

minno

Advent Family Devotional

Yesterday • Today • Forever



A Note to Parents

Every year, we may find ourselves struggling to make the Christmas season spiritually meaningful for our kids. We get lost in the hustle and spend our time baking cookies, wrapping presents, and going to parties—which are all fun parts of the season! But sometimes we're left wondering if our kids are getting the whole picture.

Christmas is about God coming to be with us through His son, Jesus. Emmanuel.

During the Christmas season, we pause to remember that Jesus came once and that Jesus will come again. Even if we don't realize it, our hearts are longing for the day Jesus returns. Advent helps us to look back to the first time Jesus came and restore our hope in His second coming.

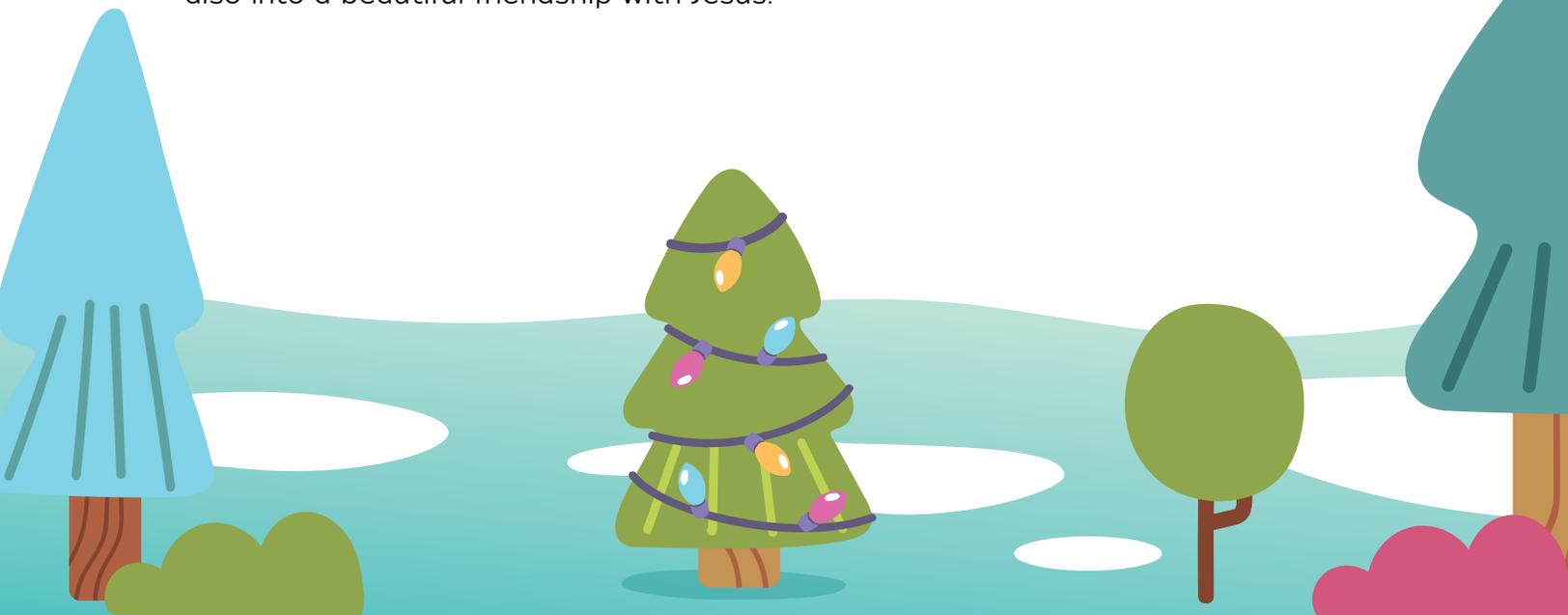
This Minno Advent Family Devotional Guide was written to bring hope and purpose to that tension: the longing of our hearts, the suspension between two advents, and living in the already/not yet of Christ's incarnation.

Christ has died, Christ has risen, and at Advent we remember that *Christ will come again*.

Here's what you'll find in this devotional:

1. What is Advent?
2. How to Use This Devotional Guide
3. Week 1: Hope
4. Week 2: Peace
5. Week 3: Joy
6. Week 4: Love
7. Christmas Day
8. Christmas Time Capsule

We hope this devotional helps you bring the meaning of Advent to life for your family this season. We pray the weekly or daily rhythm (whichever you choose) helps you to quiet your hearts before the Lord and celebrate His arrival. Take turns letting your kids read the Scripture or ask the questions. Engaging the whole family as you read, watch, talk, sing, pray, and play will help plant seeds that grow, not just into memories, but also into a beautiful friendship with Jesus.



What is Advent?

Did you know that Christmas didn't become an official holiday in the United States until 1870? And you may have noticed that nowhere in the Bible is a festival of Christ's birth celebrated. It was several hundred years after Jesus' death that the Church created a "Feast of the Nativity," which marked Jesus' birth.

Through the centuries, the idea of Christmas took many twists and turns. You can [read more about the history of Christmas on the Minno Life blog](#).

The Latin word *adventus* means "coming." The season of Advent is a time to remember that Jesus came once and that He will come again.

Advent's History

After Christmas began being celebrated on December 25th (in the 4th century), church leaders started to treat it similarly to Easter, and asked people to worship and prepare their hearts in advance to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Advent became a time to remember that we are living between two advents: the first coming of Christ (His birth) and His second coming. Today, many Christians mark the four weeks before Christmas as the Advent season, focusing each week on a different aspect of our relationship with Jesus: the hope, peace, joy, and love He brings. Advent also serves as the beginning of the liturgical calendar.

What is the Liturgical Calendar?

The liturgical calendar, or Church calendar, is a way of understanding the year through the lens of church holidays. It helps us to mark the seasons with Scripture and stories, framing our worship during key times of the year. The seasons of the Church calendar include: Advent, Christmastide, Ordinary Time, Lent, Eastertide, Pentecost, and more Ordinary Time.



How to Use this Guide

WEEKLY:

You'll find a devotional that your family can read in full each Sunday of Advent or you can spread it out over 3-4 days in the week. There are also [companion videos you can watch](#) to deepen your family worship and Christmas story experience this Advent.

Each devotion is written as a script for you to follow, to make it as easy as possible. Tweak as you need or break it up over the course of several days. Use these symbols as a way to guide your conversation:



Get Started



Watch



Read



Talk



Sing



Yesterday,
Today, Forever



Candle
Lighting



Pray



Activities

Advent Candle Lighting:

Each week, you can light a new candle on your Advent wreath. A traditional Advent wreath has 5 candles: 3 purple, 1 pink, and 1 white. Purple candles are lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday, and the white candle (known as the Christ candle) is traditionally lit on Christmas Day. If you don't have colored candles, don't worry! Any candles will do!

What is the significance of the Advent candle colors?

Purple represents **ROYALTY** and the anticipation of the coming King, Jesus.
Pink represents **JOY** and the move from reflection to celebration in Advent.
White represents the **PURITY** of Christ.

DAILY:

Activity Cards (optional)

If you enjoy a daily Christmas countdown activity, use the printable cards to make an Advent calendar somewhere in your home. String the cards up on a piece of ribbon, stack them on your kitchen table, or place them somewhere else you'll remember to look each day. Each activity or idea takes less than 5 minutes to do, providing a simple rhythm for your family to celebrate Advent. You'll notice that the activities are designed to engage many different learning styles and senses. The categories are: build, move, wonder, serve, listen, and create.

Bonus: Christmas Time Capsule

At the end of this guide, you'll find a Christmas Time Capsule that your family can complete together. Fill it out then pack it away with your Christmas decorations, so when you open them next year, you'll have a chance to relive the memories!

Week 1: Hope



Get Started:

Let's quiet our minds and bodies so we can learn with our whole selves. Take 3 deep breaths together.

This week's word is **HOPE**.

What do you think the word **HOPE** means?

How do you feel when you hear the word **HOPE**?

Take turns making a hopeful face.

Hope means that we believe God will do what He says He will do. A long time ago, God promised Abraham that He would bring a blessing for the whole world. Many, many years later, God sent Jesus, His promised blessing. Christmas reminds us that God keeps His promises. When we put our hope in God, our hope is in the right place! We can have hope for a beautiful future with God forever, because He promised us that in His Word . . . and God always keeps His promises.



Watch:

This week's video: [Minno Advent 5MFD, HOPE](#).



Read:

Let's find out what the Bible says about **HOPE**.

Psalm 33:20-22 (NLT)

We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.

Ask: How is hope described in this psalm? Who or what should we put our hope in?



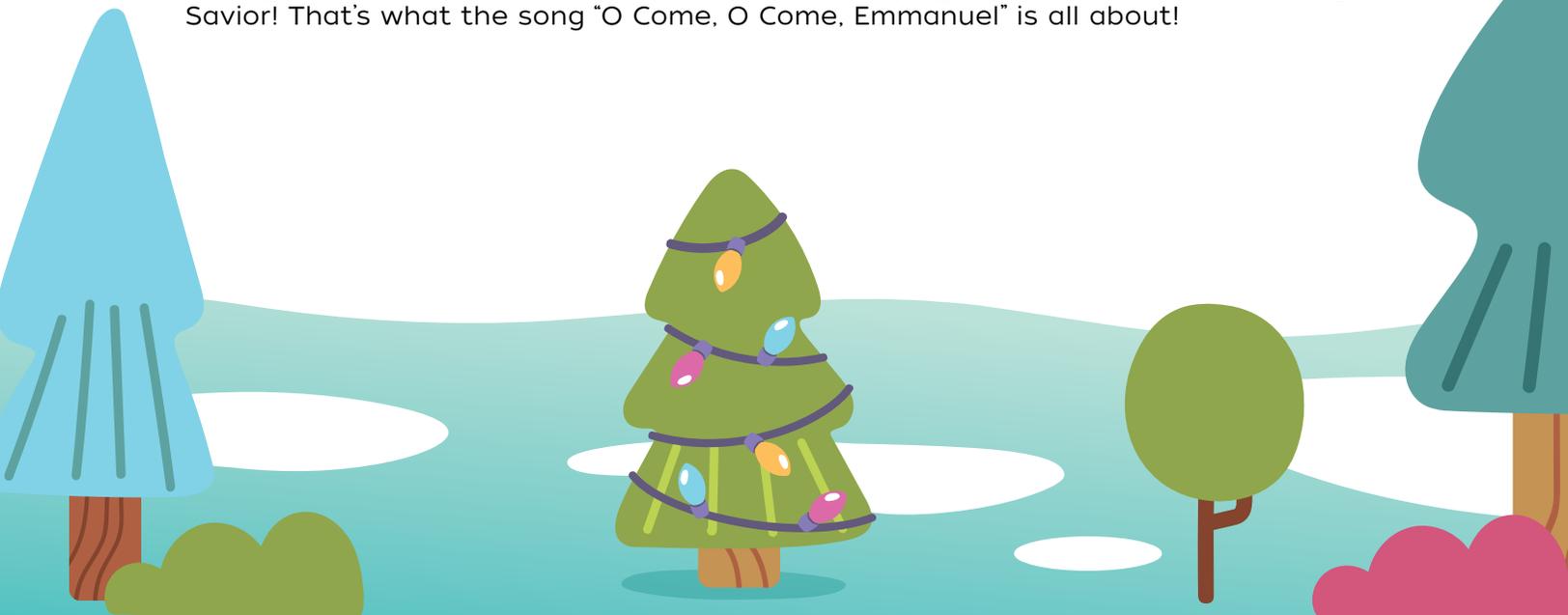
Talk:

What are some things you hope for?

Is there anything you hope to get for Christmas?

How does it feel to hope for something?

Throughout the whole Bible, God's people were hoping for God's promised blessing, a Savior! That's what the song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is all about!





Sing:

Go back and sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" from this week's video or look up the lyrics.

What are some of the things hoped for in the song? What are some of the things God promises?

Need some help? Try doing this fill in the blank from the song about things hoped for:

... and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until _____
O come thou dayspring come and _____ our _____ by thine advent here.
Disperse the _____ of night ...

What is a Prophet?

A prophet was someone who shared messages from God about the future. Isaiah was an important messenger of God who wrote a lot about the coming Messiah, Jesus!

Let's look at what the prophet Isaiah said about Jesus.

Where do you see hope? What were people hoping for? What was God promising?

Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7 (NIV)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder ...

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.





Yesterday, Today, Forever:

Yesterday

What does Isaiah 11:1-5 say God's people were hoping for?

Today

What makes you worried or sad at times? Who gives hope and help when you need it?

Forever

What does 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 say about our future, forever hope as followers of Jesus?



Light This Week's Advent Candle:

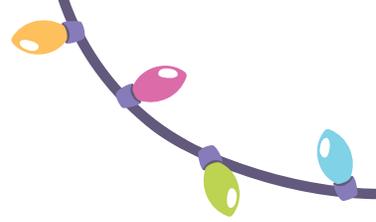
HOPE



Pray:

Dear God, Thank You for the chance to learn more about You and Your Son during the Advent season! We praise You for the hope we have because of the birth of Jesus. Thank You for the prophecies of Isaiah in the Bible that help us learn more about His coming. We want to grow closer to You during Advent, God. Show us the ways we can share Your hope with others this season. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.





Week 1: **HOPE** Activity Cards

Day 1: Learn

Complete the weekly family devotional: HOPE.



Day 2: Build

Find a creative way to spell out the word "HOPE." You can use your bodies, toothpicks, silverware . . . what else can you build with?



Day 3: Move

Make up motions to "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," and then perform them together after dinner.



Day 4: Wonder

Make Christmas magic milk. Pour milk into a shallow pan. Then add red food coloring and green food coloring into the pan on different sides. Using cotton swabs dipped in dish soap, take turns swirling the food coloring around.

Day 5: Serve

Have a penny race. Set a timer for 5 minutes and find as much loose change around your house as you can! Then donate it to a local food bank or charity, or save it to put in Christmas coin kettles as you are out shopping this season.

Day 6: Listen

Using the internet, look for versions of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" in other languages. Try searching and listening to it in French, Spanish, or Japanese.

Day 7: Create

Cut out paper snowflakes and use them to decorate around your house.



Week 2: Peace



Get Started:

Let's quiet our minds and bodies so we can learn with our whole selves. Take 3 deep breaths together.

This week's word is **PEACE**.

What do you think the word **PEACE** means?

How do you feel when you hear the word **PEACE**?

Take turns making a peaceful face.

Peace is what God made us for! It means wholeness, perfect relationships, kindness, justice, and creation that is not affected by sin. This is often called "shalom," which is the Hebrew word for peace. We were made for shalom, or perfect peace, which is what God has promised us in eternity with Jesus.



Watch:

This week's video: [Minno Advent 5MFD, PEACE](#).



Read:

Let's find out what the Bible says about **PEACE**.

Colossians 3:15 (NLT)

And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Ask: Where does this verse say peace comes from? Why are we called to live in peace?





Talk:

What do you think it would be like to live in a peaceful world?
What kinds of things keep us from being at peace?

The Bible promises us that God will keep us in perfect peace if we trust in Him. Do you think that means that everything will always work out the way we want? Or that it means we will never feel mad at someone else, or feel the consequences of them being upset with us?

It doesn't! In fact, the Bible tells us that in this world we will have troubles. But we can have peace in the midst of those troubles when we trust in God.

When Mary found out she was going to have a baby, she probably felt worried. But she trusted God, which gave her peace. Let's read Mary's story together from Luke 1. An angel told Mary she was going to have a baby and that her baby would be Jesus, the Messiah! Mary was very scared, but she found peace by trusting God. Here's what she said:

Luke 1:30-38 (NKJV)

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus . . ."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God . . . For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.



Sing:

Go back and sing the song in this week's video or look up the lyrics.

What does the song, "Joy to the World," say about preparing our hearts for the coming king?

Like Mary, we can make room in our hearts and be willing to carry His peace into our broken world.





Yesterday, Today, Forever:

Yesterday

The Old Testament is full of stories where God's people were not at peace. When Jesus came, He promised forever peace in our hearts that would be stronger than anything we face in our lives!

Today

What are some ways we can live in peace with others right now, in our everyday lives?

Forever

What do you think it will be like to live forever at peace with God like it talks about in Isaiah 32:16-18?



Light This Week's Advent Candle:

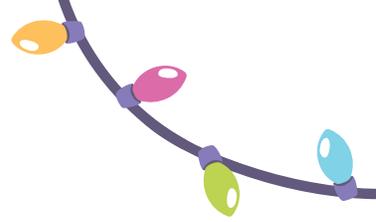
PEACE



Pray:

Dear God, You are the creator of peace! And You promise us peace that stays in our hearts no matter what. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Like Mary, we want to be people who are willing to carry Your peace into our broken world. Help us to always live at peace with others, and fill our hearts with love for You and for our neighbors. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.





Week 2: **PEACE** Activity Cards

Day 8: Learn

Complete the weekly family devotional: PEACE.



Day 9: Build

Split into two teams. Using toy building blocks, build two different castles. Set a 5 minute time limit. Then combine them into one awesome castle!

Day 10: Move

Play Christmas charades. Take turns acting out Christmas words and seeing if anyone can guess what you are "saying" through movement.



Day 11: Wonder

Collect some pine needles or leaves (real or fake!) and put them under a piece of paper. Then use crayons or colored pencils to draw over them.



Day 12: Serve

Make Christmas trail mix (combine mini marshmallows, chocolate circle candies, mini pretzels, and dried cranberries) and deliver some to your neighbors in a cute holiday package.

Day 13: Listen

How many songs can you think of with the word "peace" in them? Take turns singing them together!



Day 14: Create

Print or draw a map of the world. Then turn it over and draw the outline of puzzle pieces on the back. Cut out the pieces and take turns putting the puzzle back together. Then talk about how God has a plan to bring peace to the whole world through Jesus.

Week 3: Joy



Get Started:

Let's quiet our minds and bodies so we can learn with our whole selves. Take 3 deep breaths together.

This week's word is **JOY**.

What do you think the word **JOY** means?

How do you feel when you hear the word **JOY**?

Take turns making a joyful face.

Joy is an emotion we feel when we are delighted or happy. We can be full of joy because we are loved by God, always and forever! The feeling of joy goes deeper than everyday happiness. But we can also be happy and enjoy the blessings God has given to us. This is especially true at Christmas when we remember that God gives us good gifts and deep joy. We can receive and celebrate His blessings at Christmas!



Watch:

This week's video: [Minno Advent 5MFD, JOY](#).



Read:

Let's find out what the Bible says about **JOY**.

1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Ask: What kind of joy is described in these verses? Who gives us this joy?





Talk:

What are some things that bring you joy at Christmastime?
What are some ways that you can bring joy to other people at Christmastime?

When the angel appeared to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born, do you know what he said?

Let's read the story together.

What are all the joyful words you hear in these verses?

Luke 2:10-14 (NKJV)

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, 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. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

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, goodwill toward men!

What happened that night in Bethlehem was the greatest gift the world has ever been given! It is a reason to rejoice!



Sing:

Go back and sing the song in this week's video or look up the lyrics.

What does this week's song, "O Come, All Ye Faithful," say about being joyful people who celebrate the birth of Jesus?

"Adore" means to love and celebrate someone or something. What are some ways we can adore Jesus during this Advent season?





Yesterday, Today, Forever:

Yesterday

Why did the news of Jesus' birth bring great joy?

Today

How can we live with joy now? How does Jesus bring joy into our daily lives?

Forever

What does Isaiah 35:10 say about what it will be like to live with God forever?



Light This Week's Advent Candle:

JOY



Pray:

Dear God, You created so many things that give us joy, like beautiful flowers, majestic mountains, yummy foods, and our special friends. Help us find joy in the good gifts You have given us. Thank You for the most joyful gift of all, Jesus! We are thankful for the season of Advent and Christmas, because it reminds us of what a good God You are. We want to live as people who feel the neverending joy of knowing You as our Father. Help us to spread joy to everyone we meet during Christmastime. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.





Daily Activity Cards



Week 3: **JOY** Activity Cards

Day 15: Learn

Complete the weekly family devotional: JOY.



Day 16: Build

Using toothpicks or building blocks, recreate the nativity scene.



Day 17: Move

Can you think of a Christmas song with the word "JOY" in it? Find one to play and then have a freeze dance party while you listen!

Day 18: Wonder

Collect some small, metal jingle bells. Put them in a clear glass jar, then pour a clear carbonated drink (like seltzer or soda) into the jar. Watch what happens!

Day 19: Serve

Write a letter to someone who brings you joy and mail it to them.



Day 20: Listen

Open a window or walk outside. Stay silent for 2 minutes, then share with each other everything you heard.



Day 21: Create

Set a timer for 3 minutes and collect as many materials as you can from around your home to build a Christmas wreath. Now make it!

Week 4: Love



Get Started:

Let's quiet our minds and bodies so we can learn with our whole selves. Take 3 deep breaths together.

This week's word is **LOVE**.

What do you think the word **LOVE** means?

How do you feel when you hear the word **LOVE**?

Take turns making a loving face.

Love means putting others first, wanting the best for them, and seeking goodness for them. God loves us more than anyone (even our parents!), and everything in the Bible shows us His love, especially Jesus.



Watch:

This week's video: [Minno Advent 5MFD, LOVE](#).



Read:

Let's find out what the Bible says about **LOVE**.

1 John 4:7-12 (NIV)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Ask: How does this verse describe love? What does it say we should do because of God's love for us?





Talk:

What are some things or people that you love?
How does it make you feel to know God loves you even more than you can imagine, more than you can even understand?

God showed His love for us when He sent His Son Jesus, which is what we celebrate at Christmas! In fact, because of the love God showed to us at Christmas, we can show love to others in this season. What are some ways we can show God's love during Christmas?

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, we see different people responding to God's love in different ways. Let's read the story together.

How do the shepherds react to God's love?

How does Mary react to God's love?

Luke 2:16-20 (NKJV)

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.



Sing:

Go back and sing the song in this week's video or look up the lyrics.

What does this week's song, "O Holy Night," teach us about love?

Let's fill in the blanks for this verse:

Truly He taught us to _____ one another. His law is _____ and His gospel is _____.





Yesterday, Today, Forever:

Yesterday

What does John 3:16 say about how God showed His love through Jesus?

Today

How can we live with love for God and others now?

Forever

What do you think it will be like when Jesus comes again and we experience perfect love, forever?



Light This Week's Advent Candle:

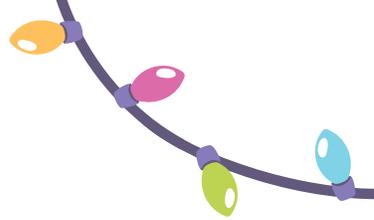
LOVE



Pray:

Dear God, You are the God of love! All love comes from you. You showed us Your love by sending Your Son Jesus—our promised Savior. Thank You for the love we feel from those around us at Christmastime. Help us to see people we can show love to this time of year. We want to always remember how much You love us and to spread Your love throughout the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.





Week 4:
LOVE
Activity Cards

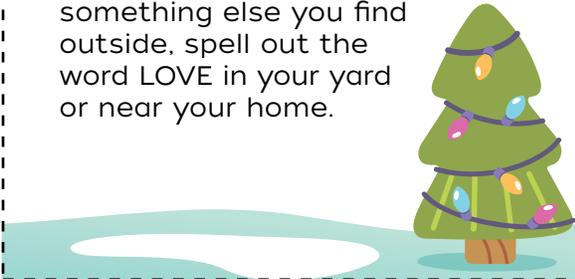
Day 22: Learn

Complete the weekly family devotional: LOVE.



Day 23: Build

Using sticks, leaves, or something else you find outside, spell out the word LOVE in your yard or near your home.



Day 24: Move

Go Christmas caroling in your neighborhood or building!



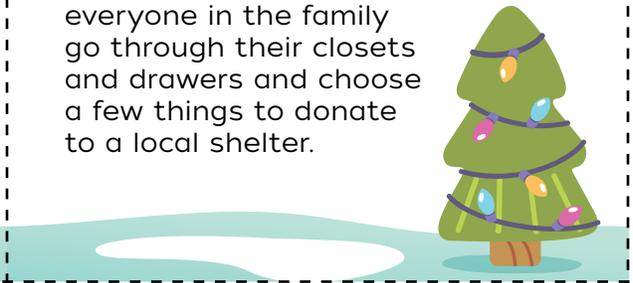
Day 25: Wonder

Cut a Christmas tree and stars out of paper. Turn the lights off in the room, except for a flashlight. Make shadow puppets by putting the cut-outs in front of the light!



Day 26: Serve

Set aside time to have everyone in the family go through their closets and drawers and choose a few things to donate to a local shelter.



Day 27: Listen

Take turns naming as many songs with the word "love" in them as you can. Then sing along!



Day 28: Christmas Day!

Celebrate the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love you've learned about this Advent.



Christmas Day



Get Started:

Let's quiet our minds and bodies so we can learn with our whole selves. Take 3 deep breaths together.

Today's word is **CHRISTMAS**.

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus! Today we remember and celebrate Jesus coming to earth as a baby. We can reflect on what we've learned together this Advent about the hope, peace, joy, and love of God!



Watch:

This week's video: [Minno Advent 5MFD, CHRISTMAS](#).



Read:

Let's read the rest of the Christmas story in the Bible.

Matthew 2:9-11 (NKJV)

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



Talk:

*What gifts did the wise men bring to Jesus?
What were your favorite gifts from today?
What was your favorite gift to give to someone else?*

The Bible tells us that every good gift is from God. *How can we thank God for the gift of Jesus and for all the other gifts in our life?*

What gifts can we bring to Jesus?





Sing:

Go back and sing the song in today's video or look up the lyrics.

What does the song in today's video, "Little Drummer Boy," inspire you to bring as a gift to Jesus?



Light This Week's Advent Candle:

CHRISTMAS

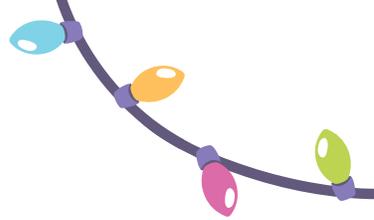


Pray:

Dear God, It's Christmas! Today we celebrate the most amazing gift of all . . . Jesus! Thank You for the perfect gift of Your Son. Help us to always remember the hope, peace, joy, and love we learned about this Advent, and to share Your good gifts with everyone we meet. We love You and thank You, God! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Our Christmas Memory Capsule



Year: _____

Here is a picture of our family this Christmas:

This is who is in our family and how old we are:

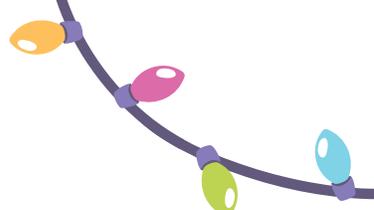
| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

This year we spent Christmas with: _____

We spent Christmas at: _____



Our Christmas Memory Capsule (cont.)



Here are some of our favorite gifts from this Christmas:

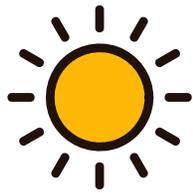
We watched _____ Christmas movies this season.

Our top 3 favorites were:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Christmas song we sang the most was: _____

The Christmas weather was:



Some things we learned about God this Christmas:

Our family prayer for the next year:





Use this Advent Devotional along with the Minno Five Minute Family Devotional: Advent

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