



BURNT HICKORY PRESENTS

advent



welcome to **advent**

Advent is a time of joyful anticipation as we prepare our hearts for the miracle of Christmas and embrace the HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE that Emmanuel (God with us) brings.

To begin each week, we've provided a heartfelt family devotion centered around these beautiful themes; accompanied by daily scriptures that will guide us in our reflection and contemplation of the season. Our Worship Ministry has chosen a weekly song to enhance and deepen our worship experience, and we've also provided ideas for activities your family can do together as you weave the week's Advent focus into your daily family life.

Pastor Matt Petty will then bring each week to a meaningful close with his Advent sermon series. This season is not just about individual reflections, but a collective celebration as a church family. Your presence adds a unique and cherished note to the melody of our shared Advent journey. Let us embrace this time of togetherness, reflection and celebration. Be sure to join our online community as we reflect and inspire one another by sharing photos and stories of your unique family Advent experiences by using the hashtag #BHBCadvent.



facebook



instagram

Find our community online: @BHBCkids

week one

hope

talk about it:

What is hope? How did the birth of Jesus bring hope to the world?

scripture reading:

Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-25

parent reflection:

Hope is more than just wishful thinking; it's a confident belief and longing for something good, while trusting God will keep His promise. It's the anticipation and assurance that, even in the waiting, something wonderful is on the way. Excitement and hope connect us to the incredible news in Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-25, when the angel announced that Mary would give birth to Jesus, God's Son – our Savior.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke the first recorded promise about Jesus. For generations, the people of Israel had been hoping for a Savior, the Messiah God had promised (Isaiah 7:14).

Life was tough, and they longed for someone who would bring light to their darkness. It wasn't just a wishful desire; it was an expectant anticipation. They yearned for a Savior who would restore and redeem them. They waited for centuries, facing challenges and uncertainties, yet holding onto hope that God would fulfill His promise. So, imagine the hope when the news of the promised Messiah finally came.

The birth of the Messiah wasn't just good news for the Israelite people. God sent Jesus as the Savior for all people for all times (John 3:16; 1 John 4:14). Jesus, our Savior, brings light into our darkness, offers hope, redemption, restoration, and fellowship with God forever (Romans 6:23).

As we journey through this advent season, let's not just remember the excitement of that first announcement but also embrace the enduring hope that Jesus brings into our lives today (John 14:1-3). He's the fulfillment of God's promise, the light in our darkness, and the reason we can face tomorrow with confidence and joy. So, let's unwrap this gift of hope together as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas season.



←
**scan for this week's
musical selection**

week one

family devotion:

Hope isn't just wishing for something; it's like when you're really excited about getting a present and you just know it's going to be awesome. It's trusting that something really good is coming your way, even if you have to wait for it.

In the bible story we just read, the angel brought amazing news about a special baby named Jesus! A long time ago, when Adam and Eve disobeyed, God promised that He would send Jesus to make everything better.

Imagine the people of Israel waiting and hoping for their Savior, someone to bring light to their dark times. Then, finally God fulfilled His promise. Jesus was born! But here's the coolest part: Jesus didn't come to just be the Savior for the people of Israel. Jesus was God's gift for everyone, including you and me! Jesus gives us hope and a way for us to be with God forever (John 3:16).

As we go through this special Advent season, let's celebrate the hope that Jesus gives. He's the best gift ever, making our days brighter, helping us face anything with confidence and joy. So, together, let's thank God for His gift of hope as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas season!

pray together:

Give thanks to God for sharing His plans and promises in the Bible, and for offering us a source of enduring hope. Praise God for the incredible gift of Jesus, who is Emmanuel - God with us. Express your gratitude for the hope that Jesus brings into our lives this Christmas.

share with us:

Celebrate the beauty of Immanuel, God with us, by sharing your stories of joyful anticipation, whether it's a story of how you eagerly awaited the birth of your children, or any other precious moments filled with hope and promise! Share your photos and experiences that reflect the spirit of anticipation. We're all part of this wonderful journey together.

advent for each day

nov 27: week one family devotion – HOPE

nov 28: Psalm 33:20–22

We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

Pray as a family, asking God to fill your hearts with hope and love. Share a photo of your family's time of prayer.

nov 29: Isaiah 40:9–11

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'

Share your favorite Christmas song with your family and talk about why that song brings you hope. Share a video of your family singing or dancing to the song together or share your reflections from this conversation.

nov 30: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Enjoy an outdoor family activity under the warm sun – take a walk, a bike ride, or simply go out to appreciate the sun's glow. During your time together, talk about how the sun's radiant energy can serve as a symbol of the fresh beginnings and hope that God brings into our lives. Capture moments from your sunny day activity and share them along with your reflections on the hope it represents.

dec 1: 1 Peter 1:3


Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

As a family, gather gently used toys, books, or clothing and donate them to a local charity or organization that supports those in need. Discuss how this act of giving represents the hope and love of Jesus in your lives. Share a photo of your family with the items you're donating, along with your reflections on spreading hope through generosity.

dec 2: Jeremiah 29:11

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."

Work on a jigsaw puzzle together as a family. As you piece it together, discuss how life can be like a puzzle, and even when things seem scattered, God has a plan that will come together beautifully. Share a photo of your family working on the puzzle and your reflections on hope. #BHBCAdvent



May the God of
Hope fill you
with all Joy and
Peace as you
Believe in Him.

Romans 15:13

week two

peace

talk about it:

What makes you feel peaceful? How does Jesus bring us peace?

scripture reading:

Luke 2:4-18

parent reflection:

In week two of this Advent season, our hearts turn to the theme of peace - a word that often conjures images of tranquility, ease, and the absence of strife. Yet, as we ponder the deeper meaning of peace, we recognize that the calm moments in life are often fleeting and determined by our circumstances. However, God, in His profound wisdom, sent Jesus to be the Prince of Peace, offering a peace that goes beyond mere quietness and endures through all circumstances.

The angels' proclamation in the Christmas story resonates with the divine purpose of Jesus' arrival: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests!" This peace introduced through Jesus is not a temporary respite but a transformative path to reconciliation and redemption that surpasses our understanding (Philippians 4:7).

In a remarkable display of love, God sent Jesus to bear the weight of our sins (Romans 6:23), paving the way for our redemption and reconciliation. By placing our faith in Him, we discover the profound truth that we now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Our Prince of Peace, Jesus, offers reassurance in John 16:33, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." This true peace emanates from the understanding that Jesus holds our future in His hands - a comfort that transcends circumstances.

As we reflect on the profound gift of peace during this Advent season, let it not only bring tranquility to our hearts but inspire us to share this extraordinary news with the world. Much like the shepherds who eagerly shared the angelic proclamation, may we, too, be messengers of the peace that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, brings - a peace that transforms, reconciles, and offers everlasting comfort.

dec 4 – dec 9



scan for this week's
musical selection

week two

family devotion:

When we hear the word "peace," we might think of calm and quiet, like when everything feels just right. But real peace, the kind that lasts through anything, comes from God. When God sent Jesus, He was to be the Prince of Peace.

In the Christmas story, the angels shouted, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" This peace isn't just a break from trouble; it's a peace we can have because Jesus came to forgive our sins and make a way for us to be with God forever. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin (the wrong things we've done). Jesus, our Prince of Peace, even said, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." It means that no matter what happens, Jesus is there to help us. He is our Savior!

As we think about this incredible gift of peace during Advent, let's not keep it to ourselves. Just like the shepherds who were so excited to tell everyone about the angels' message, let's be messengers of the peace that Jesus brings. Let's share this awesome gift and be part of God's amazing plan for peace on earth!

pray together:

Thank God for the gift of peace. Praise Him for sending Jesus, the one who enables us to have peace with God through faith in Him. Take a moment to ask God to use your family to point others to the peace of God.

share with us:

Share a family photo of your time together doing family devotion, or share your thoughts on the incredible story of Jesus' birth, and the peace Jesus brings. Our online community of fellow families will be sharing on Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag #BHBCadvent.

share online
#BHBCadvent

advent for each day

dec 4: week two family devotion – PEACE

dec 5: Isaiah 9:6

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.

Find delight in coloring the various names of Jesus and engage in conversations about their significance. As a family, select the name that resonates most with you and explain why you find it special. Share your thoughts or a snapshot of your creative time together and remember to include our community hashtag #BHBCAdvent.

dec 6: John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Life can be hectic. Gather as a family for a 'Peaceful Moment.' Each family member can take turns sharing something that brings them peace or joy. It could be a favorite memory, a comforting thought, or a moment of gratitude. Encourage one another to listen and be present, creating a peaceful atmosphere at home. Share a photo or description of your 'Peaceful Moment'.

dec 7: Philippians 4:6–7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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

Write down your worries on slips of paper and toss them into a "peace jar" as a symbolic act of giving your worries and concerns to God. Share a photo of your "peace jar" and your family's experience.

dec 8: John 16:33

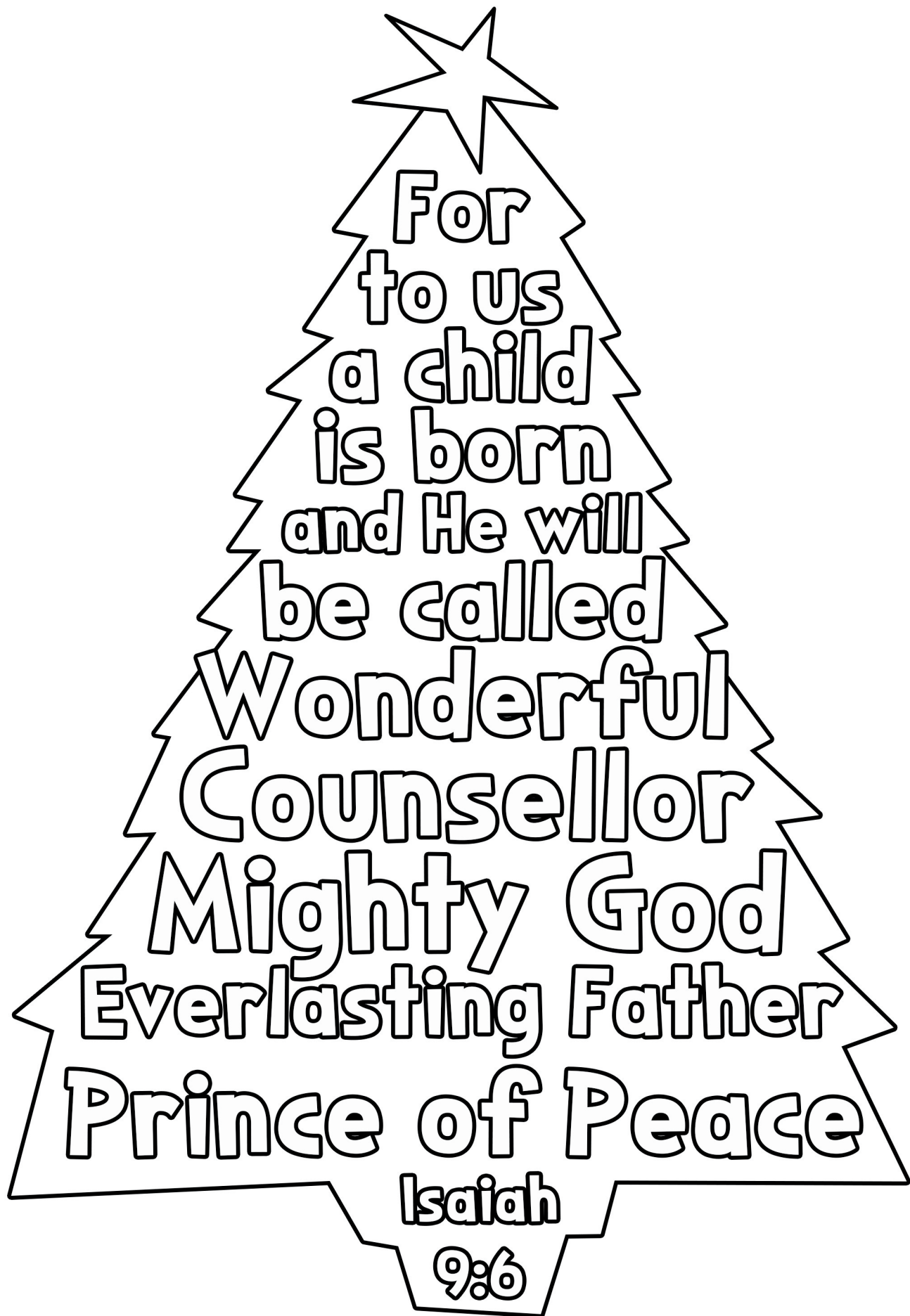
I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Light a candle together as a family. While you watch the gentle flicker of the flame, reflect on the peace that comes from Jesus. Discuss how, like the candle's light in the darkness, His peace can shine even in challenging times.

dec 9: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Go on a "Peaceful Treasures Hunt" at home to find comforting items like a stuffed animal, cozy blanket, or soft robe. Discuss how these things make you feel happy and peaceful, and how trusting in God can bring peace, hope, and joy no matter what's happening. Share a photo of your discovered treasures and your reflections on the peace, joy, and hope that trusting in Jesus can bring.



week three

joy

talk about it:

What's the difference between happiness and joy? What are things that make you happy? What are things that make you joyful?

scripture reading:

Matthew 2:1-12

parent reflection:

Joy, unlike happiness, is an enduring emotion that comes from deep within us. It's not dictated by the external circumstances of our lives but is a fruit of the Spirit, a gift from God Himself (Galatians 5:22-23).

In Matthew 2:1-12, we read the story of the Magi who followed the star to find the newborn King, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Their journey was prompted by the prospect of encountering something extraordinary, something that filled them with joy. Similarly, as we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth, we are invited to reflect on the joy that Jesus brings. While happiness can be influenced by the world around us, joy is an internal assurance that comes from knowing Jesus and understanding His unconditional love for us. It is a constant presence that we can experience regardless of life's ups and downs.

In Luke chapter two, the angel proclaimed, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people..." This good news is Jesus Himself - a gift from God to humanity. As we unwrap this precious gift during Advent, we discover that joy is not just a fleeting emotion but a deep and abiding connection to the source of all joy, our Lord and Savior.

Consider the difference between happiness and joy in your own life. Have there been moments when external circumstances brought happiness, but it was temporary? Joy, on the other hand, is an anchor for the soul, a constant assurance that we are loved by Jesus, and we can always trust in Him.

As we engage in the celebration of this season, let's remember that the joy we seek is found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the unchanging source of joy, the one who loves us unconditionally, and the one in whom we can place our complete trust. In a world often marked by fleeting happiness, Jesus offers a joy that is lasting and fulfilling. *(continued on next page)*



week three

May this Advent season be a time of deepening our connection with Jesus allowing the Holy Spirit to cultivate the fruit of joy within us. As we reflect on the Magi's journey and the announcement of good news, let's embrace the joy that comes from knowing and being known by our Savior. Joy is not just for a season; it is an eternal gift from God that sustains us through all the seasons of life. Let us share this joy with a world that desperately needs the hope and love found in Jesus.

family devotion:

Joy is different from just being happy. It's like a super cool feeling that comes from deep inside us, and it's a gift from God. Have there been times when something made you happy, but it didn't last long? Joy, though, is something that can always be in our hearts. It is like a constant feeling that comes from knowing Jesus and understanding His great love for us. It's always there, even when things are up and down.

In the bible story we just read there were wise men, called the Magi, who saw the star in the sky and followed it to find the newborn King. The bible says that when they saw the star, they were filled with great joy! Just like the Magi were excited to meet the King, we get to think about the joy that Jesus brings us.

Remember last week when we read about the angel announcing the birth of Jesus? The angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people..." The good news is that Jesus is great joy for all people! He's a special gift from God to all of us.

As we celebrate this special season, let's remember that the joy we're talking about is all because of Jesus. He's the constant source of joy, the one who loves us no matter what, the one who gave His life to save ours, and the one we can always trust. In a world where happiness can come and go, Jesus gives us a joy that lasts and fills us up. Joy isn't just for Christmas; it's a forever gift from God that helps us through all the seasons of life.

pray together:

Thank God for being the source of unending joy. Praise Him for the joy that comes from being in relationship with Him. Pray that your interactions be marked by joy, forgiveness, and a deep sense of gratitude for the gift of each family member.

share with us:

Gather as a family and discuss how the Magi followed the star to find Jesus, and the joy they must have felt when they discovered Him. Share your thoughts or a picture of your family share time.

share online
#BHBCadvent



advent for each day



dec 11: week three family devotion – JOY

dec 12: 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 that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Create a family storytelling night. Each family member can take turns sharing their favorite joyful memory or something that brings them happiness. Enjoy some hot cocoa or snacks while you share your stories.

dec 13: Psalm 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Create joyful art together! Provide art supplies like crayons, markers, and colored pencils. Encourage each family member, including the young children, to draw a picture of something that brings them joy, like a favorite toy, pet, or family moment. Discuss their drawings and why these things make them happy. Share pictures of the artwork and your discussions about the joy of God's presence.

dec 14: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Host a family talent show night, where each family member can showcase a special talent, whether it's singing, dancing, telling jokes, or performing illusions. Celebrate the unique gifts and talents God has given each of you and discuss how they bring joy and hope. Share a photo or short video of your talent show performances and your thoughts on the talents within your family.

dec 15: John 15:11

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Share in the joy of Jesus by having a family dance party. Share a short video clip or a photo from your joy-filled dance session. Use our advent hashtag #BHBCAdvent so we can celebrate with you!

dec 16: 1 Peter 1:8–9

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.

Capture moments of joy throughout your day and create a photo collage. Share the collage on social media with your reflections on how faith in Jesus brings you inexpressible joy. #BHBCAdvent



week four

love

talk about it:

Can you share a specific moment when you felt loved or when you showed love to someone else? How can we show love to one another during this Christmas season? How did God show His love for us?

scripture reading:

John 1:1-17

parent reflection:

In this final week of Advent, our reflection is centered on the theme of love, as we turn our hearts to the profound truths revealed in John 1:1-17. In this passage, we encounter the embodiment of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh, and in that flesh, we witness the very essence of God's love sacrificially given to us.

Love, as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, takes on a tangible form in the life and ministry of Jesus. This love is not merely a feeling or an emotion; it is an intentional, selfless, and enduring act of sacrifice. Romans 5:8 describes this truth: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus, as the Word made flesh, is the living expression of God's love. He came to earth fully aware of the challenges and suffering that awaited him. Despite this, He willingly submitted to the cross, transforming the ugliness of sin into the beauty of redemption. This act of sacrificial love, depicted in Romans 8:38-39, assures us that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 emphasizes the depth of God's love for us—He sent Jesus into the world, the Incarnate Word, to communicate everything we need to know about Him and His love. This love goes beyond our understanding; it is an unchanging, constant love. As we celebrate this Advent season, let's remember that God's love, revealed in the person of Jesus, is the foundation of our hope and the assurance that we are held in His embrace.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us extend His transformative love to those around us, recognizing that in Christ, we find the Word of God, the embodiment of love that offers redemption and everlasting joy.

dec 18 – dec 23



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**scan for this week's
musical selection**

week four

family devotion:

This is our last week of Advent, and today we're talking about something super special – "love"! In the bible story we just read (John 1:1-17), it talked about the Word sent from God. Words tell us something. Jesus is God's word, God's message to us. Jesus came to show us the depth of God's love. It was like God's love became a real, live person in Jesus.

Love, as the Bible talks about it, is not just a feeling. The apostle Paul says that love is not just about how we feel; it's about doing things for others, even hard things, like Jesus did. Jesus showed God's love for us by taking the punishment for our sin. Jesus died in our place.

Jesus knew that coming to earth would be hard and painful. He knew that He would be leaving His Father in Heaven and that He would suffer for our sake. But, He chose to do it because He loves us that much. The bible tells us that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can ever separate us from God's love because of what Jesus did!

So, as we are getting ready for Jesus' birthday, let's remember that God's love, shown in Jesus, is for everyone. Let's share His awesome love with everyone around us. Because in Jesus, everyone can find hope and peace and joy that lasts forever!

pray together:

Thank God for the incredible gift of love expressed in Jesus. Praise Him for the opportunity to feel and express love. Pray that your family will be a reflection of His love to others.

share with us:

Talk about the love of God that brought Jesus to earth. Share a family photo or reflections from your time together sharing about the profound moment when Jesus, our Creator, came to earth. What great love is this!



advent for each day



dec 18: week four family devotion – LOVE

dec 19: John 3:16–17

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.

Make Christmas cookies, cards, or small gifts for friends, family, or neighbors. While working together, talk about how the act of giving reflects God's love and the generosity of the giver; and mirrors the heart of God who gave His most extraordinary gift.

dec 20: Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Share a family meal together and talk about the love that holds your family together. Consider inviting a friend or neighbor to join you for this meal, spreading the love of Christ. Share your experience and reflections on what it means to demonstrate love.

dec 21: 1 John 4:7–8

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.

Plan a family "Acts of Love" day. Each family member chooses an act of kindness or love to perform for someone outside the family, like a neighbor, friend, or community member. Share your experiences and how these acts of love reflect the love of God. Use the hashtag #BHBCAdvent to share your stories and inspire others to spread love.

dec 22: Romans 8:38–39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Enjoy a family game night filled with laughter and bonding. As you play games together, discuss how unity and cooperation within the family can be a reflection of God's enduring love. Share a picture of your game night and your reflections on love and unity.

day 23: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Gather together and have each family member take a turn sharing instances of love and kindness they've observed or experienced from one another. Discuss how these actions reflect the qualities of love mentioned in the verse.

it's christmas day!

celebrate the birth of Jesus

Merry Christmas! Today is a day of great joy as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Read Luke 2:1-20 today as a family to remember the incredible story of that first Christmas.

After reading together, gather your family and take a special Christmas morning picture. Share your photo with our online community via Facebook or Instagram and use the hashtag #BHBCadvent so we can see your smiling faces and share in this precious moment of togetherness with you.

May your day be filled with love, laughter, and the true joy that only Jesus can bring. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!



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