



Arrival



HOPE



PEACE



JOY



LOVE

Advent Devotional



HOPE

1st Week of Advent

One Candle
Hope

1st Sunday of Advent

Read: Isaiah 7:14, 40:1-5 & Malachi 3:1-4

Christmas celebrates Christ coming to earth as a human baby, conceived in Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit to bring reconciliation between God and humanity. In Christ, hope for salvation was realized and brought near in a way which was tangible and true. This season, we will explore many themes, Biblical narratives, and theological beliefs surrounding the Christian holiday of Christmas. The first of these themes is hope.

Hope sometimes feels far off, especially in the midst of the worst of life. Have you been there? Do you feel this now?

Describe:

Immanuel, literally translated from the Biblical Hebrew language as, “God With Us,” speaks of the hope Christ offers by his presence with us. How does or could the presence of Jesus Christ with you bring forth hope within you? Ask Jesus to encourage you with his presence and to give you hope. Reflect or journal on these thoughts, and on the scriptures listed above.

Listen: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Arrival

Character Study *John the Baptist*

1st Monday of Advent

Read John 1:6-8, 15-28

The first character of Advent is traditionally John the Baptist - the strange desert-dwelling, locust-eating, camel-hide-wearing cousin of Jesus. This man attracts a lot of attention during Advent, but why? Shouldn't Jesus be the focus?

John knew his position in the Kingdom of God: he was the Pointer, the Herald, the Trumpeter, the Witness. John's role was not to draw attention to himself, but purely to draw all attention to the coming of Jesus, the anointed Messiah, the Savior of the World. A famous line of John declares, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Like a guide on a tour, John brings our attention to Jesus: "Look!" "Behold!" "Listen up!" "Pay attention!" "Things are changing! The Lord is among us!"

God gave you gifts and talents to be used like John's - to point others to Jesus. What are some of your natural gifts and skills? How can you use these to further the Kingdom of God? Discuss with a parent, mentor, pastor, or friend.

Listen: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Arrival

Building Narrative

1st Tuesday of Advent

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

Read: Luke 1:5-25

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Even So Come* by Passion

Arrival

Read: Luke 1:29

“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” - John the Baptist

The Baptizer saw the Savior, and spoke these momentous words. John’s declaration carries the weight of awe, worship, the terror and triumph of the Cross, the power of the Resurrection, the Lordship of Christ, and the Hope of the World. It is as if John glimpsed something eternal when he saw Jesus this day, though he might not have understood the implications of these words. Take a few moments to ponder and reflect on these words below:

Behold or Look:

The Lamb of God:

Who Takes Away :

The Sin of the World:

Building Narrative
The Birth of Jesus Foretold

1st Thursday of Advent

Read: Luke 1:26-38

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Arrival* by Hillsong

Arrival

Read: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Stuck in a tragic time of national disaster and distress, of personal despair and hopelessness, a man named Jeremiah spoke prophetic words from the Lord, speaking of a future hope, a coming resolution for and redemption of these desperate times. These words were meant to inspire hope and endurance now, in the midst of suffering.

Read all of Jeremiah 33. Compare and contrast Jeremiah's present situation with the promised future hope of the Lord:

Jeremiah's Situation

The Lord's Resolution

Building Narrative
Mary & Elizabeth

1st Saturday of Advent

Read: Luke 1:39-45

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Come Alive (Dry Bones)*
by Lauren Daigle

Arrival



PEACE

2nd Week of Advent

Two Candles *Peace*

2nd Sunday of Advent

Read: Romans 5:1-8

Read verses one through three multiple times. Rewrite in your own words, making note of what Jesus does for you:

Note the two progressive lists from these verses:

1. Faith → Justifying Grace → Peace → Hope of the Glory of God
2. Suffering → Perseverance → Character → Hope

Hope in God - not in circumstances or in ourselves - is sustaining hope, without shame. But notice what comes alongside this hope: peace.

Peace is the abiding absence of internal worry, conflict, or distress, trusting in the Lord, even in the midst of external stresses or conflict.

Ask the Lord for peace today. "Lord, I pray for faith... Jesus, grant me justifying grace... God bring peace... Holy Spirit, inspire within me the Hope of the Glory of God." Add your own words as you pray.

Listen: *The Gospel Changes Everything*
by Meredith Andrews

Arrival

Character Study ***Town of Bethlehem***

2nd Monday of Advent

Read: Ruth 1:1, 6, 22, 1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13,
Matthew 1:5-6, 16, Luke 2:1-5, 7, John 6:35

Bethlehem, a city not far from Jerusalem, is the second notable “character” of the Advent story. “Beth-Lehem,” in Ancient Hebrew, means “House of Bread,” as this was a major agricultural town in the hill country of Judea, especially of grains. Agriculture is the thread woven through the book of Ruth: Bethlehem had a famine (Ruth 1:1), the Lord provided rain and food (1:6), and Ruth and Naomi return to Bethlehem at the time of barley harvest (1:22). This is also King David’s ancestral town (1 Samuel 1:1, 11-13), of whose royal line Jesus was born (Matthew 1:5-6, 16). Jesus’ parents return to Bethlehem from Nazareth before his birth (Luke 2:1-5). “No room in the Inn” is the frequent condemnation of Bethlehem’s hospitality for Jesus’ birthday (Luke 2:7), but perhaps a more profound declaration is that the “House of Bread” becomes the birthplace for the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

You, too, have a role to play in the story of Jesus. Reflect on your past experiences, your passions, your given gifts and talents. How could these be woven together to honor the Lord?

Reflect on your Redemption Story.

Listen: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Arrival

Building Narrative
The Birth of John the Baptist

2nd Tuesday of Advent

Read: Luke 1:57-66

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *God with Us* by All Sons & Daughters

Arrival

Exploring Theology
“He Shall Be Called...”

2nd Wednesday of Advent

Read: Isaiah 9:6-7. Read again.

Create a “mind map” of these scripture verses. Write down a word or phrase, circle it, then write other words or thoughts branching out from this. Circle these, and repeat until you are finished or out of room.

Listen: *Winter Snow* by Audrey Assad

Arrival

Building Narrative
Zechariah's Song

2nd Thursday of Advent

Read: Luke 1:67-80

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *The Empathy of God*
by Chris Renzema

Arrival

Exploring Theology
The Righteous & Victorious King

2nd Friday of Advent

Read: Zechariah 9:9, John 12:12-19

A common verse cited on Palm Sunday before Easter, Zechariah 9:9 speaks of the humble, donkey-riding King as righteous and victorious. Another way to say this is Christ Triumphant, or Christus Victor - a common theological discussion topic concerning Christ's death and resurrection, resulting in the defeat of sin and death forever. Why is this important at Advent? Write your initial thoughts below:

Consider Christ's purpose: why did Jesus come to earth as a baby, anyway? If you thought of words like redemption or salvation, you are spot on! Christ came in humble victory; he did not have to win victory as if he could lose, he came triumphant, even as a baby. Reflect, journal, or discuss ways Christ is victorious.

Listen: *How Many Kings* by Downhere

Arrival

Read: Isaiah 61:1-3, Psalm 34, & Luke 4:14-30

Anointed ones are empowered by the Holy Spirit and set aside for a special purpose. This purpose may be to preach, to serve, to be healed, or to be a healing presence to others, to name a few.

In Luke 4, immediately after Jesus is tempted in the Wilderness by Satan, Jesus returns to his hometown. He stands up to teach, and begins his teaching by reading from Isaiah 61:1-3. This prophecy in Isaiah carries the same essence of faithfulness and healing found in Psalm 34, even though these were written at different times.

Jesus is the Anointed Comforter -- empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring comfort, healing, and Good News. Reread Isaiah 61:1-3 three times. Pick a word that stands out to you, and journal about it below.



JOY

3rd Week of Advent

Three Candles
Joy

3rd Sunday of Advent

Read: Isaiah 12:1-6

Describe your favorite memory of joy. What other emotions did you experience as well? Sketch the scene, too.

How do Isaiah's words speak of the joy of the Lord? Why is there joy? Can you echo this joy today? Why or why not?

Listen: *Joy to the World! (Unspeakable Joy)*
by Chris Tomlin

Arrival

Character Study ***Shepherds***

3rd Monday of Advent

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Who are these unnamed shepherds? Do an internet search to learn some details.

Why are they the first ones to know about the birth of Jesus, announced in such an amazing way?

Reread the verses listed above, making note of the role the shepherds play in the story of Jesus.

Sometimes in Scripture, God uses unexpected or unassuming people to do amazing things for the Kingdom of God. In the course of a couple of hours, these shepherds went from simply tending sheep to worshipping the Son of God, newly born. How is God calling you to worship today?

Listen: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Arrival

Building Narrative
Joseph's Response

3rd Tuesday of Advent

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Joyful, Joyful* by Casting Crowns

Arrival

Read: Isaiah 9:6, 1 John 3:1

God is compared to many common human roles - mother, friend, brother, teacher, master, Lord - but one of the most common is that of Father. Let's be honest - sometimes our earthly parents fail us, are absent, are taken from us too soon, or otherwise do not point us towards Jesus with their actions and words.

Isaiah 9:6 speaks of the "Everlasting Father;" 1 John 3:1 tells us of a Father with great love, lavishing it upon us, like the amount of cream cheese or peanut butter on a warm toasty bagel that is technically too much, but oh, so good. Chris Tomlin sings of a "Good, Good Father."

This Good, Everlasting, Love-Lavishing Father is not like earthly fathers who sometimes fail and hurt us, though sometimes our fathers demonstrate good and righteous characteristics of God. What are some of the roles and functions of a Good, Everlasting, Love-Lavishing Father?

Ask God in prayer to show these more clearly to you.

Read: Ezekiel 36:26-36 & John 14:26-27

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in each of these verses?
What words, actions, or characteristics are attributed to the Spirit?

How do these verses speak of hope?

Do you need a new heart? ____ Tell this to Jesus, be honest,
and ask for the Holy Spirit to make your heart new today.

Exploring Theology
The Light is Dawning

3rd Friday of Advent

Read: Isaiah 42:1-7, Matthew 4:16

Watch the sunrise, either today or tomorrow, starting while it is still dark until the sun is up. This will take a little bit of time. Grab a warm mug and just watch. Describe what happens in the world and inside of you. As you observe, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Let the stillness of this time teach you to be still before the Lord (Psalm 46:10).

What is the role of light in our lives? If Jesus is compared to light, what is his role as Light in our lives?

Listen: *Mary Did You Know?* by Pentatonix

Arrival

Building Narrative
From Darkness to Light

3rd Saturday of Advent

Read: John 1:1-18, Isaiah 9:2

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Unto Us* by Matthew West

Arrival



LOVE

4th Week of Advent

Four Candles
Love

4th Sunday of Advent

Read: John 3:1-21

Reread these verses. What stands out to you? What surprises you? If you are familiar with John 3:16, what did you notice when you read this within the context of the rest of the passage?

What kind of love is being described here?

Listen: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

Arrival

Character Study
Mary, the Mother of Jesus

4th Monday of Advent

Read: Luke 1:46-56

What is Mary's role in the story of Jesus?

The term theotokos is a Greek word used to describe Mary in the Eastern Christian traditions as the "God-bearer" -- her role is unique among women, in that she "conceived by the Holy Spirit," as stated in the Apostle's Creed, and gave birth to Jesus who was both fully God and fully human. Mary, the Mother of Jesus holds a special role in the story of Advent, and for this, we respect her.

Read again her song recorded in Luke 1. Which lines stand out to you? Why?

Listen: *Emmanuel - Hallowed Manger Ground*
by Chris Tomlin

Arrival

Building Narrative
The Birth of Jesus

4th Tuesday of Advent

Read: Luke 2:1-20

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Arrival

Five Candles - Light
Light of the World

Christmas Eve

Read: John 1:1-18

Take note of how “light” is used in this passage.

Read verse 5 again. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (2011 NIV). Even when all is dark - such as late at night during a power outage, even one candle can light up a whole room. Light always wins over darkness. The light of Christ dwells, or tabernacles among us -- in Christ, God has set up shop in our midst so that God may work among us, as one of us in Christ Jesus. What darkness in your current situation do you hope Jesus will overcome? Turn this into a prayer, and then give thanks for the ways Jesus has overcome darkness.

Listen: *O Holy Night!*

Arrival

Building Narrative
Christ Presented at the Temple

Christmas Day

Read: Matt. 2:1-12

Sketch, draw, or outline below the events from the scripture listed above. Read 3-4 times to catch all the details. Include the possible thoughts and emotions of each of the characters.

Listen: *What Child is This?*

Arrival

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]



10101 Ann Arbor Rd W, Plymouth, 48170

www.trinityepc.org