

God keeps His promises.

Advent

2020

Advent 2020

The weeks leading up to Christmas can be a flurry of to-do lists & stress. The season of Advent is a chance to step out of a worldly approach to Christmas and center ourselves on the importance of Jesus' arrival.

Traditionally Advent is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. It is a time for remembering, rejoicing, watching and waiting. An advent wreath with five candles marks the countdown to Christmas. Each Sunday we will mark Advent by remembering a part of the Christmas story and lighting another candle. We encourage you to do this at home as well. (Check out bpri.church/advent for tips!)

Continuing to be Jesus Strong

At BridgePointe we strive to be Jesus Strong so that we are ready for Jesus' return and are able to share our faith with others while we wait. There are three practices that make us Jesus Strong: gathering together to worship, spending time in Scripture and living in fellowship. This Advent guide will help you spend time in Scripture each day, and we encourage you worship on Sunday and live in fellowship with others this season.

You'll notice that there are Sunday pages with the Advent readings, actions and songs, as well as a page to take notes from the Sunday message. Use the pages to reflect and follow along in our teaching series, *Reason to Sing*. The Sunday after Christmas, BridgePointe will not be holding services. Please use the guide for that Sunday to worship at home.

Reading through the life of Jesus

This Advent guide focuses on the first nine chapters of the book of Luke. Reading through the life of Jesus will prepare us for Christmas. Use this guide to help you make the most of this important season, getting to know Jesus better by spending time with Him in Scripture.

How to use this guide:

We encourage you to use the framework of Context, Preparation and Approach to get the most out of your time in Scripture.

Context

The context is everything that surrounds the text. Every part of the Bible was written by someone, to someone, for a specific purpose. While there is power in Scripture whenever it is read, we can gain a lot more when we understand why it was originally written and apply that truth to our lives. Answering these three questions whenever you read scripture will help you know the context:

- *Who wrote this passage?*
- *What's going on?*
- *Why was it written?*

Preparation

What you do before you read Scripture is just as important as what you do while you read Scripture. Here are three things that will help you prepare so that you get the most out of your time.

1. Create an environment that eliminates external distractions.

Choose a consistent location and time of day.

Find a quiet space where your focus won't be interrupted.

Create traditions or habits that will help you look forward to your time. Maybe brew a cup of coffee and grab a blanket, or take a walk and sit outside, or sit at a window with a view.

2. Practice silence for two to five minutes to quiet internal distraction.

Perhaps the biggest distraction we face is that of our own mind. Silence creates the space to calm our hearts and clear our minds. This is a discipline that will take some time to develop. Focus on your breathing and push thoughts away as they creep in for a couple of moments.

Pray to ask God to help you to slow down and clear your mind so you can focus.

3. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

Before you read ask the Spirit who inspired Scripture to illuminate it for you now. Remember, what you do before you read is as important as what you do while you read!

Approach

This guide uses the SOAP method for Bible study. SOAP is an acronym for Scripture, observation, application and prayer. It's a powerful tool that moves you from the text into the reality of your life. Using this method consistently will make it a habit and something you are familiar with. We've given you space in this guide to use this method each day, but you can always use SOAP with a journal or notebook and work through any passage of Scripture.

Scripture

Write the scripture reference and read through the passage slowly.

Observation

Write down what you notice from the reading. For example...

- *What's the main point the author is trying to get across?*
- *What's something challenging or new?*
- *Is there anything in the passage you want to study more?*

Application

Write down how this applies to your life today.

- *How does this challenge you to live as a disciple?*
- *How does it intersect with your current life circumstances?*
- *Is God speaking a word of encouragement or challenge to you directly?*

Prayer

Write your prayer to God in response to what you've read.

God Cares - Mary's Song

Sunday, Nov 29

Advent Reading: Luke 1:26-35

Mary was overwhelmed that the great and glorious God was mindful of her, even in her most humble state. She sang to God because of the favor and kindness He showed her. Mary's story, and the season of Advent, remind us that God shows this same favor and kindness to everyone through Jesus. He loves us and cares for us, even in our humble state.

Advent Action:

Light the first candle and take time to reflect and talk about the kindness and favor that God has shown you.

Response Song:

Agnus Dei, Michael W. Smith

Alleluia Alleluia

For our Lord God Almighty reigns

Alleluia Alleluia

For our Lord God Almighty reigns

Alleluia

Holy Holy

Are You Lord God Almighty

Worthy is the Lamb

Worthy is the Lamb

You are Holy

Holy

Are You Lord God Almighty

Worthy is the Lamb

Worthy is the Lamb

Amen

Day 4 | Read Luke 1:39-56

Observation:

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God Saves - Zechariah's Song

Sunday, Dec 6

Advent Reading: Luke 1:5-7; 1:11-17; 1:57-58

Zechariah and Elizabeth had felt the pain and brokenness of this world, but they remained faithful to God. They longed to experience God's salvation, when He would come and bring life to His people. Their story shows that God has a special plan and a special place for people who trust Him, even when they doubt and disobey.

Advent Action: Light the second candle and confess your sin to God. Let the light of the candle remind you of the grace in your life. Jesus came to save you from your sin.

Response Song: *King of Kings*, Hillsong Worship

*In the darkness, we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the Word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt*

*Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings*

*To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross
For even in Your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake You died*

*Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty*

*Praise forever to the King of Kings
And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
'Til that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored*

*And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint
By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me, ohh*

*Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings
Praise forever to the King of Kings*

Day 7 | Read Luke 2:22-40

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God Welcomes - Shepherd's Song

Sunday, Dec 13

Advent Reading: Luke 2:1, 3-7

Going back to the beginning, God has always wanted to be close to His people because He loves us. There is no way that we could work our way back to God on our own. Because we couldn't come close to God, He came close to us in Jesus. And God invites and welcomes all who will draw near by faith.

Advent Action: Light the third candle and remember God loves you and longs to be close with you. Thank God for coming close to you in Jesus.

Response Song: *Here Comes Heaven*, Elevation Worship

*Children, weep no more
Hope is on the horizon
Weary world, behold
Your promised Messiah*

*Angels, let your song begin
Here comes Heaven
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Here comes Heaven*

*Sinner, wait no more
Love has broken the silence
Come let us adore
The Savior is with us*

*Angels, let your song begin
Here comes Heaven
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Here comes Heaven
Here comes Heaven*

*Now, behold His glory
Glory in the highest
All the earth rejoice for Christ is born
Now, behold His glory
Glory in the highest
All the earth rejoice for Christ is born,*

*Over all who mourn
Breaks the dawn of salvation
Darkness reigns no more, oh
For Jesus is greater
He is greater*

*Angels, let your song begin
Here comes Heaven
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Here comes Heaven*

*Angels, let your song begin
Here comes Heaven
All creation worship Him
Here comes Heaven*

Here comes Heaven, oh

Day 13 | Read Luke 4:41-44

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Application:

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Day 14 | Read Luke 5:1-11; 27-31

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God Promises - Simeon's Song

Sunday, Dec 20

Advent Reading: Luke 2:22-26, 2:36-38

Simeon and Ana—represent all who were waiting for God to keep His promises. Life was hard and the wait was long. But they knew that when the Promised One came, all God’s promises would be fulfilled. God has promised us many things, too—to forgive us... and to be with us; to give us comfort... and to prepare a place for us. We long for and look forward to their fulfillment.

Advent Action: Light the fourth candle and reflect on what you most look forward to when Jesus returns. What promise from God do you eagerly await?

Response Song: *Promises*, Maverick City Music

God of Abraham
You're the God of covenant and of
faithful promises
Time and time again You have proven
You'll do just what You said

Though the storms may come and the
Winds may blow I'll remain steadfast
And let my heart learn when You speak
a word it will come to pass

Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same
I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me

God from age to age,
Though the earth may pass away, Your
word remains the same
Your history can prove there's nothing
You can't do, You're faithful and True

I put my faith in Jesus
My anchor to the ground
My hope and firm foundation

He'll never let me down
Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same
I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me
Yes I'll still bless You
In the middle of the storm
In the middle of my trial
I'll still bless You
In the middle of the road
When I don't know where to go
I'll still bless You
In the middle of my storm
In the middle of my trial
I'll still bless You
Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same
I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me

Day 20 | Read Luke 8:1-18

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Seek After God

Sunday, Dec 27

Christ is born! Let's glorify Him!

We hope you joined us for our Christmas Celebration right before Christmas and had a meaningful holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus.

We are not holding services this Sunday after Christmas, but we still believe worshiping Jesus is just as important as it is on any other Sunday. Here are ways you can still worship God right where you are, whether it's with your family or on your own:

Worship

Head over to our blog or social media accounts to find a link to a worship playlist. We have sung right along with Mary, Zechariah, the shepherds and Simeon this month. After all, we have a reason to sing! Use the playlist or your favorite carol book to sing in worship this morning.

Scripture

The Magi sought Jesus, they celebrated Him, and gave gifts to Him. Read Matthew 2:1-11. Discuss the story and reflect on these questions:

How will you seek Jesus and become closer to Him?

Why do we celebrate Jesus?

What will we sacrifice for Jesus to show what He means to us?

Communion

Read Isaiah 53:5 and take communion. If you don't have grape juice and crackers, be creative with what you have.

Give

This act of worship expresses devotion to God and enables the church to carry out His mission. Make your gift online at bpri.church/give.

Pray

Spend time in prayer, thank God for what He's given you, ask Him for what you need and go to Him on behalf of others in your life.

Day 21 | Read Luke 8:19-39

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Application:

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Day 22 | Read Luke 8:40-56

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Day 23 | Read Luke 9:1-17

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BRIDGEPOINTE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

This guide was created by the staff at BridgePointe Christian Church. Founded in 2013, BridgePointe is a non-denominational Christian church located in East Providence, RI with the mission to make disciples of Jesus in relationship.

Find out more at: <http://bpri.church>



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