



A WEEKLY ADVENT JOURNEY

*Oh Come
Emmanuel*

with Chapin Presbyterian Church



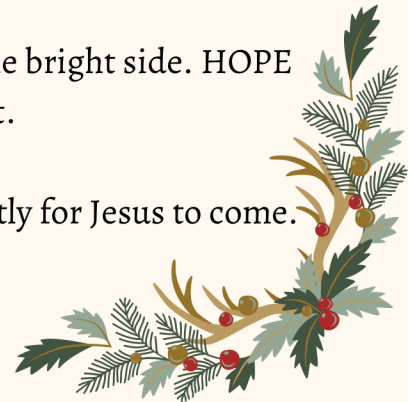
Week One: Hope

Each week of Advent we will spend time reading Scripture together, discussing it, and singing praises to God. The first week in Advent we focus on HOPE. Our passage is from an Old Testament prophet, Isaiah. A prophet's job was to share God's messages, warnings, and reminders with the Israelite people. Prophets told the people to stop sinning and to follow God's commands.

The prophets also spoke of HOPE. They told of a king who would come one day to save God's people. They told of a day when the Israelites would feel God's presence and know He was in control.

HOPE does not mean you are just a happy person who always looks on the bright side. HOPE means you are anticipating, you are waiting anxiously, you are expectant.

Advent is a time each year where we join the prophets and wait expectantly for Jesus to come. Each year we choose to HOPE in Jesus.



Turn off most of the lights in the room

Say: It is important to know when Isaiah wrote these words, the Assyrian army- a strong, fierce, foreign army- had invaded Judah and was bringing darkness and destruction for God's people.

Read: Isaiah 9:2-7

Say: Close your eyes and imagine you are in complete darkness. You cannot see. You don't know what is ahead or behind you. You don't know what is coming. How does that feel? Isaiah said "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."

Light the first purple candle.

Ask: What happens to the darkness when we light a candle?



Say: Even one candle chases away the darkness. It brings comfort and hope. Look at the names Isaiah used for Jesus in verse 6. Wonderful Counselor means He will have extraordinary wisdom. Eternal Father means He will have life that never ends. Prince of Peace means He will bring peace to the world. Mighty God means Jesus is God. He is all-knowing and all-powerful.

Ask: Which name of Jesus do you like the best? Which one sounds the most hopeful?

Pray: Jesus, thank you for bringing light into our world. Thank you that we can hope in you. Amen.

Sing: Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel



Week Two: Love

The second week in Advent we focus on LOVE. We use the word LOVE to talk about our favorite things. We love a particular tv show. We love candy. We love our parents. But in the Bible, there is more than one Greek word to explain different kinds of LOVE. Here are a few examples:

Philia – friend or brotherly love- The love you feel for your friends.

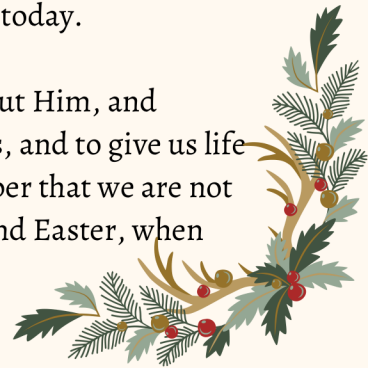
Eros – romantic love- The love your parents feel for each other.

Agape – unconditional "God" love- The love that God has for us, his creation.

It is this Agape LOVE that we talk about during Advent. As we prepare for Jesus' birth, and make our way to Bethlehem, we have to consider why Jesus was born as a baby on earth.

Back in Genesis, chapter 1, God created people. He walked in the garden with Adam and Eve and wanted a relationship with His creation. However, sin entered the world through Adam, and separated people from God. This continued with person after person in every Bible story, and even still today.

But God LOVED us so much, He sent Jesus to us. He knew we couldn't have life without Him, and because of our sin, we couldn't have a relationship with Him. So Jesus came to save us, and to give us life in Him! As we read and talk about LOVE in the scriptures this week, we must remember that we are not only on the way to Bethlehem for Jesus' birth. We must also remember Good Friday and Easter, when Jesus showed us the greatest LOVE of all.



Turn off most of the lights in the room.

Say: Today we read one of the most famous and quoted verses in the entire Bible- John 3:16.

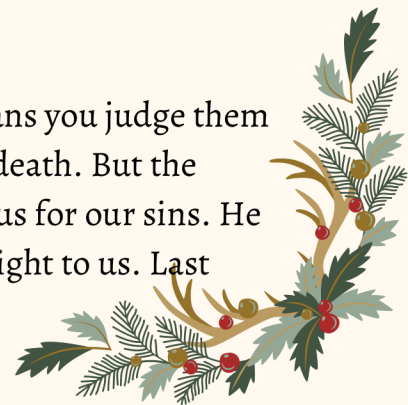
Read: John 3:16

Ask: Who sent Jesus? Why did God send Jesus? What does “perish” mean?

Say: That part can be confusing. We know that one day every person will die, but John 3:16 tells us that if we believe in Jesus we won’t “perish but will have eternal life.” Let’s keep reading.

Read: John 3:16-21

Say: Do you know what “condemn” means? If you condemn someone it means you judge them harshly, you disapprove, you sentence them to a punishment- maybe even death. But the Bible tells us that Jesus didn’t come to do that. He didn’t come to condemn us for our sins. He came to save us. Jesus is our light. He came to our dark world to bring His light to us. Last week we lit the HOPE candle. This week we light the LOVE candle.



Light the two purple candles.

Say: Think about who comes when a house is on fire. A firefighter, right? Does the firefighter stop and fuss at the people or condemn them because their house is on fire? No! He works hard to save them even though they are strangers. Imagine how much more Jesus loves us, His creation.

Read: 1 John 4:19

Ask: What does that verse say about why we love? How does knowing how much Jesus loves us help us to love Him? How does it help us to love others?

Pray: Jesus, thank you for loving us and saving us. Help us to love you and love one another. Amen.

Sing: Oh Come All Ye Faithful



Love

Family Activity Idea

You'll need:

- pre-baked cookies, cupcakes, or brownies (or bake your own!)
- white frosting
- fine point decorator icing tube
- spatula or butter knife



Directions:

Start with a base of your favorite home-baked, slice-and-bake, or picked-up-at-the-store cookies, cupcakes, or brownies. Show your child how to gently frost the treat with a smooth layer of white icing.

When the base layer is ready, help your child squeeze the decorator tube to make a single heart on the treat. Encourage kids to add additional decorations or a design of their choosing. Remind your child that Jesus' **love** inspires His followers to show **love** to everyone—not just at Christmas, but all year long.

As a family, choose a time this week to deliver the treats to neighbors and friends, celebrating the **love** of Jesus this Christmas.

Week Three: Joy

The third week in Advent we focus on JOY. JOY is one of those words that gets overused. Most often we use JOY to describe when we are happy.

Earn an A on a test... JOY.

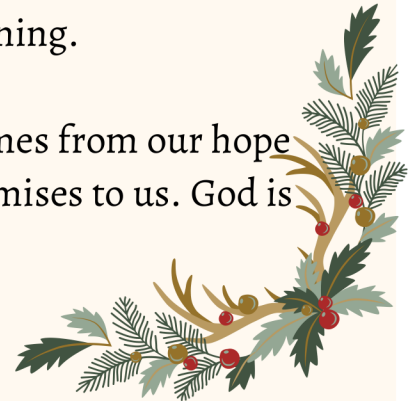
Eat a piece of chocolate... JOY.

Hug a friend... JOY.

Get a new puppy... JOY.

According to the dictionary, JOY does mean “a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.” But in the Bible, the word JOY takes on a deeper meaning.

JOY isn't just a good feeling when everything is going right. It comes from our hope knowing that God is in control. He loves us and will keep His promises to us. God is good all the time. And He is the source of our JOY.



Turn off most of the lights in the room

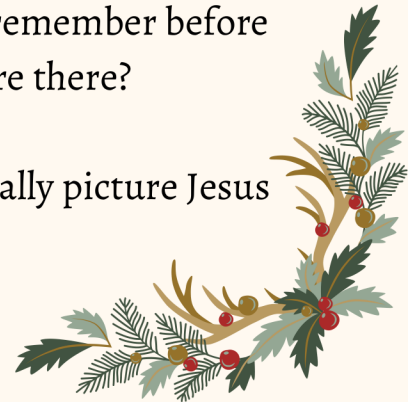
Say: One of the most JOYFUL days in the history of the world was when Jesus was born! The last two weeks we've lit the HOPE candle, the LOVE candle, and this week we light the JOY candle.

Light two purple candles, and the pink candle.

Read: Luke 2:1-7

Ask: What is familiar in this story? Are there any details you didn't remember before reading it today? Are there any details missing that you thought were there?

Say: A manger is a feeding trough for animals, which is why we usually picture Jesus being born in a barn or similar structure.



Read: Luke 2:8-12

Ask: Who was the first to learn about Jesus' birth? Who told them about it? What was the first thing the angel said?

Say: Just like the shepherds, sometimes we can feel afraid. But because of Jesus, we can always find JOY in times of fear. Another name for Jesus is Immanuel, which means 'God with us.' We can always find JOY in knowing He is with us, no matter what.

Pray: Lord, thank you for the joy we have because of Jesus. Thank you for always being with us. Amen.

Sing: Joy to the World



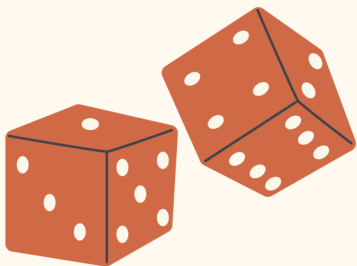
joy jump board game

Family Activity Idea

Joy

You'll need:

- poster board or a large sheet of paper
- red and green stickers or markers
- dice (2)
- buttons, coins, or other game tokens



Directions:

With your child, create a game path by making a closed loop of red and green stickers or dots with markers—as many spots as you wish.

Players can begin with their tokens anywhere on the game path. The youngest player may toss the dice first and move his or her token in any direction. If the token lands on a red space, prompt the player to explain why Jesus gives me joy. If the token lands on a green space, the player should describe how I can share joy with others.

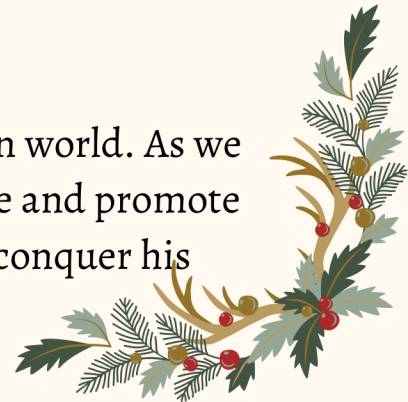
For fun, if a player tosses doubles, yell, “Joy break!” Allow everyone to jump up and down, shout, and clap. Time the game to last no longer than your child’s attention span, or after everyone has had an agreed-upon number of turns

Week Four: Peace

The fourth week in Advent we focus on PEACE. Peace is defined as the “absence of war or conflict” or “the state of being calm or quiet” but in the Bible it means much more.

The Hebrew word for PEACE is shalom and means completeness or wholeness. It comes from the root word shalom (shaw-lame’) which means to make amends or to make whole or complete. In the Bible, PEACE is more than just feeling tranquil and being free from conflict. It is taking an active role in restoring brokenness and resolving conflict.

Jesus is the promised Prince of Peace, come to restore our broken world. As we strive to be more like Jesus, we too are called to cultivate, nurture and promote peace. Jesus came to us not as a rich and powerful king ready to conquer his enemies, but as a baby in a manger.



Turn off most of the lights in the room.

Say: For the past three weeks, we've focused on HOPE, LOVE, and JOY, and today we will talk about what? PEACE.

Light two purple candles, the pink candle, and the last purple candle.

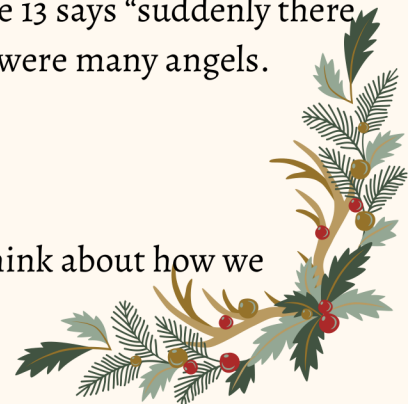
Say: Last week, we read that baby Jesus was born! An angel appeared to the shepherds and told them of the JOY of Jesus' birth. Let's read what happened next.

Read: Luke 2:13-14

Say: Notice at first it was one angel who spoke to the shepherds. Now verse 13 says "suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angels..." That means there were many angels.

Ask: What were the angels doing? What were they saying?

Say: Think about how angels- heavenly beings- were praising God. Now think about how we should respond to God.



Read: Luke 2:15-20

Ask: After the angels left the shepherds and returned to heaven, what did the shepherds do?

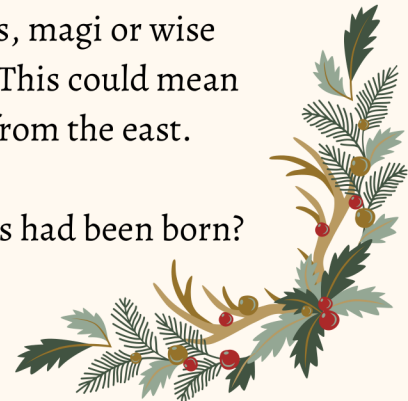
Once they found Mary, Joseph and Jesus, what did the shepherds do?

Say: The shepherds were excited and began to tell everyone what they had seen and heard. But then it says, “But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them.” Now, let's read about another group of people who wanted to worship Jesus.

Read: Matthew 2:1-12

Say: You will hear the men who followed the star to find Jesus called kings, magi or wise men. These men were likely astronomers and they came from “the east.” This could mean Babylon, Persia, or another part of Arabia. The Bible just says they were from the east.

Ask: What do the wise men ask King Herod? What alerted them that Jesus had been born?



Say: We don't know exactly how many wise men there were, but we often say three because they offered three gifts to Jesus.

Ask: What were the three gifts the wise men presented to Jesus?

Say: Gold, frankincense and myrrh were expensive gifts. They were treasures for a king. And though these men were gentiles, they fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus, the Prince of PEACE.

Pray: Lord, glory to YOU in the highest heaven. Thanks for sending Jesus to be our peace. Amen.

Sing: Hark the Herald Angels Sing



Peace banner



You'll need:

- plain or printed scrapbook paper in the colors of your choice
- scissors
- narrow fabric or curling ribbon
- markers
- a hole punch or stapler

Family
Activity
Idea

Directions:

Cut triangular banners from the paper and arrange them pointing down. Help your younger child print P E A C E with markers, one letter per banner.

Older children can make a more elaborate banner with a P E A C E O N E A R T H caption (inserting blank triangles between words).

Punch holes in the top two corners and help your child thread ribbon through the holes, or simply fasten the triangular banners to the ribbon with a stapler

Christmas Day!!

Say: The first week in Advent we heard from the prophets. We learned that our Savior was coming, and we had HOPE.

Light the first purple candle as you read and sing.

Read: Isaiah 9:6

Sing: Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel

Say: The second week in Advent we read about God's LOVE for us in sending Jesus to save us. Jesus taught us to love. Come let us adore Him.

Light the second purple candle as you read and sing.

Read: John 3:16

Sing: Oh Come All Ye Faithful



Say: The third week in Advent we discovered JOY. Joy in the birth of Jesus. Joy in the angel's announcement to the shepherds. Joy in the midst of hard things. Joy found only in Jesus.

Light the pink candle as you read and sing.

Read: John 1:1-5

Sing: Joy to the World

Say: The fourth week in Advent we heard from the angels of PEACE on earth. Our Lord and Savior-the Prince of PEACE- was born and it was told to lowly shepherds and wise men from the east.

Light the fourth purple candle as you read and sing.

Read: Luke 2:13-14

Sing: Hark the Herald Angels Sing



Say: And now today, on Christmas day, we light our Christ candle. The Christ candle sits in the middle of our wreath, just as Jesus Christ is the center of our life and our family. The Christ candle brings more light to our room just as Jesus Christ brings light to our dark world.

Light the white candle as you read.

Read: Isaiah 52:7

Pray: Lord, we know it is now our turn to proclaim peace and bring the good news to all we meet. Guide us, Father. Amen.

Sing: Go Tell it on the Mountain

Merry Christmas!!



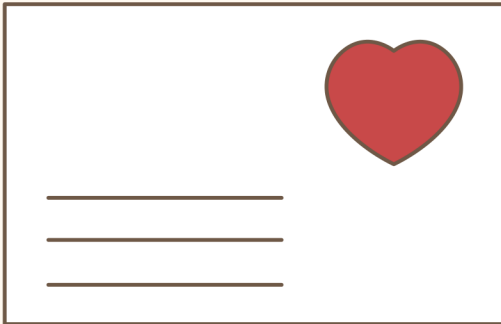
Christmas Day

thank you cards

Family
Activity
Idea

You'll need:

- blank card stock
- markers and stickers
- envelopes and stamps





Directions:

Later in the day, when your family is ready for some quiet time, bring out the card making supplies. Help your child fold card stock to fit your envelopes and decorate the fronts of several cards to write thank you notes in the coming days.

Save the last card for a special purpose: before the day ends, encourage your child to design a special thank you card to place in the empty space under your Christmas tree.

Inside, encourage your child to write a prayer to thank Jesus for the difference He makes in the lives of those who trust Him.



WISHING YOUR FAMILY A
CHRISTMAS FILLED WITH THE
HOPE, LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE
OF CHRIST. O COME EMMANUEL!!

*with love from
Chapin Presbyterian Church*