



# *Advent* **at Home**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## The Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12) Devotional

**This devotional can be used on Three Kings Day (Sunday, January 6), New Year's Day or any time. Use it to reflect on the Advent season.**

The Wise Men came from a long distance to seek the newborn King. Traditional nativity scenes have three "Wise Men" visiting the infant Jesus on the night of his birth. However, the Bible doesn't tell us there were three wise men, nor is it likely that they were there on that first night. They may not have arrived until Jesus was about two years old. If you would like to learn more, check out [www.whychristmas.com/story/wisemen.shtml](http://www.whychristmas.com/story/wisemen.shtml) or [www.jba.gr/about-the-wise-men.htm](http://www.jba.gr/about-the-wise-men.htm).

**Prayer: Thank You, Lord, that we can worship You just as the wise men did. May we be as excited about knowing You as they were. Help us to let others know Christmas is special because it is Jesus' birthday. Show us how we can bring joy to those around us this Christmas season and always. Amen.**

**Sing: "We Three Kings," Joy to the World," "The First Noel," or "What Child Is This?"**

### **Dig Deeper:**

Why did the Wise Men bring gifts to baby Jesus? \*See quote below.

What gift can you give to Jesus?

Share something joyful that happened to you today or this week.

How can you bring joy to someone you know?

Read scriptures about joy: Psalm 47:1-2; Psalm 126:2-3; Romans 15:13; 1 Peter 1:8; Hebrews 12:1-3.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Each of the gifts that the Wise Men brought has a special meaning. Gold stood for the riches of a king. Jesus would be King of kings. Incense was used by priests in temple worship. Jesus would be our high priest who would go between us and the Father. Myrrh was a perfume put on people after they died. Jesus would die as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. The Wise Men's gifts showed that Jesus would be King, Priest, and Sacrifice." (Hibbard, Ann. Celebrating Advent. 2011. p. 75)

### **Nativity Scene**

Add the wise men to your nativity set.

### **Family Moments**

Turn off the electronics, eat together, talk in the car, or whatever works for your family to come together for a few minutes each day.

### **Waiting**

Make plans for a fun Christmas activity next week that you know your children will love. It may be seeing a Christmas play or movie, decorating cookies together, or seeing Christmas lights. At the end of your family Advent time, promise your kids that you are going to do something special together to celebrate Advent, but don't tell them what or when. As the days go by, remind them of your promise and give them clues as to what it might be. Let their expectation and excitement grow throughout the week. Use this opportunity to remind them of God's promise to send a Savior and the anticipation God's people felt as they waited.

The next week, keep the promise you made. Talk about how you fulfilled the clues you gave them. Discuss the experience of waiting: What was it like to wait? What was it like to finally experience what you had been waiting and hoping for? Remember together God's faithfulness in sending a Savior; it happened just as He said it would.

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### **Clouds & Stars**

Take a moment to be still. Grab a blanket or a couple of chairs, lean back, and look at the sky, both during the day and at night. During the day, watch the clouds and imagine what it might look like for Jesus to come down from the clouds to take those who love and trust Him to be with God forever. Praise God for using all of creation, like the sky, to remind us of His greatness. At night, look at the stars. Imagine what it might look like with a big, new star in it, like the one God put in the sky the night Jesus was born. Or what it might look like filled with angels singing about how great God is.

### **Family Book Club**

Take turns choosing a Christmas book for the family to read together. Encourage the person choosing the book to think of questions to start discussion. Take a field trip to the library or bookstore to further encourage a love of reading. Invite extended family to join you and make a night of it!

### **Words**

Give each person a small pad of sticky notes and a pen. Designate a wall or other space to post the notes. Give your family 1 minute to write one word per note that pertains to Christmas and stick the notes on the wall. Younger children can draw pictures or give them 1 minute before the family and help them write their notes. See how many words your family can get on the wall. Afterward, read the words and talk about why they make them think about Christmas.

John 1:1, 14 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus is the Word. What does that mean? (Jesus is God and man in one person. God sent Jesus to earth in the flesh to tell us about who He is. Jesus is God's personal message to us.)

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### **Prayer Garland**

Cut 25 green and/or red strips of construction paper strips. On each strip, write the name of a family member, friend, or ministry. Staple, tape, or glue the strips together as links into one long garland. Hang it in your home as a decoration. Each day in December, remove one of the strips and, as a family, pray for the person or ministry listed.

### **Family Worship Night**

Schedule a night later in the week (or month) when you will have a family worship night. Talk about the elements of your church's worship service and why each element is included. Ask each family member to choose a way they will participate in your Family Worship Night- they may choose to read Bible verses aloud, sing a song, write and read a poem, present a dance, write and act out a drama, or share artwork.

As part of your worship night, talk about how you told the family about the evening ahead of time so they would know what to expect and how to prepare. Relate this to how God took the time to tell his people, through the prophet Isaiah, several hundred years early, that a special Messiah would be born. God told them many details so they would know what to expect. Read Isaiah 9:6-7.

### **Family Interviews**

Videotape the kids interviewing grandparents, great-aunts, and great-uncles about their lives. What was life like growing up? What special memories do they have of Christmas or other holidays?

Then, turn it around and have the older family members interview the kids!

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### **Traditions**

Take 5 minutes and have each family member write down or share their favorite Christmas traditions. You may wish to ask, "What traditions will they keep when they have a family?"

How do the various traditions help us remember Jesus? They don't have to be directly connected to the Christmas story, they may reflect the character of God or what He calls us to do. The goal is to get your family thinking about how everything we do can reflect who God is, even the small things. Preparing our hearts for Christmas is about remembering Jesus in all we do.

### **Love-ing Pancakes**

Have pancakes for dinner, preparing them in the shape of a heart or in the shape of the letters L, O, V, and E. As your family enjoys dinner together, talk about the things they love. What were Jesus' two greatest commandments to us (Matthew 22:36-39)? How can we love God and others?

### **When You Were Born**

Pull out old baby books, pictures, and videos and share the birth story of each family member. Also bring out any saved baby blankets, clothes, toys, books, etc. Talk about the preparation that went into getting ready for a new baby and the excitement that was felt by the family.

Next, share the "second" birth story of family members who are believers. How did you come to Christ? This is a wonderful way to help each other be comfortable sharing your story.

Talk about how Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth. This is a difficult concept for children, but begin by talking about the things they can do to help them remember Christmas is about Jesus' birthday. Take time to pray, read scripture, have a few minutes of quiet time, and to thank God for all He has given you.

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## *Books and Resources*

### **Board Books**

- Cozy Nativity: A Touch and Feel Christmas Story
- Christmas in the Manger by Nola Buck (Nativity story)\*
- Humphrey's First Christmas by Carol Heyer (Nativity story-Wise men)
- Itsy Bitsy Christmas by Max Lucado (Nativity story) \*
- Merry Christmas, Nighty Night by Michael W. Smith
- My Merry Christmas by Sally Lloyd-Jones (Writer of The Jesus Storybook)
- Really Woolly Christmas Blessings by Bonnie Rickner Jensen
- The Christmas Story by Patricia A. Pingry (Nativity story)
- The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado (Experience God's love for those who feel alone or different.)\*

### **Picture Books**

- Twas the Evening of Christmas by Glenys Nellist (Wise men)
- A Birthday Party for Jesus by Susan Jones
- A is for Angel: A Christmas Alphabet and Activity Book by Debbie Trafton O' Neal\*
- Away in a Manger, Thomas Kinkade (Nativity story) \*
- Christmas in the Barn, Margaret Wise Brown (Nativity story) \*
- God Gave Us Christmas by Lisa Tawn Bergren\*
- Goodnight, Manger by Laura Sassi (Nativity story)
- Humphrey's First Christmas by Carol Heyer (Nativity story-Wise men)
- M is for Manger by Crystal Bowman
- Mary's First Christmas by Walter Wangerin Jr. (Nativity story)
- Nativity by Cynthia Rylant (Nativity story)
- One Baby Jesus by Patricia A. Pingry
- Room for a Little One by Martin Waddell (Nativity story)
- The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski (Story of hope and healing)
- The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado (Experience God's love for those who feel alone or different.) \*
- The First Christmas by Carol Heyer (Nativity story) \*
- The Little Drummer Boy by Ezra Jack Keats (Nativity story)

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## Picture Books: Interactive

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- The Donkey in the Living Room Nativity Set by Sarah Cunningham
- The Giving Manger by Allison Hottinger
- The Shepherd on the Search by Josh & Lindsay Helms [www.shepherdonthesearch.com](http://www.shepherdonthesearch.com)
- The Sparkle Box by Jill Hardie
- What God Wants For Christmas by Barbara Rainey (Interactive Nativity)

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## **Picture Books: Waiting**

- Llama, Llama Holiday Drama by Anna Dewdney (Little Llama is tired of all the endless waiting)
- The Littlest Watchman: Watching and Waiting for the Very First Christmas by Scott James
- The Littlest Watchman - Advent Calendar by Alison Mitchell
- Waiting for Christmas: A Story about the Advent Calendar (World traditions) by Kathleen Long Bostrom

## **Read-Alouds**

- Christmas Crossroads (Choose Your Journey) by Elizabeth Raum
- Christmas Stories: Little House Chapter Book (Reillustrated Edition) by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- Once Upon a NON-Time: 25 Christmas Stories for Kids by Ryan Rench
- The Christmas Candle by Max Lucado (Book & DVD)
- The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry

## **Activity and Coloring Books**

- Because of Bethlehem Christmas Coloring Book by Max Lucado
- Can You See What I See? Night Before Christmas by Walter Wick
- Nativity Stained Glass Coloring Book by Marty Noble (Dover Coloring Book)
- Christian Christmas coloring books can be found in Hobby Lobby and on [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com)

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## **Christmas Symbols - Santa Claus/St-Nicholas**

- Mommy, Was Santa Claus Born on Christmas, Too? by Barbara Knoll"
- Santa, Are You For Real? by Harold Myra
- Santa's Favorite Story: Santa Tells the Story of the First Christmas by Hisako Aoki\*
- The Candymaker's Gift by David and Helen Haidle
- The Christmas Candle by Richard Paul Evans\*
- The Legend of the Candy Cane by Lori Walburg\*
- The Legend of the Christmas Tree by Rick Osborne
- The Legend of the Three Trees, Book adaptation by Catherine McCafferty
- The Night Before Christmas by Jan Brett - Tasha Tudor\* - Will Moses\*
- The Pine Tree Parable by Liz Curtis Higgs
- The True Saint Nicholas: Why He Matters to Christmas by William J. Bennett

## **Devotionals for Kids**

- Bible Journal for Kids: Christmas by D.I.G. for Kids

## **Devotionals for the Family**

- A Family Advent: Keeping the Savior in the Season by Thomas Nelson Publishers
- Celebrating A Christ-centered Christmas: Children's Edition by Emily Belle Freeman
- Celebrating Advent: Family Devotions and Activities for the Christmas Season by Ann Hibbard
- Christmas Countdown: Creating 25 Days of Advent Traditions for Families by Margie Harding
- Christmas Is Coming! But Waiting Is Hard! by Karen Whiting
- Counting to Christmas: Family Advent Devotions and Calendar by Gail Pawlitz
- Look! A Child's Guide to Advent & Christmas
- Names of Jesus - Advent Ornament Book
- She Reads Truth for the whole family [shopshereadstruth.com/collections/advent-2019](http://shopshereadstruth.com/collections/advent-2019)

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### **Devotionals for the Family**

- The 25 Days of Christmas: An Advent Celebration for the Entire Family by Rebecca Hayford Bauer (out-of-print, find used copies online)
- The Advent Storybook: 25 Bible Stories by Laura Ritchie
- The Best Gift Ever Given: A 25-Day Journey Through Advent from God's Good Gifts to God's Great Son The Expected One: Anticipating All of Jesus in the Advent by Scott James
- The Family Book of Advent (Uses the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy & Love) by Carol Garborg
- The Twelve Names of Christmas by Family Life
- The Way to the Manger by Jeff and Abbey Land
- The Wonder of the Greatest Gift: An Interactive Family Celebration of Advent by Ann Voskamp Unwrapping the Greatest Gift by Ann Voskamp (based on the Jesse Tree)
- NEW When Will It Be Christmas? by Carol Garborg

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### **Devotionals/Books for Adults**

- Can Martha Have A Mary Christmas?: Untangling Expectations and Truly Experiencing Jesus
- Loving My Actual Christmas: An Experiment in Relishing the Season
- Not a Silent Night: Mary Looks Back to Bethlehem
- She Reads Truth for the whole family [www.shopshereadstruth.com/collections/advent-2018](http://www.shopshereadstruth.com/collections/advent-2018)
- Stories Behind the Best-Loved Songs of Christmas by Ace Collins
- The Greatest Gift: An Advent Devotional by Ann Voskamp
- The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren
- The Story of the Other Wise Man by Henry Van Dyke
- The Women of Christmas: Experience the Season Afresh with Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna
- Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas compiled by Plough Publishing House

### **Movies**

- Christian Cinema Christmas movies [www.christiancinema.com/digital/category/christmas](http://www.christiancinema.com/digital/category/christmas)
- FishFlix [www.fishflix.com/collections/christmas-movies](http://www.fishflix.com/collections/christmas-movies)
- Max Lucado's The Christmas Candle
- The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Joely Richardson (Netflix DVD)

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## **Nativities**

- Bible Paper Toys: The Nativity Story [www.mylittlehouse.org/the-nativity-story.html](http://www.mylittlehouse.org/the-nativity-story.html)
- Fisher-Price Little People Nativity (Amazon, but shop around)
- Fox Run 4536 Nativity Scene Cookie Cutter and Icing Bake Set, 21-Piece (Amazon)
- Fun Express Christmas Nativity Scene Rubber Duckie Ducky Duck Toy (Amazon)
- Melissa & Doug Classic Wooden Christmas Nativity Set (Amazon)
- Paper Nativity (\$2.00) <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Christmas-Craft-for-the-Classroom-Make-A-Nativity-Scene-42470>
- Pattern for Felt Nativity Playset [www.etsy.com/listing/471523542](http://www.etsy.com/listing/471523542)
- NEW Teeny-Tiny Nativity (Amazon)
- The First Christmas (felt finger puppets) [www.etsy.com/listing/16871288](http://www.etsy.com/listing/16871288)
- Felt Nativity (Hobby Lobby)

## **Advent Wreaths**

- Paper Handprint Advent Wreath [kicker.info/beth/2011/12/02/toddler-friendly-advent-wreath/](http://kicker.info/beth/2011/12/02/toddler-friendly-advent-wreath/)
- DIY Advent Wreath Options [www.youandkids.com/12-diy-advent-wreath-crafts-celebrate-honor-faith/](http://www.youandkids.com/12-diy-advent-wreath-crafts-celebrate-honor-faith/)
- Dollar Store Advent Wreath (battery-operated votives)
- [premeditatedleftovers.com/naturally-frugal-mom/dollar-store-diy-advent-wreath-craft-kids/](http://premeditatedleftovers.com/naturally-frugal-mom/dollar-store-diy-advent-wreath-craft-kids/)

## **Family Gifts**

- NEW The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name by Sally Lloyd-Jones

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### *Easy Gifts and Recipes*

#### **Bird Seed Ornament**

Link: [chachingonashoestring.com/2013/12/18/how-to-make-a-bird-seed-ornament/](http://chachingonashoestring.com/2013/12/18/how-to-make-a-bird-seed-ornament/)

Knox gelatin  
Cookie cutters  
Twine  
Bird seed (for small birds)  
Wax paper

1. In a small saucepot, mix together an envelope of Knox gelatin with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water and stir while bringing it to a simmer. Continue until the gelatin is dissolved. Remove it from the heat and let it cool for a minute. Stir in a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of birdseed (seed for small birds). Add more seed if there is still liquid in the pot.
2. Lay a cookie cutter on wax paper and fill it half way with the bird seed mixture.
3. Cut a piece of twine, knot the end to create a loop and push the knot into the birdseed.
4. Continue filling the cookie cutter with bird seed (covering the knot) until it is full.
5. Let it sit overnight. Carefully, remove the birdseed from the cookie cutter.

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### **Taco Soup**

Brown 10 oz. lean ground beef  
1 chopped onion  
Add 2 (150z) cans diced tomatoes  
1(8 oz) can tomato sauce  
1(150z) can kidney or pinto beans w/liquid  
1(150z) can black beans, drained  
1(150z) can corn w/liquid  
3 cups water  
1 pkg. taco seasoning  
1 pkg. ranch dressing mix

Heat thoroughly and enjoy!

### **Hot Chocolate Mix in a Jar**

Serves: 7-8

3/4 cup non-fat dry milk powder  
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
3/4 cup powdered sugar  
Optional garnishes: Mini chocolate chips, crushed candy canes, or mini marshmallows

Layer the ingredients in order in a quart-size wide-mouth mason jar. Fill gift jars or bags.

Include the following instructions:

Before use, mix ingredients well. For one serving, combine cup of hot chocolate mix with 1 cup boiling water in a cup or mug. Stir until dissolved and enjoy!

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### **Friendship Soup**

Link: [allrecipes.com/recipe/12944/love-soup-mix-in-a-jar/](http://allrecipes.com/recipe/12944/love-soup-mix-in-a-jar/)

1/4 cup barley  
1/3 cup beef bouillon granules  
1/2 cup dry lentils  
1/4 cup dried minced onion  
1/2 cup dried split peas  
1/3 cup long-grain white rice  
1/2 cup uncooked twist macaroni  
1 cup uncooked tri-color spiral pasta

Use a canning funnel or any funnel that has about a 2-inch neck. This will make it easier to fill the jar with the ingredients. Be sure to use a wide-mouth, 1-quart canning jar.

Layer ingredients in the order given: bouillon, onion flakes, split peas, small shape pasta, barley, lentils, rice, and enough tricolor spiral pasta to fill jar.

Attach label from the resources section with the cooking instructions: In a large kettle, brown pound ground beef or stew beef cut into bite-size pieces in a little olive oil. Remove tricolor pasta from top of jar and reserve. Add the rest of the jar contents to the kettle with 12 cups water. Let come to a boil and simmer 45 minutes. Add tricolor pasta and simmer 15 minutes more. Serve with your favorite bread or rolls and a tossed salad.

Video lesson on Friendship Soup: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7w7yXkJTuo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7w7yXkJTuo)

Lesson Plan includes writing prompts, discussion starters and printables.

[www.mindsetmission.com/assets/building-relationships-video-lesson-friendship-soup.pdf](http://www.mindsetmission.com/assets/building-relationships-video-lesson-friendship-soup.pdf)

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### **M&M Christmas Poem**

Makes 12

Link: [simplesojourns.com/mm-christmas-poem-candy-jar-tutorial/](http://simplesojourns.com/mm-christmas-poem-candy-jar-tutorial/)

(12) 1 pint mason jars

(6) large bags of red and green M&Ms (12.60 ounces)

(1) large square Christmas themed 12 x 12-inch scrap paper page (we used three different patterns)

(2) sheets (8.5 x 11) of the M&M Christmas Poem printed on card stock paper Christmas-themed ribbon for tying around the jar lid

As you hold these candies in your hand  
And turn them, you will see  
The 'M' becomes a 'W',  
An 'E', and then a '3'.

They tell the Christmas Story-  
I'm sure it's one you know.  
It took place in a stable  
A long, long time ago.

The 'E' is for the East,  
Where the star shone so bright.  
The 'M' is for the Manger,  
where the Baby Jesus slept at night.

The '3' is for the Wise men,  
Bearing gifts, with which they came.  
'W' is for Worship,  
Hallelujah! Praise His Name!

So as you eat these candies  
Or share them with a friend,  
Remember the meaning of Christmas:  
It's a love that never ends

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### Christmas Carols

- It Came Upon The Midnight Clear
- Angels We Have Heard on High
- Joy to the World
- Away In a Manger
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- The Little Drummer Boy
- O Come, All Ye Faithful
- O Holy Night
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel
- O Little Town of Bethlehem
- Silent Night
- We Three Kings
- The First Noel
- What Child Is This