

## Week 4

# The Candle of Joy

For the fourth week of Advent, we relight the candles of Hope, Peace and Love and add the candle of Joy. We give thanks that God is with us. God gives us joy.

### Candle Lighting

We light this fourth Advent candle, the candle of Joy.  
This candle reminds us to rejoice because God is with us.

### Wonder Together

I wonder what the things are that fill God with joy.  
I wonder why God decided to come to earth as a baby.

### Candle Snuffing Prayer:

May God's hope, peace, love and joy flow in and through us,  
even as we blow out these candles.



## Week 4: Hands On Activity

### Supplies:

\*Invisible  
Ink pen

The prophet Isaiah wrote about a sign that would come: "The LORD himself will give you a miraculous sign. The virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be called Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Joseph and Mary are told that Jesus will be called Immanuel which means "God with us."

God with us! This changes everything! God had always been present with the people of Israel: leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, giving them 10 Commandments and God's glory filling the temple are just a few examples.

God is invisible. Jesus, when he lived here on earth, could be seen, heard and touched. Now when we want to know what God is like we can look at Jesus' life. Jesus is God with skin and bones. God wants us to know what God is like. Jesus is God's earthly face. When Jesus was born as Immanuel the invisible God became visible!

**Do:** Take your invisible ink pen and write **God is with me** on your arm. Can you see the writing? Hold in the button on the pen to turn on the UV light. Shine that light on your arm where you wrote the words. Jesus is the light of the world and Jesus makes God visible!

Because of Jesus, God is not only with us but according to 1 Corinthians 3:16 "God is in us. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple? God's Spirit lives in you. God once lived in the temple in Jerusalem, but now God wants to live in you!" Use your invisible ink pen to write **God is in me** on your other arm.

**Pray:** God, thank you for coming to earth so that I could know you. Thank you for being with me and in me. Help me to know you better every day. Amen



# Nativity Story 7: Shepherds & Sheep

**Read:** Nearby where Jesus was born, there were shepherds living out in the fields. It was night and they were looking after their sheep. Shepherds at the time would have smelled like sheep, slept on the ground and had very little money. They were not considered important people but yet:

"An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" (Luke 2:9-14). The angels went back to heaven and the shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger.



**Let's Talk:** Why do you think God chose shepherds to be the first people to hear about Jesus birth? Imagine what a large group of angels would look like suddenly appearing on a starry night. What would you have done? How would you have felt, do you think? What would you have said to your shepherd friends after you heard the message and the angels went right back to heaven?

**Do:** Find the shepherds and sheep in your box and color them. Add them all to your stable scene.



## Week 4: Interactive Prayer Activity

### Supplies

Post it notes, pens

Sometimes we forget to pray and encourage those closest to us - members of our own family. This week we will focus on praying blessings on our family members. Chose a family member to go first. This person will write a prayer of blessing for a family member on a post it note and put it somewhere that your family member will see it. Then it is that person's turn to write a blessing for someone else in the family. Repeat all throughout the week. By the end of the week, everyone should have received at least one prayer of blessing.

Not sure what to pray for someone in your family? Here are some prayers based on Colossians 1:9-11 and Philippians 1:9-11:

- I pray that you will be strong.
- I pray that you will be patient.
- I pray that you will never give up.
- I pray that you will be filled with joy! (or peace, hope, love)
- I pray that your love for God will grow more and more.
- I pray that your knowledge of God will grow.
- I pray that you will be able to know what is best.
- I pray that your life will be filled with goodness.
- I pray that God will fill you with the knowledge of what God wants.
- I pray that God will give you wisdom and understanding.



# Nativity Story 8: Wise Men, Camel & Me

**Read:** Scripture tells us that “Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea. After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ‘Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him’” (Matthew 2:1-2). King Herod did not want anyone else in his land claiming to be king. He asked the religious leaders where they thought the promised king would be born. They told him Bethlehem. Herod asked the Wise Men to go and search for the child and when they found him to report back to Herod so that he could also go and worship. “The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh” (Matthew 2:9-11). God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod (who wanted to harm baby Jesus) so they returned home on a different road.



**Let's Talk:** What do you think it would be like to take a very long trip with only a star to guide you? What problems might you face on the trip? The wise men brought Jesus the best gifts they could think of - gifts fit for a king! What are the best gifts that you can give to Jesus?

**Do:** Find the wise men and camel in your box and color them. Set them up moving toward the stable. We don't celebrate the wise men giving their gifts to Jesus until Epiphany which is celebrated on January 6 so have your wise men get a little closer to Jesus each day! Use the blank strips to draw yourself holding a gift that you would like to give to Jesus. Write your name on the blank line. Now add yourself to the nativity scene!



## The Christ Candle

### Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

We relight all four Advent candles and now add the Christ candle.  
We celebrate God's arrival into our world, to be God with us - Immanuel.

#### Candle Lighting

We light the Christ Candle. This candle reminds us that Jesus, the Light of the world, has come to dwell with us.

#### Wonder Together

I wonder what it would be like if baby Jesus had been born into my family.  
I wonder if God still shows up on earth.

#### Candle Snuffing Prayer

May the light of Christ shine in and through us, even as we blow out these candles.

