

# FAMILY WORSHIP

*Setting aside time for the Word, prayer and fellowship are essential for your family's life together. Worshiping together knits you together as a family and together with Christ.*

## Family Advent Liturgy

*The following liturgy provides a simple structure to worship this Advent. Have one family member be the leader each time and the rest of the family responds.*

### **Materials Needed:**

- One large bowl of beans, rice, salt or sand.
- One large family candle placed in the center of the bowl.
- One small bowl and one small candle for each person.

*Leader* The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

### **Leader lights the family candle.**

*Leader* Jesus the Light of the world.

*Family* Jesus the Light of the world.

*Leader* The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way.

*Family* All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way.

*Leader* We have all sinned.

*Family* We have all sinned.

### **Go around in a circle and have each person scoop up some sand and say, 'I have sinned.'**

*Leader* Lord, grant us your light, that being rid of the darkness of our hearts, we may come to the true light which is Christ.

*Family* Jesus, the Light of the world come to me.

**Leader lights each person's candle. When each candle is lit, sing together. Song suggestions: O Come, O Come Emmanuel; This Little Light of Mine; Wait for the Lord.**

*Leader* This is the Word of the Lord

*Family* Thanks, thanks, thanks, thanks be to God.  
(sung)

### **Read an Advent Scripture (passages provided on pages 6-9).**

*Leader* Thanks be to God for the reading of his Word.

*Family* Thank you, God. Thank you, God.

*Leader* Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Family* Amen.

*Family* *Sing Together:* Jesus, name above all names  
Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord,  
Emmanuel, God is with us,  
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

*Leader* The Lord be with you.

*Family* And also with you.

*Leader* Let us pray.

*Family* Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Leader* May he whose second coming in power and great glory we await, make us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

*Family* Amen.

*Leader* Let us bless the Lord.

*Family* Thanks be to God.

## Scripture Readings

*Choose a passage to read together as a family during the Advent Family Liturgy. All readings are from the New International Version (NIV).*

### Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep  
darkness  
a light has dawned.  
<sup>3</sup>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.  
<sup>4</sup>For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered  
the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.  
<sup>5</sup>Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.  
<sup>6</sup>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.  
<sup>7</sup>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.

### Isaiah 11:1-9

**A shoot will come up from the stump of  
Jesse;**  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of  
understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of  
the LORD—  
<sup>3</sup>and he will delight in the fear of  
the LORD.  
He will not judge by what he sees with his  
eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his  
ears;  
<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the  
needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for  
the poor of the earth.  
He will strike the earth with the rod of his  
mouth;  
with the breath of his lips he will slay  
the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup>Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash around his  
waist.  
<sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the  
yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.  
<sup>7</sup>The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
<sup>8</sup>The infant will play near the cobra's den,  
and the young child will put its hand  
into the viper's nest.  
<sup>9</sup>They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the  
knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

## Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people,  
says your God.  
<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and proclaim to her  
that her hard service has been  
completed,  
that her sin has been paid for,  
that she has received from the LORD's  
hand  
double for all her sins.  
<sup>3</sup> A voice of one calling:  
"In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the LORD;  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.  
<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.  
<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD will be  
revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."  
<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out."  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
"All people are like grass,  
and all their faithfulness is like the  
flowers of the field.  
<sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of  
the LORD blows on them.  
Surely the people are grass.  
<sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God  
endures forever."  
<sup>9</sup> 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!"  
<sup>10</sup> See, the Sovereign LORD comes with  
power,  
and he rules with a mighty arm.  
See, his reward is with him,

and his recompense accompanies him.  
<sup>11</sup> He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;  
he gently leads those that have young.

## Isaiah 53:1-7

Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of  
the LORD been revealed?  
<sup>2</sup> He grew up before him like a tender  
shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us  
to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we  
should desire him.  
<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by  
mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with  
pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their  
faces  
he was despised, and we held him in  
low esteem.  
<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our  
transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us  
peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
<sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before its shearers is  
silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

## Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

## Luke 1:39-56

<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors."

<sup>56</sup> Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

## Luke 1:67-80

<sup>67</sup> His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

<sup>68</sup> “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup> He has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David

<sup>70</sup> (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

<sup>71</sup> salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—

<sup>72</sup> to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup> the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

<sup>74</sup> to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,

and to enable us to serve him without fear

<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

<sup>76</sup> And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

<sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation

through the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,

by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

<sup>79</sup> to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

<sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

## Matthew 1:18-2

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.”

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

# Advent Activities

## Jesse Tree

The Jesse tree tells God's story from creation through Jesus' birth. It reminds us of God's goodness as we wait for Christmas! Get a small tree, some branches, or create one with poster board. Then create, find, or buy these ornaments from the list below to put on your tree. You can put them on throughout Advent or all at once. Read the Scripture that goes with each ornament when you put it on your Jesse tree. Isaiah 11:1 gives the origin of the Jesse tree.

*Apple* – Adam and Eve, Genesis 3:1-15

*Ark* – Noah, Genesis 6

*Lamb* – Isaac, Genesis 22:1-19

*Knife* – Abraham, Genesis 22:1-19

*Ladder* – Jacob, Genesis 28:1-22

*Coat* – Joseph, Genesis 27:1-4

*Burning Bush* – Moses, Exodus 2

*Harp* – David, I Samuel 16:14-23

*Crown* – Solomon, I Kings 1:22-48

*Whale* – Jonah, Jonah 1-2

*Dove* – Elisha, II Kings 5:1-27

*Rose* – Isaiah, Isaiah 35:1-2

*Heart* – Ruth, Ruth 1:15-18

*Wheel* – Ezekiel, Ezekiel 1:15-21

*Lion* – Daniel, Daniel 6:1-24

*Lily* – Mary, Luke 1:26-28

*Hammer* – Joseph, Matthew 1:18-24

*Chi Rho* (An X with a P through the middle of it) – Jesus, Luke 2:1-20

## Advent Calendar Chain

Make a paper chain with 25 links. On each link write something to do as a family. Ideas might include baking cookies together, going ice skating, buying the Christmas tree, serving a neighbor in need, singing a Christmas carol, playing a game, etc. Take turns letting each family member break the next link off the chain and read the day's activity.

## Christmas Carols

Choose one Christmas Carol to sing every night until everyone knows all of the words. It might take your family 1 night or 1 week to learn a Christmas Carol. After you learn one carol, choose another one to sing each night. By the end of Advent (and over the years) your family will have quite the repertoire!

## Building the Nativity

Are you travelling for Christmas? Do you have relatives who are travelling? Mary and Joseph had to travel before they reached Bethlehem and the shepherds travelled to the stable where they found the Holy Family. Does your family have a nativity scene to build? Construct the scene piece by piece over multiple nights, ending with the appearance of the infant Jesus on Christmas Eve. Each night, place that night's character hidden in special box. Select one child to open the box and take the character on the journey to Bethlehem.