

For this week of Advent you save some of the activities for Christmas day, to enrich the celebration of the King who has come and who will forever reign.

The Old Testament looked expectantly for The Advent of God's forever king, the anointed one who would bring peace to his people. In anticipation, they declared, "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." When the long-awaited Messiah finally came, angels announced his birth by declaring, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." The birth and the fulfilled promise of Jesus changed everything. There was finally an answer for our biggest need, our sin debt. Jesus was the Holy Lamb sent to pay in full our debt and forever changing the course of history.

READ

To make the reading more fun, have friends and family act out the Christmas story as a narrator reads it.

Cast:

Narrator	Angel
Joseph	Jesus
Mary	Shepherd(s)

1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:1-20 NIV

WORSHIP

Silent Night-The song was originally a poem written by pastor Joseph Franz Mohr and composed by his friend Franz Xaver Gruber in early 19th century Austria. Pastor Mohr desperately needed a carol for the Christmas Eve midnight mass that was only hours away, and he hoped Gruber – a school teacher as well as the church’s choir master and organist – could set his poem to music; he composed the melody in just a few hours on that Christmas Eve.

[Verse 1]

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

[Verse 2]

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born

[Verse 3]

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

PRAYER/INVOCATION

Rejoice you just; it is the birthday of the Justifier.
Rejoice, you who are weak and sick; it is the birthday of the Savior, the Healer.
Rejoice, captives; it is the birthday of the Redeemer.
Rejoice, slaves; it is the birthday of the One who makes you lords.
Rejoice, free people; it is the birthday of the One who makes you free.
Rejoice, all Christians, it is the birthday of Christ.

(Saint Augustine of Hippo)

Thank you God for sending your Son that we may be free.

Amen

REFLECT

1. What did Mary do after Jesus was born?
2. A manger is a feeding trough for animals. How weird! Is this the kind of crib you would expect the King of Kings to sleep in? Why or why not?
3. There was no room for Jesus in the inn before he was born, how can we make room for those that seem like they don't belong?
4. How did Jesus make room for us in His kingdom?
5. What is something that we can do all year long that will help us remember that Jesus made room for us?

ACTIVITIES: CHRISTMAS MORNING SKILLET

Since this is a special week and day, we are going to give you several things you can do the days leading up to Christmas, the day of, and the days following. All of these are designed to remind you of the truth that you have been invited into a kingdom that will last forever and even though there was no room for Jesus, He has made room for all of us to be a part of his family and to dine at his table.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 50 minutes

Serves: 8

Ingredients:

6 eggs	4-ounce canned green chilis
2 cups shredded cheese	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped onion
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt	Hot sauce (to taste)
1-2 slices of bacon (the more bacon the merrier)	

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
- Add all ingredients into a mixing bowl and combine.
- Pour mixture into a buttered 8-inch cast iron skillet (or glass baking square) and bake 50-55 minutes
- Remove from oven and dig in.



PRESCHOOL: READ A CHRISTMAS BOOK

There are numerous Christmas books that are preschool friendly. (Yard sales and discount book stores are a great place to find affordable kid books.) There are many different nativity books that tell about the birth of Jesus in many different ways - from mice learning of Jesus' birth to animals in the manger witnessing the miraculous event. If you have older children, let them help read to the younger preschoolers. Read a Christmas books that will remind your family that gifts are great and new toys are nice, but the best thing about Christmas is the Savior that came and gave himself as a gift of grace.

KIDS: WRITE AN ENCOURAGING NOTE

Write a note to someone who may feel like an outsider this holiday season, someone who may be sad or lonely. Think of how you can encourage them or make them feel and know they are loved and special.

THAT'S A WRAP!

Gather Christmas wrapping paper, bows, ribbons, and tape. Maybe you can use that which is leftover, that way you have an excuse to buy new wrapping paper next year, as if you needed an excuse. Choose one or more family members to be gift wrapped, typically the person who doesn't want to be wrapped, makes the best candidate. Set a time limit for wrapping the family member and judge the best wrapped family member. Remind your family that giving and receiving gifts is fun, but God gave us the best gift of all! God gave us the gift of Jesus. Jesus was born as a baby, lived a sinless life, died for our sins, and rose again. Jesus gives us the gift of salvation and eternal life when we trust in Him. This truly is the most special gift that we could ever receive. Take some time and thank God for the best gift this Christmas and spend some time talking about how the gift of Jesus changed everything.

FOR THE RECORD: 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

WE REMEMBER AND WE LOOK FORWARD

Where did we spend Christmas day?

What time did we wake up?

What was the weather like?

Who did we celebrate with?

What made us laugh?

What tradition meant the most to us this year?

What was my favorite Christmas song this year?

Artist?

What was my favorite gift to give?

Who did I give it to?

What was my favorite gift I got?

Who was it from?

Favorite scripture of this Christmas Advent season?

Why?

How did we see God work in 2019?

What has God taught me about His character?

What has God revealed about me?

What was an unexpected joy this past year?

What was an unexpected sorrow?

This year I was grateful for?

This year I was most proud of?

The most challenging part of my year was...

The highlight of my year was...

As we look forward, I think the word of this year is...

Prayer for 2020 is...

BENEDICTION

A benediction is a short invocation (to call on, invoke, to give) for divine help, blessing and guidance, usually at the end of worship service.

Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of your Incarnate Word; Grant that the same light enkindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen
(Book of Common Prayer)

