



ADVENT

The Most Wonderful Time

GUIDE

Advent

at THE WAY

Explanation

History has a funny way of repeating itself. Like Ecclesiastes says, “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecc 1:9). Everything cycles through. We’re born. We live. We die. Rinse. Repeat. We experience wonderful moments, tragic moments, and every other moment(s) in between. It’s all sort of the same no matter who you talk with and no matter what the moment is. But there is one event that didn’t repeat itself and all of history happens to revolve around it. That’s right! One moment happened one time and it changed everything. God entered humanity, took on flesh, lived among us, experienced everything we do (except sin), and died in our place for our sin on a cross. But where did it all begin? In an old tumbledown stable about 2,000 years ago. We say that the most wonderful time of the year is Christmas. But it’s so much more than that. It’s the most wonderful time in history!

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to give you and your loved ones an opportunity to engage this Advent season weekly in a thoughtful way. No matter what your life looks like as you walk through this Christmas season, there is always the certainty that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. So there is always hope! Christmas gave us Jesus! This means we can have continuous hope! That’s why it’s the most wonderful time in history.

Instructions

The most effective way to use this guide is to work through the weekly devotions on your own and in community (i.e. your spouses, roommates, children, and teens). There will be a weekly theme provided accompanied by a biblical passage driving the theme; as well as an explanation and reflection question. Additionally, there will be age-specific questions for children and teens, as well as activities for the littles, and song suggestions for family worship.

We hope you enjoy this guide as you engage this Advent season with The Way Church.



**I will put enmity between you
and the woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.**

GENESIS 3:15





Week 01

t h e n e e d

Christmas is the most wonderful time because it exposes mankind's biggest problem while providing the perfect solution!

READ

Genesis 3:1-19

KEY VERSE(S)

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” Gen 3:6

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Gen 3:15

EXPLANATION

Early in the pages of the Bible, we see a good creation in the eyes of God go terribly wrong. God's intention for his most prized creation (humanity; the imago dei) was for them to exist with him in perfect unity and community here on earth, worshiping him and enjoying his good gifts forever. But Adam and Eve pulled off the most tragic exchange: Creator for creation (cf Rom 1:22-23). You see, in this thinking, we believe the good gifts God gives can somehow satisfy us more than God himself. Like Adam and Eve, it isn't enough for us to simply enjoy God and his good gifts, so we end up worshiping those gifts. Sin is idolatry at its core. And this is humanity's biggest problem! We replace God with something else. Something else becomes ultimate. Tim Keller says it best: “An idol is something that we look to for things that only God can give.”

Sadly, our greatest problem warrants judgment which is seen in a small way in Genesis after Adam and Eve fall and are kicked out of the garden. Thankfully, there is a greater solution for our greatest problem given here as a glimpse. So if you're not careful, you'll miss it. In v15, the first gospel is provided. The offspring of Eve (Jesus) would receive a bruised heel (the cross) but deliver a crushing head blow to Satan and all the sin and evil he represented.

REFLECTION

What are you currently exchanging God for, to give you the satisfaction you aim to find?

SONG TO SING

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

DISCUSSION

Children:

What is something that you really care about? It can be an item or a person. No matter how much you love that item or person, God loves YOU even more and He wants you to love Him too. How can you love God more than things or people?

Teens:

What is one thing, if it were taken from you (including things like friends, athletic ability, or acceptance from peers) would lead you to be angry with God? Would you have a right to be angry with God? Why or why not?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Little Ones:

Create a nativity scene and add to it throughout the Advent season. Today add the stable, animals, Mary, and Joseph.

Whole Family:

Create or purchase an Advent wreath to use throughout the Advent season and light the first candle.

Week 01: The Need
DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

SUNDAY

Genesis 3:1-19

MONDAY

Isaiah 2:2-5

TUESDAY

Isaiah 9:1-7

WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 11:1-9

THURSDAY

Isaiah 39:5-40:11

FRIDAY

Isaiah 52:1-12

SATURDAY

Isaiah 61:1-4

notes, reflections or memories

notes, reflections or memories

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



**Behold, the days are coming,
declares the Lord,
when I will raise up for David
a righteous Branch,
and he shall reign as king
and deal wisely,
and shall execute justice
and righteousness in the land.**

J E R E M I A H 23 : 5

WEEK 02

The Promise

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Week 02

the promise

Christmas is the most wonderful time because it gives us an age-old promise that even though we ruined the relationship between us and God, all along God intended to fix it.

READ

Jeremiah 23:1-8

KEY VERSE(S)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” Jeremiah 23:5

EXPLANATION

Quick, think about how many times you’ve made a promise that you failed to keep. Now think about this... Because you didn’t keep a promise, it wasn’t a promise after all. Rather, it was a lie. A promise is a fail-proof commitment. A declaration of assurance. A guarantee. Now, here’s the thing: When God makes a promise, he always comes through. Why? Because God is incapable of lying. Hebrews 6:18 says “It is impossible for God to lie!” If you were to trace out all the promises the Old Testament gave about Jesus, his incarnation, his life, death, burial, and resurrection, you would see that everything God said centuries before Jesus arrived, all happened exactly how God said it would happen. This passage in Jeremiah is no exception. Jesus would come from the family line of David. He would live a completely sinless life. He was enthroned as king when he fulfilled his death, resurrection, and ascension. And he executed justice and righteousness by satisfying the demands of the law, sin, death, and God’s wrath.

REFLECTION

Dwell on some of God’s promises towards you and how they impact your life today and forever.

SONG TO SING

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

DISCUSSION

Children:

Advent season and Christmas invite us to think about the promises of God, but especially God's promise to restore and redeem us and all of creation back to Himself. Can you remember a time that you broke a promise? Does God break His promises to us? Let's pray and ask God to help us trust in Him every day, and thank Him for His rescue plan of redeeming us to one day enjoy perfect life with Him forever.

Teens:

Either in the back of your Bible (in the concordance section) or on a Bible app, search for four verses that contain a promise (hint: look up the word "promise") from God and note how He kept that promise. Is there a promise from God that you're having trouble believing? Pray this week that He will strengthen your faith to believe His promises and give you eyes to see all the ways He is faithful.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Little Ones:

Continue adding to your nativity set. Today add baby Jesus.

Whole Family:

Create a nativity scene out of Legos or building blocks.

Light the second candle on your Advent wreath.

Week 02: The Promise
DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

SUNDAY

Genesis 3:1-19

MONDAY

Galations 4:4-6

TUESDAY

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

WEDNESDAY

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

THURSDAY

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

FRIDAY

Colossians 1:15-20

SATURDAY

2 Peter 3:3-13

notes, reflections or memories

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government
shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6





Week 03

the hope

*Christmas is the most wonderful time because it brings hope
to an otherwise gloomy world and history.*

READ

Isaiah 9:1-7

KEY VERSE(S)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

EXPLANATION

The early verses of Isaiah 9 are filled with so much hope. A nation who was exiled out of their land and placed under the oppressive captivity of the Assyrians is given good news. There was light amidst the darkness. And it came in the form of a child. This is as clear a prophecy about the incarnation that you will see in the Old Testament. This child would also be a “son” (THE Son of God). All authority would be given to him. He would bring peace. And his rule of justice and righteousness would last forever. This reminds us that no matter how bleak things are at times in our lives, there will always be hope, because Jesus took on flesh to save sinners like you and me, and he is moving all of us towards an eternity that is marked by peace, justice, and righteousness.

REFLECTION

Even though the world around us doesn’t seem to be marked by peace and justice, how does the good news that Jesus came to save us encourage us to say “It is well with my soul and this world?”

SONG TO SING

Noel

DISCUSSION

Children:

Think about a time when you were really sad, and how you responded to your sadness. Knowing that Jesus came to save us, how can we respond to situations that make us feel sad or hopeless? What do you think it felt like for God's people to wait for Jesus to come and save mankind?

Teens:

What do you think is the biggest dilemma/problem facing unsaved people today? What is the **ONLY** solution to that dilemma? Would you be willing to help those who are unsaved around you find that solution?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Little Ones:

Continue adding to your nativity set. Today, add a shepherd and an angel

Whole Family:

Each Sunday we've been learning about the church planters and missionaries The Way Church supports. Pick a church planter or missionary family and pray for them. Consider writing them a letter or email to encourage them during this Advent season.

Light the third candle on your Advent wreath

Week 03: The Hope
DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

SUNDAY

Isaiah 9:1-7

MONDAY

Mark 14:60-65

TUESDAY

Jeremiah 33:14-17

WEDNESDAY

Micah 5:2-5

THURSDAY

Ezekiel 34:11-31

FRIDAY

Zechariah 8:1-8

SATURDAY

Zephaniah 3:14-17

notes, reflections or memories

notes, reflections or memories

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



**But he was pierced
for our transgressions;
he was crushed
for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that
brought us peace,
and with his wounds
we are healed.**

ISAIAH 53:5



WEEK 04

The Strategy

WEEK 04

Week 04

the strategy

Christmas is the most wonderful time because it is the strategy for the rescue mission that God underwent to reconcile sinners back to him.

READ

Isaiah 53:1-12

KEY VERSE(S)

“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5

EXPLANATION

Whenever we give any sort of thought to coming up with a good strategy for any situation, it never involves inflicting serious harm on ourselves. We don't go into a scenario saying “How can I ensure that this will do major damage to me?” That would be odd and people would begin to question our sanity. But this is exactly what Jesus did as he planned out his redemption strategy. 1 Peter 1:20 helps us to see this: “He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.” Before mankind was created; before we ever even sinned, God strategized a plan that involved intense suffering on his Son's behalf. Jesus would be pierced and crushed. Why? Isaiah 53 makes it clear: For our sin! But more importantly, because he loved us. He took the chastisement that we deserved because he loved us. Romans 5:8 says “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus' strategy to save us came by way of his suffering because he wanted so badly to bring us into his family out of a deep love for us. So deep was it that he was willing to endure the most painful death. What a Savior and Christ we have!

REFLECTION

Christmas tends to sugar coat Jesus' purpose but as we see that the baby born in Bethlehem was the same person who went to the cross on Calvary to suffer and die, how does this make Christmas even more significant and special in our lives?

SONG TO SING

This is War

DISCUSSION

Children:

How did Jesus save mankind? Knowing that God had a strategy to save us through Jesus, how does that make Christmas even more special to us?

Teens:

Since the holiday season began, how much have you thought of bringing about good in others' lives? How much have you thought about all that you want to receive. Thank Jesus that He was thinking of your good when He was suffering and ask Him to help you think even more about others.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Little Ones:

Continue adding to your nativity set. Today add the Magi.

Whole Family:

Plan a birthday party for Jesus on Christmas Day! Think about a special dessert you can have together as a family and prepare it.

Light the fourth candle on your Advent wreath.

Week 04: The Strategy
DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

SUNDAY

Isaiah 53:1-12

MONDAY

Isaiah 7:10-17

TUESDAY

Matthew 1:11-17

WEDNESDAY

Luke 1:26-38

THURSDAY

Luke 1:39-56

FRIDAY

Matthew 1:18-25

notes, reflections or memories

[illegible]

**And suddenly
there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host
praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those
with whom he is pleased!**

LUKE 2:13-14





Week 05

the announcement

Christmas is the most wonderful time because it came by way of the most glorious announcement given by troops and troops of angels to a bunch of lowly shepherds.

READ

Luke 2:8-14

KEY VERSE(S)

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Luke 2:13-14

EXPLANATION

Have you noticed lately how out of hand baby announcements have become? People go to the craziest and cleverest lengths to tell the world they’re expecting. The whole goal behind them is to tell as many people as possible. So when it came to announcing the birth of the Messiah, one would think that the announcement would be the most viral announcement imaginable given to the most important people on earth at the time. But the birth of Christ was in fact the opposite of that. Instead of a public announcement to nobility and royalty, God chose to tell a few lowly shepherds who were enjoying a quiet night. Everything about the announcement was humble because everything about this Savior was humble. And this humility would not only mark the entirety of this Savior’s life, but also his death. He would die the death of a criminal (cf Philippians 2:8). Even though this Savior was eternal God, he lowered himself to unimaginable depths to save us!

REFLECTION

How can the humility of our Savior impact the way I see the world and live my life?

SONG TO SING

Angels We Have Heard On High

DISCUSSION

Children:

Why did God choose to announce the birth of Jesus to lowly shepherds instead of people that had more important roles? How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw and heard the angels proclaiming Jesus' birth? How can we tell others about Jesus?

Teens:

Are you tempted at times to make a name for yourself, to want people to praise you and your accomplishments? God wants you to ask Him to help you live a life that desires to give all praise to Him.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Little Ones:

Finish your nativity set. Today add the Magi's gifts. Talk about how Jesus is the greatest gift of all!

Whole Family:

Celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus! Take turns praying for one another. Thank God for Christmas and His rescue mission to reconcile sinners back to Him.

Light the fifth candle on your Advent wreath.

Additional Advent Activities for Families

The Way Church wants to encourage families to point one another to the gospel, the good news that Jesus loves and saves sinners. God cares more about our family members than we do, and His Word determines how we should live in every area of our lives. The Advent season can be a busy time and it can be overwhelming to think about ways to be mindful of how we are discipling our family members. Although each family will look different in how they carry out family discipleship, we want to offer a framework of Time, Moments, and Milestones (adapted from the book, *Family Discipleship*) that we believe sets parents up to fulfill God's call to be the primary disciplers of their children.

TIME

*Creating intentional time within your family's current rhythms for the purposes of thinking about, talking about, and living out the gospel. You create **TIME** with your family by thinking about the routines you already have and incorporate ways you can be more intentional about gospel living.*

THREE IDEAS FOR ADVENT:

- Read this Advent Devotional Guide with your family each week.
- Use the Christmas Countdown Calendar and provided stickers to take the time to remember the purpose of Advent and celebrate with your family.
- Serve your neighbors or community in a special way.

MOMENTS

*Capturing and leveraging opportunities taking advantage of opportunities that come up in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations. **MOMENTS** are not planned in advance; you're taking advantage of opportunities that come up to communicate God's truth.*

THREE IDEAS FOR ADVENT:

- When family members talk about their excitement for Christmas morning, talk about the importance of Jesus' birth, why we needed a savior to come, and how God is faithful in keeping His promises.
- When you're shopping or making gifts for others talk about how there is no greater gift than Jesus. Also, when you see Christmas lights, talk about why we enjoy them: because they remind us of the light of Jesus who is the Light of the world (John 8:12)!
- Have a kid-friendly nativity set available for your children to play with all season long.

MILESTONES

*Marking and making occasions to celebrate and commemorate significant spiritual milestones of God's work in the life of your family and children. **MILESTONES** are any event or change that is so important or profound that they're worthy of bearing witness to God's faithfulness by creating a milestone to remember (Marking) or celebrating and appreciating God when the event or change happens (Making).*

THREE IDEAS FOR ADVENT:

- Enjoy a Christmas meal with favorite dishes and family traditions to celebrate another year of remembering that Jesus is the Savior.
- Celebrate a new family member or significant event (marriage, home, anniversary, etc.): Hang a special ornament to celebrate the occasion and remember God's goodness in your lives, or take time to pray and thank God for His provision.
- Remember the life of a family member or friend who has passed away: share memories, pray to God and thank Him for the life of your loved one, hang a special ornament to remember and celebrate the life of your loved one.

notes, reflections or memories

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