

What Child is This?

Christmas is a wonderful time of year, full of traditions, special time with family, beautiful decorations, festive songs, yummy treats, and the excitement of giving and receiving presents. But most importantly, Christmas is a time to celebrate Jesus and remember His birth.

The season of Advent is a way to prepare for Christmas. This advent season, on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, we will focus on something special about Jesus and the events surrounding His birth. Together we will answer the question – What Child is This? – as we prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas!



Parent Guide:

I'm so glad you and your family are joining us this month for our special advent study! Here are a few tips to make your lessons go as smoothly as possible.

- Every study includes four parts to “RAMP up” learning – Read, Apply, Make it Stick, and Prayer. See comesojourn.com/resources for more information on this method.
- I encourage you to preview the lessons before doing them with your family so you are familiar with the material. You know your children best and looking ahead gives you a chance to anticipate areas where they might need more (or less) time and focus for the best understanding.
- Before starting, check out the “Make it Stick” sections where each activity is listed so you can plan ahead. This month the focus is on activities to enjoy with the whole family in celebration of the Christmas season.
- I recommend printing the verses (last page), cutting them, and posting each verse in a place your children will frequently see it. Kids may enjoy coloring the mini Christmas designs on each verse this month!
- This month our optional “Bonus” section centers around Christmas extras we love in our family and recommend checking out if you’re interested/able.

Thanks again for joining us. I pray God blesses your family this Christmas season as you draw near to Him together!

Lesson 1: Child of Hope

Read: Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, Micah 5:2

What does hope mean?

You might hope it snows for Christmas, or you might hope to find a certain toy wrapped up under the tree. But when you say “I hope” for those things, you can’t be sure it will happen. It might, or it might not.

When the Bible talks about hope it means a confident expectation of something. Biblical hope is different than wishing for something, without being sure it will happen. When we hope in God and His promises, we can be sure, without a doubt, that what He says is true and will come to be.

The prophets who spoke about Jesus had that kind of hope, and they shared that hope with God's people. They didn't know when Jesus would come, but they knew He would come. They were sure it would happen because God promised it would.

We celebrate this hope at Christmas. We celebrate the way Jesus fulfilled the prophecies that were told about Him. His birth happened just as God, through the prophets, had said it would. We also celebrate the hope we have for the future, knowing that all the other promises God has made will come true.

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Apply: The prophets spoke with hope of the coming of a savior, and Jesus fulfilled that hope. What do we hope for now? What has God promised us for the future that we are waiting to see fulfilled?

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Make it Stick: Christmas Cookies

When we make cookies there is a sense of anticipation. Anticipation means waiting for something, expecting it to happen. We measure and mix the ingredients, then put the cookies in the oven and wait for them to bake. We know what's coming – a delicious treat – but there's a time of waiting until we can enjoy it.

Pick a favorite family recipe to bake some Christmas cookies together. As you wait for your cookies, remember the hope – the waiting with expectation – that the prophets shared in anticipating Jesus coming to earth!

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Pray: Thank God that He sent Jesus at just the right time. Thank Him that we can look forward with hope to a future with Him.

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Verse: Isaiah 7:14

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Bonus: Make a Christmas countdown chain. Just as the prophets waited in hope for the coming of Jesus, we look forward to the coming of Christmas to celebrate His birth. Cut strips of red and green construction paper, then staple them together in a chain of loops. Make one loop for each of the days leading up to Christmas and hang it up in a spot where you can see it. Every day you can tear off another loop, counting down the days until Christmas!

Lesson 2: Child of Love

Read: Luke 1:26-33, 46-49, Matthew 1:18-21

Mary was surprised, and confused, when she received the message that she would give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. Joseph was uncertain of what to do when he first heard the news.

But both Mary and Joseph trusted God and obeyed Him. They believed the message given to them and humbly did as God asked.

Mary and Joseph loved Jesus and recognized what a special blessing it was to be chosen to raise God's Son. Even more importantly, they rejoiced in God Himself, recognizing His greatness and praising Him for who He is and all He has done.

At Christmas we celebrate love. We enjoy the love of family all around us, just as Jesus's earthly family loved Him. And we rejoice in the amazing love that God has for us – a love that caused Him to send His own Son into the world so that we can be His children.

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Apply: Think of the love that you have for your family and the love that they have for you. Isn't it amazing that God's love is even greater? His love is beyond our comprehension. He gave His own Son to save us so that we can be called His children.

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Make it Stick: Christmas Cards

Celebrate your love for family and friends by sending Christmas cards. Use purchased cards or put your creativity to work to make your own! Send as many or as few as you'd like. Alternatively, if you'd rather not mail cards, you can hand out cards in person to family and friends you see during the Christmas season.

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Pray: Thank God for the people you love and the people who love you, then praise Him for His amazing love!

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Verse: Luke 1:46-47

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Bonus: Read “The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey” by Susan Wojciechowski. A beautiful story of healing and love as a widower carves a nativity scene for a widow and her son.

Lesson 3: Child of Joy

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Can you imagine how the shepherds felt that night in Bethlehem? They were terrified when they first saw the angels, but when they heard the message of Jesus's birth they were filled with joy. They couldn't wait to find the special Child the angels spoke of.

Joy is a wonderful feeling. It's like happiness, only better. We can take joy in many things, and Christmas is a season that often brings moments of joy.

Maybe you feel joy when you wake up Christmas morning and walk downstairs to see the tree all lit up with presents underneath. You might be filled with joy when you hug someone you love who has come from far away to celebrate with you. Or perhaps you feel joyful as you cuddle up in your pajamas on Christmas Eve and read a favorite Christmas book.

Those moments of joy are very special and we should be thankful for them. Even better though, is the joy that we have in God. When our joy comes from God it is deep and lasting. That joy is more than just a feeling. It is there no matter what else is happening in life because we know God is with us always and that His promises are true.

Christmas is full of joy. Special joys of the season, but also the incredible joy we can have in God. Through the gift of Jesus, God gave us a future promise to be with Him, and nothing can change that. His promise gives us a joy that lasts forever. Just as the shepherds shared the joyous message of Jesus's birth, we can share the joy we have in God with those around us.

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Apply: The angels declared a message of joy and the shepherds couldn't help but share it with everyone. How can we share the joyful message of Jesus with those around us this Christmas season?

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Make it Stick: Christmas Carol Sing-Along

There's something extra special about singing together that brings out the joy of the Christmas season. Have a Christmas carol sing-along and celebrate that joy as a family!

Make your sing-along special and unique for your family. Maybe that means lighting candles or sitting by the fire as you sing, or perhaps it means singing as you take a hike in the woods. Whether acapella, with instrumental accompaniment, or along with the radio, pick some favorite songs that celebrate Jesus's birth and sing with joy together!

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Pray: Thank God for something that makes you joyful at Christmas, then praise Him for His gift of Jesus, that gives us lasting joy.

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Verse: Luke 2:10

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Bonus: Watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" together. Linus's monologue on stage mirrors this week's reading.

Lesson 4: Child of Peace

Read: Matthew 2:1-12, Isaiah 9:6-7

When the wise men came looking for Jesus they called Him the “King of the Jews”. These men studied prophecies and knew what had been told about Jesus. They followed the star and brought gifts worthy of a king to present before Him.

But Jesus didn't live as the king many people thought He would. He didn't build a fancy palace or sit on a throne and make laws that would bring peace throughout the land.

So were the wise men wrong when they called Jesus the king and bowed before Him? Was the prophet Isaiah wrong when he wrote, “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace”?

No, of course not! Everything spoken about Jesus was true, but it didn't all happen the way people expected.

Jesus does sit on a throne – a heavenly throne at the right side of the Father – as we are told in many verses in the New Testament (see Hebrews 12:2 as one example). And one day He will return to rule over a kingdom united in peace.

But until then, Jesus brought peace in another way. He brought peace with God for all people who will come to Him in faith as we read in Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

At Christmas we remember the child that the wise men visited and worshipped as the king. As we celebrate Jesus's birth we also remember the way His death and resurrection brought us peace – a peace with God that is everlasting and cannot be taken away. And we look forward to the day when there will be true peace on earth, when He returns.

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Apply: Do you have peace with God that comes through Jesus? How does that peace make a difference in the way you live? The wise men brought gifts to honor Jesus as king; how can we honor Jesus as king too? What kind of gifts does He desire from us?

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Make it Stick: Christmas Lights Drive

The wise men followed the light of the star, now it's your turn to seek out some beautiful lights to enjoy together! Take a drive to view Christmas decorations around your town.

You can make your Christmas lights drive extra fun for kids by letting them wear pajamas and enjoy a tasty treat in the car along the way. Don't forget to play your favorite Christmas tunes!

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Pray: Thank Jesus for bringing us peace with God and pray for those who don't yet know that peace.

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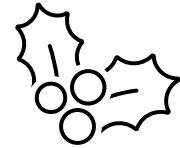
Verse: Isaiah 9:6

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Bonus: At Christmas we enjoy giving gifts to others, just as the wise men gave gifts to Jesus. Create some handmade tags to label gifts for family and friends, or decorate your own wrapping paper/gift bags as a special personal touch to your gift giving!

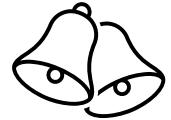
Verses: Cut out the verses to post each week

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14



And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Luke 1:46-47

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people" Luke 2:10



For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6