

FAMILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

The True Hero



"The Bible isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne – everything – to rescue the one he loves. It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life!"

-The Jesus Storybook Bible

Advent is a season consisting of the four weeks before Christmas that prepares us for the coming of Christ. Often, we use advent to prepare presents, decorations, delicious cookies, and the Christmas tree. All these things are wonderful, but the most important preparation we can make is for the coming of Jesus, The Greatest Hero.

This devotional book is a guide to help your family prepare your hearts for Christmas. Because the season is four weeks long, there are four family devotions included in this book. It might work best to find a consistent time each week (maybe Sunday nights) to read through the lesson, answer the questions, and do the suggested activity. If you don't have a copy of The Jesus Storybook Bible to read, you can find audio versions on Spotify or Hoopla. We've included a QR code below for the Christmas music playlist.

Our prayer is for your family to come together this season and draw closer to Jesus, who came into our world the first Christmas Day as our Great Rescuer.

The Crossing Kids Team

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR EACH WEEK

Need Each Week: Jesus Storybook Bible (book or audio) or a Bible (Crossing Kids uses NiRV).

Week One: paper and markers for each child; look up what your child's name means.

Week Two: 2 – 12-inch silver pipe cleaners (per child); string or cord, scissors.

Week Three: candy canes (one per person).

Week Four: paper and pens; a gift box, wrapping paper, and bow (for each child).

Check out our Christmas music playlist



Week One: Operation "No More Tears!"

(For the week of November 28)

Say: This is the first Sunday of Advent. We want to get ourselves ready for Jesus to come into our lives and into our hearts this Christmas. We've gathered here to think about Jesus and His coming into our world. God used different people in His plan to bring Jesus to our world. We are learning about a prophet from the Bible who lived over 700 years before Jesus' birth named Isaiah.

Read or Listen: Operation "No More Tears" (pages 144-151) in The Jesus Storybook Bible or read from your own Bible: Isaiah 9 and 53

Discuss:

- What does Isaiah's name mean?
(God to the rescue.)
- What secret did God tell Isaiah?
(God was going to mend his broken world. He gave him a message to tell the people.)
- What do you remember about the message that Isaiah told people?
(Some answers could be: He is sending a shepherd. A baby will be born. His name will be Emmanuel. He will be a King. He will be a Hero.)

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for planning to send us a rescuer before the beginning of the world. Thank you that you sent a message to Isaiah a long time ago so that we would know that Jesus is our King, our True Hero. Help us to believe in the one you have sent. Amen.

Listen: "Joy to the World"

Week One Optional Family Activity:

The prophets said that Messiah had many names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Father, The Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God, and Emmanuel (which means "God is with us"). Talk with your children about these names and what they mean. Then tell your children about their own names and why they have the names they do. Ask your children to think of new names for Jesus that have to do with Him being their Hero. Write these on pieces of paper and hang them on the fridge, put them on the Christmas tree, or leave them around an Advent wreath.

Week Two: He's Here

(For the week of December 5)

Read or Listen: "He's Here" (pages 176- 183) in The Jesus Storybook Bible or read from your own Bible: Luke 1 and 2

Discuss:

- How do you think Mary felt when the angel asked her to be Jesus' mother?
(She probably felt afraid, unsure, and excited. In Luke 1:38, Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." When we trust God, he helps us to know Him more and glorify Him with our lives.)
- In many parts of the Christmas story we just read, angels played an important role. What do we know about angels from what we just read? How would you feel if an angel came to speak to you?

Say: Angels bring good news, they are God's messengers, they are frightening, and they are full of God's glory. God uses the angels for very important tasks. It is amazing that in just a few weeks during the Christmas Story, God sent many angels to earth to tell of Jesus' coming. The angels get to be a part of worshipping with us that Jesus is born.

Prayer: God, we are thankful for your angels in the Christmas story. Thank you for sending the angel to talk to Mary. Thank you for allowing ordinary people like Mary and Joseph and our family to be a part of your son's birth. Please help us prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus-our True Hero, our Great Rescuer, our King- this Christmas. Amen.

Say: We can share in the angel's excitement as we prepare for the birth of Jesus. The Bible tells us the angels sang to proclaim Christ's birth. Let's listen to some songs while we make an angel craft.

Listen: "Angels We Have Heard on High" and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"

Week Two Optional Family Activity:

Make pipe cleaner angels together to hang on your Christmas tree.

Use this QR code for picture directions:



What you'll need:

- 2 – 12-inch silver pipe cleaners (per child)
- string or cord
- scissors

How you'll make it:

- Cross the two ends of one of the pipe cleaners to make a small X. Then twist those ends together. You should have a large circle shape.
- Place one of your fingers inside the large pipe cleaner circle. Pull the pipe cleaner around your finger then twist it twice to hold it together. When you remove your finger, you should have a small circle the size of your finger. This will be the angel's halo.
- To make the angel's head, place your finger through the pipe cleaner right next to the first small circle. Twist the pipe cleaner around your finger twice. When you pull your finger out you should have two small circles and one larger oval shape.
- Bend the top circle forward to a 90-degree angle so it sits over top of the second circle - the head - like a halo.
- Bend the large oval-like shape below the head and halo into a long triangle shape. It should have two long sides and a short bottom, so it looks like the angel's dress.
- To make the wings, grab the second pipe cleaner and cross the two ends and twist them in place to make another large circle shape. Bring the opposite sides of the circle shape together until they meet in the middle. It should resemble a "squished" circle.
- Slip the "squished" circle over the angel. Center it just under the angel's head where the "neck" would be. Twist the pipe cleaners twice, as close to the angel's "neck" as you can on both sides of the angel.
- Open the pipe cleaner wings on both sides of the angel and bend them into wing shapes. They should look like sideways hearts.
- Add some string so you can hang it on the Christmas tree!

Week Three: The Light of the Whole World

(For the week of December 12)

Read or Listen: "The Light of the Whole World" (pages 184 – 191) from The Jesus Storybook Bible or read Luke 2:8-20

Discuss:

- The Bible tells us the angels brought "good news of great joy" to the shepherds. Why is Jesus' birth considered good news?

(He was the True Hero that they had been looking for; He came to rescue us from our sin.)

Say: Jesus is extraordinary news worth telling others about. When people receive good news, they naturally want to share it with others right away. If you get good news in the middle of the night, sometimes you can't even wait until morning to tell people. The birth of Jesus was such extraordinary news that it turned into the biggest holiday we celebrate – Christmas.

The shepherds were so excited about Jesus. However, the shepherds were not the most popular people in their day. They were outcasts who lived out in the fields with animals. If you were a shepherd back then, people would say you were good for nothing and had no future at all.

- How do you think those Shepherds felt when God picked them, out of all the people on the planet, to be the first to hear this Good News?

(Surprised, shocked, excited)

Say: The Good News was not just for the nicely dressed people who lived in town. It was for everyone! Jesus is called the Savior. That means Jesus – our True Hero, our Great Rescuer, our King - was going to save people from their sins and make a way for them to get to heaven someday.

The greatest gift of Christmas is Jesus. He came to show love and forgiveness to all people. In a world that desperately needs love and forgiveness, that is extraordinary news. Let's thank God for the Good News of Jesus right now.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank You for sending Jesus. He is Good News for me today, just like He was Good News for the Shepherds 2,000 years ago. Please help me receive Jesus' love and forgiveness and tell others about it! Thanks for sending us the best gift of all – your Son, and for being our Good Shepherd. Amen.

Listen: "The First Noel"

Week Three Optional Family Activity:

Enjoy some candy canes together. Discuss how the candy cane reminds us of the Good News of Jesus. If we hold the candy cane upside down, then it looks like the letter "J". That could remind us of "Jesus", which begins with the letter "J". And if you hold the candy cane right side up, then it looks like a shepherd's staff. A shepherd uses a staff to guide, protect and rescue the sheep. Jesus called Himself the "Good Shepherd." He came to guide, protect, and rescue us.

Week Four: The King of all Kings

(For the week of December 19)

Read or Listen: "The King of all Kings" (pages 192-199) in The Jesus Storybook Bible or read Matthew 2:1-12

Say: The wise men were probably pretty, excited! They had the unique opportunity to give the very first Christmas gifts to Jesus. Wouldn't that be cool if you could go back in time and give a Christmas present to Jesus?

Discuss:

- What present would you give Jesus if you could? Do you have any special gifts you plan to give this year?
- The wise men went on a long journey to see Jesus to worship Him and bring gifts. What do you think their journey was like? Why did they travel so far?

Say: Even though the magi brought gifts to Jesus, they believed Jesus was the best gift of all. They knew, even though he was just a little boy, He was the True Hero, the Great Rescuer, and the Real King!

The reason Jesus deserves to be the king of our lives is simply because He loves us more than anyone on this planet. Jesus created the universe and everything in it! Jesus made sure that Planet Earth was put together just right so that you could live here for God's glory. Jesus created you and called you, His masterpiece. Jesus knew you would sometimes do really bad things—but loved you anyway. Then, Jesus decided to take the punishment you deserved for all those bad things. He died a painful death—in your place! That's what makes Jesus different. He is the perfect king and the Great Rescuer. He rescued us from our sin.

- How is Jesus your True Hero, your Great Rescuer, and your King?

Say: The Christmas story is about more than just the angels, shepherds, and wise men. The Christmas story is about Jesus the rescuer – who came as a baby to die for the sins of the world.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to celebrate and praise you this Advent. Cause us to be aware of your presence and to know that you are with us. Give us hearts that find their joy in you. Give us eyes to see your light in this dark world and enable us to spread that light to other people. Help us to know and believe the Jesus is the greatest Hero of all. Amen.

Listen: "Silent Night"

Week Four Optional Family Activity:

Write a note to each person in your family telling them how you love them. Wrap the note in a gift box with a bow to be opened on Christmas day. Place it under the tree.