that was in it and part of it was good. It was God's desire that all things would remain good just as He made them, but the first two people created, Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve they had to be separated from God and punished for their sin. Adam and Eve could no longer stay in the beautiful garden that God had made for them and they would no longer be able to live forever. God is a perfect God and because He is perfect He could not be around those who are not.

As God is perfect He is also very merciful, He gives second chances. Though Adam and Eve had to be punished for their disobedience God made a promise to them that one day He would send someone to rescue them from their punishment and one day they would be able to once again be close to God. God didn't do this right away, in fact it would be thousands of years later that Jesus would be born. While they waited Adam and Eve and every person who was born after them had something to look forward to,

they had hope. Because of Jesus' birthday we to have hope that we will also get to be near God again.

Family Question

What is something that you get excited about that is really hard to wait for?

Explain how that is the same feeling God's people had and have as they wait for Jesus to come to earth.

Family Prayer

Have someone pray and thank God for promising to send Jesus to make a way for us to be close to Him again and rescue us from our sins.

Song

Either sing one of the following songs as a family or listen to it together. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Family Activity

Choose one or both of the following activities to participate in as a family.

Make a plan to do something as a family later in the week that you know your kids will look forward to. Talk to them about how their excitement for the promised family activity is the same excitement God's people have had and have for Jesus' coming.

As a family choose a craft depicting the Nativity scene. Ideas can be found for this activity on our Advent Pinterest page.

Week #2

The Love of Christmas

Personal Study

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” - Micah 5:2

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. - John 3:16

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (appeasement of God's wrath) for our sins. - 1 John 4:10

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. - Luke 2:7

Scriptural Context

If you do not plan on using the family devotional but would like to light advent candles ,then now would be a good time to light your first and second advent candle as you meditate on God's provision of hope and love.

In Genesis chapter 3 God made a promise to His creation motivated by mercy and love. This promise was reiterated over and over again throughout the Old Testament (OT). From the time God promised to rescue man from His sins to the first advent of Jesus there was a 2,000 year span, but God never forgot His promise.

Through God ordained events Mary and Joseph were led exactly where God intended them to be. A little town called Bethlehem, prophesied by Isaiah 700+ years before.

On an unassuming night, in an unassuming place, to an unassuming family, Jesus The Savior arrived. There had been 450 years of silence since the last words of the OT were penned and on that night God once again began to speak through the cry of a baby.

Jesus' arrival did not measure up to the expectations of those waiting with great anticipation, but God's way seen through the lens of hindsight brings clarity to the perfect fulfillment of God's promises. The OT prophets through the inspiration of the spirit foretold exactly how the Messiah would arrive and because of God's great love we were given a path to a restored relationship with our God.

Personal Response

These questions are designed more for meditation to encourage us to think on the reason for the Advent season.

When you consider the exact fulfillment of Jesus' prophesied birth how does this encourage you when you consider the sovereignty of God?

How does the great gift of Jesus Christ display the great love that God has for His creation?

Personal Prayer

Take some time to thank God for His faithfulness to fulfill His promises by giving us the gift of His only son.

Song(s) for the Season

Take some time to listen to and or sing along with the following carols of Christmas. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Away in the Manger
Oh Holy Night

Week #2

Family Time

Light The Candle

Have one member of your family light the first and second of four candles of Advent. The Hope of Christmas and The Love of Christmas

Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passage of scripture.

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. - **Luke 2:1-7**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. - **John 3:16**

The Love of Christmas

Have an adult read the explanation below...

Last time we lit an Advent candle we learned that God made a very big promise to all of us that He would give us a gift that would allow us to live with Him forever because He loved us so much. Tonight we light a new candle to remind us how much God loves us.

On a night not much different from tonight, Jesus' mother and father made their way to a town called Bethlehem because the king commanded everyone to return to their home towns. That night Jesus' family had to stay in a barn because all the rooms in the town were full. While Jesus' mom and dad shared a space with all kinds of animals it was

time for Jesus to be born. After thousands of years of waiting for God to keep His promise He finally did on Jesus' birthday. Because Jesus was born that day we all can have hope because we know that God loves us and has made a way to forgive us of all our sins.

Family Question

Have you ever been given a present from someone who loves you very much?

Explain how God loves us the same way and has given us the gift of Jesus that shows us His love.

Family Prayer

Have someone pray and thank God for loving us so much that He gave us the gift of Jesus.

Song

Either sing one of the following songs as a family or listen to it together. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Away In The Manger
Oh Holy Night

Family Activity

Take time to make a popcorn and cranberry garland that you can hang outside as a gift of food for the birds.

Explain how your gift to the birds helps give them what they need to live just as the gift of Jesus gives us what we need to live forever.

You can find instructions for this activity on our Advent Pinterest page.

Week #3

The Joy of Christmas

Personal Study

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” - **Luke 2:8–14**

Scriptural Context

If you do not plan on using the family devotional but would like to light advent candles , now would be a good time to light your first, second and third advent candle as you meditate on God’s provision of hope, love and joy.

Jesus had finally arrived and it was time to share the news. The first account we see of the proclamation of Jesus’ birth is from the angels to the shepherds in the field. With keeping with God’s “habit” of involving the least of society in His purposes He sends His angels to the lowly shepherds.

The message of the angels was one of great jubilation for the promised messiah was finally here it there was not other response to give than one of celebration. What about this baby, according to the message of the angels, demanded this response? 1. It was a message for all people, 2. It happened in the city of David just as God had said, 3. He was the long, long awaited savior. Then the angels break out in song Glory to God in the highest, meaning God’s promises are being fulfilled, by bringing peace and goodwill to men. The peace with God that was shattered in the garden is in process of being restored to all men. The very thing that God proclaimed was very good is once again going to be seen as very Good. This message should cause all men to respond with JOY!

Personal Response

These questions are designed more for meditation to encourage us to think on the reason for the Advent season.

During the Christmas season do you ever find yourself lacking joy? If yes, what do you believe the source of this might be? How in those moments might you get that joy back?

Personal Prayer

Spend some time in prayer remember the glory of God and joyfully praising Him for all that He has done and continues to do.

Song(s) for the Season

Take some time to listen to and or sing along with the following carols of Christmas. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Joy to the World
Angels We Have Heard on High
Go Tell It on the Mountain

Week #3

Family Time

Light The Candle

Have one member of your family light the first, second and third of four candles of Advent.

The Hope of Christmas ,The Love of Christmas and The Joy of Christmas

Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passage(s) of scripture.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” - **Luke 2:8–14**

The Joy of Christmas

Have an adult read the explanation below...

So far in our story of Advent we have seen that God made a big promise to Adam and Eve even after they disobeyed Him. Because our God loves us so much He promised to make a way for all of us to once again have a relationship with Him. The people had to wait a very long time but they had great hope that God would soon fulfill His promise. On a quiet night in a small town God gave us the greatest gift of love that anyone could give, He gave us Jesus. Jesus was born so one day He could save us from our sin. Jesus' birthday was and still is a great reason to celebrate and to sing for Joy that God is always with us and will always love us no matter what.

Family Question

Have you ever been given a gift that you couldn't wait to show your friends because it brought you so much joy?

Explain how this is the same kind of joy that the angels had when Jesus was born and the people they told were just as happy that they wanted to tell everyone.

Family Prayer

Have someone pray and thank God for the awesome gift of Jesus and ask Him to help us tell others about how happy Jesus makes us.

Song

Either sing one of the following songs as a family or listen to it together. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Joy to the World
Angels We Have Heard on High
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Go Tell It on the Mountain

Family Activity

Choose one or both of the following activities to participate in as a family.

As a family make some cupcakes or a cake and sing happy birthday to Jesus.

Do a craft together depicting the angels who proclaimed the joy of Jesus' birth. Ideas for this activity can be found on our Advent Pinterest page.

Week #4
The Peace of Christmas
Personal Study

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - **Isaiah 9:6**

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. - **Isaiah 53:6**

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, - **Romans 5:1**

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. - **Romans 8:22–23**

Scriptural Context

If you do not plan on using the family devotional but would like to light advent candles ,then now would be a good time to light your first, second, third and fourth advent candle as you meditate on God's provision of hope, love, joy and peace.

Let's go once again back to the beginning. The sin of Adam and Eve in the garden shattered the peace (shalom) that originally existed in the world and between God and man. Through the sin of man the wrath of God now abided on him and all of his descendants. What could man now do to appease the wrath of God...nothing. Man would make attempts at covering his own sin but ultimately they would be futile. Any attempt at self righteousness on the part of man would be rejected by God as *filthy rags*. What is man to do? How does God's promise in Genesis 3:15 play a role in bringing peace?

The birth and life of Jesus would make Him a worthy sacrifice for our sin. Jesus born of a virgin and tempted like us yet never sinning makes Him acceptable as a payment for our sin. Jesus could go to a cross and have the wrath of God poured out on Him while

dying in our place. 2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is where the description given to Jesus by Isaiah comes into play, Isaiah prophesied Jesus as the Prince of Peace, among other things. The first advent of Jesus accompanied by His life and His death, restored a peaceful relationship with God.

What about Jesus' second coming?

In Acts 1:11 after Jesus had risen from the dead He ascended into heaven while His disciples looked on. An angel appeared and proclaimed that just as He ascended to heaven He would one day return in a like manner to rule and reign as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Until that day we early wait with hope and anticipation that just as God fulfilled His promise once He will most certainly do it again.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...

Personal Response

These questions are designed more for meditation to encourage us to think on the reason for the Advent season.

We live in a world that struggles to find peace amongst it's people and people's hearts and minds. How do the two advents of Jesus play a major role in establishing peace especially in the hearts and minds of people? How does the promised coming of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords give us hope for the future?

Personal Prayer

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the peace that He gives us through the gift of His son and the peace He will bring with Him when He returns.

Song(s) for the Season

Take some time to listen to and or sing along with the following carol of Christmas. You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing
What Child is This?
Peace Has Come

Week #4

Family Time

Light The Candle

Have one member of your family light the first, second, third and fourth candles of Advent.

The Hope of Christmas ,The Love of Christmas, The Joy of Christmas and The Peace of Christmas

Scripture Reading

Have one member of your family read the following passage(s) of scripture.

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - **Isaiah 9:6**

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. - **Isaiah 53:6**

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, - **Romans 5:1**

The Peace of Christmas

Have an adult read the explanation below...

Peace means that we no longer are enemies of God but His family

Jesus has been born in Bethlehem and we celebrate His birthday because it brings us great hope and joy that we can be saved from our sins.

After His birth Jesus grew up to be an adult and while He grew He never sinned and He lived a perfect life. When Jesus was around 33 years old He willingly went to a cross where He died so we could be saved from our sins. We no longer have to fear the anger of God but we can with great joy know that He loves us so much that He gave us the gift of Jesus and we are not separated from Him anymore but we are part of His family.

Someday in the future Jesus is going to come back to earth as our King and He will make a new home for us to forever live with Him. We will no longer get sick and we won't ever be afraid again.

Family Question

Have you ever been in an argument with one of your friends and siblings, but they did something kind for you anyway?

Explain how God gave His only son Jesus even when we didn't deserve it because He loved us so much.

Family Prayer

Have someone pray and thank God for giving us peace through the gift of Jesus, and for Jesus dying for our sins on the cross. Tell God how much we are looking forward to Him coming back for us.

Song

*Either sing one of the following songs as a family or listen to it together.
You can find these songs on our Advent playlist.*

Hark the Herald Angels Sing
What Child is This?
Peace Has Come

Family Activity

As a family build a gingerbread house

Talk about how because of the birth, the life and the death of Jesus we are now part of the family of God and just like this house and the house we live in, we will one day get to live forever in the home that Jesus is making for us.

You can find some ideas for this activity on our Advent Pinterest page.