



2018

— *ADVENT* —  
*GUIDE*







## – INTRODUCTION –

Advent is the traditional celebration of the first coming of Jesus in humility and the anxious waiting of His second coming in glory. Advent comes from a Latin word which means “coming” or “arrival.”

This season is a time for remembering and rejoicing, watching and waiting. It’s about stepping into the shoes of the Israelites, longing and crying out for the Messiah to come. It’s about reflecting on our sin and shortcomings and our need for a Savior. It’s about looking around at our broken world and hoping for the second coming of Jesus. And, once we get to Christmas Day, the celebration of Jesus’ birth becomes that much more spectacular and meaningful.

We’ve provided this Advent guide to help you make the most of this season. Our greatest desire is for you to know Jesus by spending time with Him in His Word. There are four weeks in Advent and each week includes a reading plan, reflection questions and a prayer. The questions and prayers are meant to supplement the reading and can be used whenever you desire throughout the week.

This guide was created as a companion to BridgePointe’s 2018 Christmas series *Extra Ordinary Christmas* and each week’s message is listed in the reading plan for the week.

## – For Parents –

At the end of this guide you will also find ideas for family discipleship. The greatest responsibility God gives parents is to raise their kids to know Jesus. We want to do everything we can to help you win in this essential area of parenting. The Advent season is a great opportunity to use the greatest story ever told to stir our kids hearts towards their Savior.

## ***WEEK 1 / DECEMBER 2-8***

The family history Matthew begins with gives us a rich narrative of God working through ordinary families to bring about His ultimate plan. The belief and faithfulness of so many people lead up to the moment God had planned all along – His entrance into the world.

### **- Reading Plan -**

- Sunday: Listen to “Ordinary Family. Extraordinary Plan.”  
Matthew 1:1-17
- Monday: Genesis 15; Psalm 1
- Tuesday: 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2
- Wednesday: Isaiah 11; Psalm 3
- Thursday: Jeremiah 33; Psalm 4
- Friday: Romans 13:11-14; Psalm 5
- Saturday: Reflect and catch up.

### **- Reflection -**

Think of an event in your life where you waited with long expectation. What were you waiting for? How did you feel in the waiting? What was it like when it finally happened?

What are some of evidences of the brokenness of this world that you've seen this week? How does the return of Christ help reframe the way you see them?

Think about someone who you know might be feeling overwhelmed by darkness. What are some ways you can point them to the hope of Christ coming this week?

**- Prayer -**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son, Jesus Christ, came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day when he will come again in glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

— *The Book of Common Prayer*

## ***WEEK 2 / DECEMBER 9-15***

Mary and Joseph displayed incredible faith. This week we look at scripture from all across the Old and New Testament which point to how their faithfulness played a crucial part in God. Our faithful hearts and faithful service today still play a crucial part in God's plan for the world.

### **- Reading Plan -**

- Sunday: Listen to "Ordinary People. Extraordinary Faith."  
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38
- Monday: Isaiah 7; Psalm 23
- Tuesday: Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 24
- Wednesday: Jeremiah 23:1-8; Psalm 25
- Thursday: John 1; Psalm 26
- Friday: 1 Corinthians 1; Psalm 27
- Saturday: Reflect and catch up.

### **- Reflection -**

Mary and Joseph were ordinary people who took an extraordinary step of faith. What step of faith has God been leading you to that you've been putting off? What can you do this week to trust God and step out in faith?

When Mary was approached by Gabriel with the news of her child, she exhibited an incredible openness to God. In what area of your life might God be calling you to a deeper faith and openness to His will?

Isaiah reminds us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and of His government and peace there will be no end. Where might God be leading you to bring peace this season? What steps can you take to speak words of Jesus' peace? (Isaiah 9:1-7)

**- Prayer -**

Dear Heavenly Father, we sing with great enthusiasm, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King." Yet as we review the true desires of our heart we would confess we are prone to seek the gifts and benefits that Christ can grant rather than actually receiving him deep within our lives. There are times when we are frightened by what might happen if we truly took Jesus seriously and resolved to invite him into all the diverse dimensions of our lives. Lord, have mercy upon us and cleanse us. Forgive the distorted images we hold of Christ which prevent us from living with him with the same trust and obedience as Joseph and Mary. Renew your sustaining Spirit within us that we might truly know and live in your joy through Jesus' redeeming name. Amen!

– Robert Weber



## ***WEEK 3 / DECEMBER 16-22***

When the birth finally happened people came from miles away to see Jesus. Their hopes of a Messiah who would pierce the darkness in the world became a reality. The first coming of Jesus was a cause for joyous worship and celebration. His second coming will be a final release from all evil in the world and we will worship and celebrate forever.

This coming weekend we will celebrate Christmas. Who can you invite to experience this same hope?

### **- Reading Plan -**

- Sunday: Listen to “Ordinary Witnesses. Extraordinary Worship.”  
Luke 2:15-40
- Monday: 1 John 4:7-21; Psalm 42
- Tuesday: Isaiah 35; Psalm 43
- Wednesday: Mark 13; Psalm 146
- Thursday: Revelation 22; Psalm 147
- Friday: Micah 5; Psalm 148
- Saturday: Reflect and catch up.

### **- Reflection -**

What are you most thankful for about Christ during this season? How does this make you want to worship and follow him more.



Is there someone in your life who is struggling to believe that God will fulfill all that he has promised? How can you encourage them in light of the hope of Jesus' return.

How does the imminence of Christ's return impact how you view what you're doing in the here and now? How does the way you live reflect a belief that Jesus really is coming back? (Revelation 22)

**- Prayer -**

O Son of God and Son of Man,  
You were incarnate, and you did suffer, rise, ascend  
for my sake;  
Your departure was not a token of separation  
but a pledge of return;  
Your Word, promises, sacraments, show your death  
until you come again.  
That day is no horror to me,  
for your death has redeemed me,  
your Spirit fills me,  
your love animates me,  
your Word governs me. (*continues...*)

I have trusted you and you have not betrayed my trust;  
waited for you, and not waited in vain.

You will come to raise my body from the dust,  
and re-unite it to my soul,  
by a wonderful work of infinite power and love,  
greater than that which bounds the ocean's waters.  
ebbs and flows the tides,  
keeps the stars in their courses,  
and gives life to all creatures.

This corruptible will put on incorruption,  
this mortal, immortality,  
this natural body, spiritual body,  
this dishonored body, a glorious body,  
this weak body, a body of power.

I triumph now in your promises as I will do  
in their performance,  
for the head cannot live if the members are dead;

Beyond the grave is resurrection, judgement,  
acquittal, dominion.

Every event and circumstance of my life will be dealt with  
the sins of my youth, my secret sins,  
the sins of abusing you, of disobeying your Word,  
the sin of neglecting leader's admonitions,  
the sins of violating my conscience -  
all will be judged;

And after judgement, peace and rest, life and service,  
employment and enjoyment, for your elect.

O God, keep me in this faith,  
and every looking for Christ's return.

- The Second Coming from *The Valley of Vision*



## ***WEEK 4 / DECEMBER 23-25***

The anticipation and angst was worth it. The culmination of our celebration has arrived. Christ has come and He will come again. Take a moment to truly celebrate His birth for yourself. Celebrate with family! Celebrate with friends! What can you do to help others celebrate Christ's birth with you?

### **- Reading Plan -**

- Sunday: Listen to "Ordinary Town. Extraordinary Arrival."  
Luke 2:1-14
- Monday: Matthew 1-2
- Tuesday: Luke 1-2

### **- Reflection -**

As you reflect on the Christmas story, what part amazes you the most? How does turning back to this story annually influence your relationship with God?

As Advent comes to a close, what specific circumstances in your life have made this year's celebration of Advent special and unique? Why do you think God gives us this gift of yearly celebration?

What was Christmas typically like when you were growing up? What event signaled the end of Christmas for you? How did you feel as the season came to a close?

- Prayer -

Three in One, One in Three, God of my salvation,  
Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit,  
I adore you as one Being, one Essence,  
one God in three distinct Persons,  
for bringing sinners to your knowledge and to your kingdom.

O Father, you have loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me;

O Jesus, you have loved me and assumed my nature,  
shed your own blood to wash away my sins,  
worked righteousness to cover my unworthiness;

O Holy Spirit, you have loved me and entered my heart,  
implanted there eternal life,  
revealed to me the glories of Jesus.

Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise you,  
for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so wondrous,  
so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory.

O Father, I thank you that in fullness of grace  
you have given me Jesus,

to be his sheep, jewel, portion;

O Jesus, I thank you that in fullness of grace  
you have accepted, espoused, bound me;

O Holy Spirit, I thank you that in fullness of grace  
you have exhibited Jesus as my salvation,

implanted faith within me,

subdued my stubborn heart,

made me one with him forever.

O Father, you are enthroned to hear my prayers,

O Jesus, your hand is outstretched to take my requests,

O Holy Spirit, you are willing to help my weaknesses,  
to show me my need, to supply words, to pray within me,  
to strengthen me so I do not faint in requests.

O Triune God, who commands the universe,

you have commanded me to ask for those things  
that concern your kingdom and my soul.

Let me live and pray as one baptized into the threefold Name.

- The Trinity from *The Valley of Vision*



## ***IDEAS FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP***

### **- The Birth of Jesus -**

Read the story of Jesus' birth together as a family. If your kids are younger, read the story "He's Here" in *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (p. 176). If you have older children reading the account from the Bible can be a sweet time to grow together as a family. (Luke 2:1-7) Help your kids find the story in their Bibles using the table of contents and the chapter and verse numbers.

After reading the account of Jesus' birth, talk about where Jesus was born. Was He born in a hospital? Were there doctors and nurses there to help take care of Mary and baby Jesus? Was it warm and clean? Was it quiet and calm? Jesus is God. He left heaven to be born a helpless baby. This was part of God's good plan to save sinners! Then draw a list of how you think the stable and manger looked, smelled and felt. Praise God for being generous and humbling Himself to be born as a baby.

### **- The Shepherds and Angels Share the Good News of Jesus -**

On the night Jesus was born, God began to share the good news of His birth. But He didn't tell the leaders or important people. Instead, He told a group of shepherds whom no one really liked. Read about the shepherds and the angels in Luke 2:8-20 or in "The Light of the Whole World" from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (p. 184). Who did God send to tell the shepherds the good news that Jesus had been born? What did the angels say? What did the shepherds do when they heard the good news?

Spend time reenacting the story of the shepherds and angels together as a family. Use flashlights and sleeping bags to add to the fun.

### **- Hints and Clues -**

God gave His people many hints and clues about the birth of Jesus all through the Old Testament. God was helping His people wait for their

Savior. At Christmastime, we have lots of opportunities to give hints and clues—about gifts, fun activities, food and more. Capture opportunities to give hints and clues to your family about things you will be doing this Advent season. Help build anticipation and joy. When those hints and clues are fulfilled, remind your family that God gave hints and clues about Jesus. And every hint, clue and promise He made came true!

Maybe you put baby Jesus on a far side of the house and could move him closer and closer to the manger as the days draw closer to Christmas. Maybe you could do a Christmas Eve treasure hunt for your child's first gift before Christmas. Along the way point to prophecies and clues about Jesus.

Maybe you take the kids through their own Advent Reading Plan which points to Jesus. You can find the printable Jesus Storybook Bible reading plan by searching "Jesus Storybook Bible Advent Guide" on Google.





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