

New International Version

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December 1

Today's Topic: Advent



Watch the Video for December 1

Read the following:

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Matthew 3:1-3

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things you would like to do as a family to prepare for the coming of Christmas?
2. What do these two passages tell you about Christmas?

December 2

Today's Topic: Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer



Watch the Video for December 2

Read the following:

Isaiah 53:3-6

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

John 1:10-14

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Was there anything in the story of Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer that surprised you? What was it?
2. How does today's reading remind you of the story of Rudolph?

December 3

Today's Topic: Holly and Mistletoe



Watch the Video for December 3

Read the following:

Psalms 51:1-3, 7

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. . . . Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Romans 5:6-9

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of any other plant that is associated with Christmas?
2. Red and green are Christmas colors. Red can remind us of what Jesus did for us in dying for our sins. What does the color green make you think of?

December 4

Today's Topic: Handel's Messiah



Watch the Video for December 4

Read the following:

Isaiah 9:6-7

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 increase 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.

Luke 2:8-14

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Look over the names Isaiah uses for Jesus. How is each of these important to you?
2. What are some of your favorite Christmas songs that talk about Jesus?

December 5

Today's Topic: Gift of the Magi and The Fourth Wise Man



Watch the Video for December 5

Read the following:

Proverbs 14:31

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Matthew 25:34-40

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What does the story of Della and Jim teach you about the true nature of Christmas giving?
2. According to the passage in Matthew, what are some ways we can serve God by helping others?

December 6

Today's Topic: Saint Nicholas



Watch the Video for December 6

Read the following:

Proverbs 19:17

He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Luke 6:31-38

Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. How was the real Saint Nicholas like Santa Claus?
2. In what ways can you be like Saint Nicholas this Christmas?

December 7

Today's Topic: WW1 Christmas Peace



Watch the Video for December 7

Read the following:

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of someone you can give the message of peace to this Christmas?
2. In the midst of battle, the story in today's video tells us that some found peace in singing *Silent Night*. What are some songs you know that bring you comfort and peace?

December 8

Today's Topic: The Candy Cane



Watch the Video for December 8

Read the following:

Jeremiah 17:7-8

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Titus 2:13-14

While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways the candy cane can be used to teach people about Jesus?
2. What are some of your favorite Christmas treats?

December 9

Today's Topic: The Nutcracker



Watch the Video for December 9

Read the following:

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

Luke 4:16-21

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you about the story of the Nutcracker?
2. What do these verses teach you about what Jesus can do?

December 10

Today's Topic: Truth or Tradition?



Watch the Video for December 10

Read the following:

Micah 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Was there anything in today's video that you thought was truth but was really tradition? What was it?
2. Why is it important to distinguish truth from tradition?

December 11

Today's Topic: Traditional Christmas Foods



Watch the Video for December 11

Read the following:

Psalms 34:8-10

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Different types of Christmas foods were mentioned in today's video. What one is your favorite? Is there one you would like to try?
2. Food is often associated with rejoicing. Why do you think this is so? What food makes you rejoice?

December 12

Today's Topic: Angels



Watch the Video for December 12

Read the following:

Psalms 41:1-2

Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.

Hebrews 13:1-3

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some stories about angels from the Bible?
2. The video suggested some ways in which we can act like angels by helping others. What is something you would like to do this Christmas to help others?

December 13

Today's Topic: Christmas Trees



Watch the Video for December 13

Read the following:

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

John 3:14-17

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Did you learn something that you did not know about Christmas trees from the video? If so, what was it?
2. Name at least one thing about Christmas trees that you like best.

December 14

Today's Topic: Nativity Scenes



Watch the Video for December 14

Read the following:

Psalms 2:7

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. If you could be part of a Nativity scene, who would you like to be and why? If you have enough members of your family present, act out a nativity scene right now.
2. The shepherds first saw an angel of the Lord, then a great number of angels, and then finally the Lord Jesus. They then told others what they had heard and had seen. What are some of the things you think they might have said to others about what they had just experienced?

December 15

Today's Topic: Go Tell It On The Mountain



Watch the Video for December 15

Read the following:

Isaiah 55:11-12

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Acts 10:34-36

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What did you learn from the video?
2. Why is it important to understand that God considers everyone the same regardless of their race, education, sex, age, where they live, or how much money they may or may not have? How should this affect the way we view others?

December 16

Today's Topic: A Christmas Carol



Watch the Video for December 16

Read the following:

Psalms 51:7-10

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The heart of Ebenezer Scrooge was changed. Why do you think Christmas has such an effect on people?
2. Scrooge said that he would honor Christmas and "keep it all the year." What is something you can do to keep the spirit of Christmas burning in your heart all year long?

December 17

Today's Topic: Christmas Trivia



Watch the Video for December 17

Read the following:

Hosea 11:1

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew 2:13-15

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you name something about Christmas that was not covered in the video?
2. According to the above passage, why did Joseph take Mary and the baby Jesus into Egypt? Can you think of anyone else from the Bible who was also "called out of Egypt" to serve God?

December 18

Today's Topic: Gifts



Watch the Video for December 18

Read the following:

Esther 9:22

As the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

Ephesians 4:7-12

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What were some Christmas gifts that you received in the past?
2. Think of a spiritual gift that God has given to you. What is it?

December 19

Today's Topic: Birthday Cakes for Jesus



Watch the Video for December 19

Read the following:

Psalms 18:46

The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!

Colossians 1:12-18

Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What would you put on a Birthday cake for Jesus? Why not make one and do it?
2. Can you think of some other things you can do to celebrate Jesus' birthday?

December 20

Today's Topic: X-mas



Watch the Video for December 20

Read the following:

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The passage in Deuteronomy teaches us that God will make some things known to us. What are some things God has revealed to you?
2. Before you watched today's video, did you know that "X" stood for Christ? How does this information make you feel about the phrase "Merry X-mas"?

December 21

Today's Topic: Season of Light: Christmas-Hanukah-Kwanzaa



Watch the Video for December 21

Read the following:

Psalms 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

John 1:1-5; 8:12

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it . . . When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Do you like the various lights we see at Christmas time? What are some of your favorites?
2. What did you learn about Hanukah or Kwanzaa that you did not know before?

December 22

Today's Topic: We Three Kings of Orient Are



Watch the Video for December 22

Read the following:

Psalms 72:11

All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.

Matthew 2:1-8

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

Family Discussion Questions:

1. The wise men gave gifts to Jesus. What is something you can give to Jesus this Christmas?
2. From either the Bible or tradition, what are some other things you have been taught about the wise men?

December 23

Today's Topic: The Star of Bethlehem



Watch the Video for December 23

Read the following:

Numbers 24:17

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.

Matthew 2:9-12

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the various explanations of the Star of Bethlehem do you think is more likely?
2. Can you think of a poem, rhyme or verse that uses the word "star" in it?

December 24

Today's Topic: The Twelve Days of Christmas



Watch the Video for December 24

Read the following:

Proverbs 2:6

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Can you name or sing the gifts of the Twelve Days of Christmas?
2. Do you think *The Twelve Days of Christmas* was really a secret code or just an urban legend? Why?

December 25

Today's Topic: Was Jesus Born on December 25?



Watch the Video for December 25

Read the following:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" —which means, "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Does it really matter what day we celebrate the birth of Christ? Why?
2. Think of something you can do today that would make Jesus happy. What is it? Why not do it?