

Advent Family Devotions

Introduction

Advent is another name for the season leading up to Christmas day. It comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means “coming.” Starting about four weeks before Christmas, Advent is traditionally a time of reflecting on how the saints of the past waited and longed for the first coming of Jesus while the saints of today look forward to his second coming.

Family devotions don’t have to be complicated. At their heart they are just about gathering the family together with God. This devotional is designed to be flexible and can be used for a variety ways. Any of the five parts can be removed or lengthened to fit your own situation. It can be used for personal or family devotions. It can be done 5 days a week instead of every day. You get the point, the details are up to you.

Here are five parts that you can use:

1. **Reading:** a scripture reading is at the heart of each devotion. If you miss a day you can skip it our double up at the next session. The first seven readings focus on longing for the coming messiah in the Old Testament. The rest follow the Christmas story.
2. **Discussion:** take a few minutes to discuss the reading with your family. Ask your kids questions relative to their age.
3. **Song:** most of the songs are classic hymns and Christmas carols that try to align with the reading. Lyrics are provided at the bottom of the packet. These are fun to sing acapella but if you want to sing along with music the songs can easily be found online to sing along with.
4. **Prayer:** let the reading lead you into prayers of thanksgiving, adoration, petition, etc...
5. **Advent Calendar:** if your family uses an advent calendar as part of your family tradition it works great as the last part of the family devotions.

Sample Family Devotion

Day	Reading	Song
Dec 1	The Word Became Flesh John 1:1-5; 14	Beautiful Savior

1. **Reading:** have the family take turns reading through John 1:1-5 and verse 14.
2. **Discussion:**
 - a. Who is the “word”? (Jesus)
 - b. What do the first three words of verse one remind you of? (Genesis 1:1)
 - c. Was Jesus truly human? (Yes, so he could obey the law perfectly and suffer the punishment for sin as our human representative)
 - d. Was Jesus truly God? (Yes, so his obedience and sacrifice would be perfect and effective)
 - e. What else did you notice about these verses?
3. **Song:** sing the song Beautiful Savior together. Have the girls sing one verse and the boys sing another. All together at the end.
4. **Prayer:** we worship you our mighty creator God. Thank you Jesus for being the light that came into the world! Let us live by that light and see it more truly this Christmas season.
5. **Advent Calendar:** kids get a treat from the advent calendar.

Day	Reading	Song
Dec 1	The Word Became Flesh John 1:1-5; 14	Beautiful Savior
Dec 2	Longing for Mercy Psalms 51:1-10	His Mercy Is More
Dec 3	We All Like Sheep Have Gone Astray Isaiah 53:2-6	Nothing But The Blood of Jesus
Dec 4	A New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34	Oh Come Oh Come Emmanuel
Dec 5	A Shoot from Jesse Isaiah 11:1-10	Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Dec 6	Unto us A Child is born Isaiah 9:2; 6-7	Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Dec 7	Signposts of The Coming King 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Micah 5:2; Isa 7:14	Come Thou Almighty King
Dec 8	Certainty of things Taught Luke 1:1-4	The Bible Is A Treasure Book
Dec 9	Zechariah & Elizabeth Luke 1:5-17	Praise To The Lord The Almighty
Dec 10	Preparing the Way Mark 1:1-8	Amazing Grace
Dec 11	The Angel Appears to Mary Luke 1:26-38	All Hail The Power of Jesus Name
Dec 12	The Angel Appears to Joseph Matthew 1:18-25	Make Me A Servant
Dec 13	Leap for Joy Luke 1:39-45	Clap Your Hands All You People
Dec 14	Mary's Song Luke 1:46-56	God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Dec 15	To Bethlehem Luke 2:1-5	O Little Town of Bethlehem
Dec 16	Jesus is Born Luke 2:6-7	What Child is This?
Dec 17	The Shepherds Luke 2:8-12	Hark the Harold Angels Sing
Dec 18	A Great Company of Heavenly Host Luke 2:13-14	Angels We have Heard on High
Dec 19	Glorifying and Praising God Luke 2:15-20	Oh Holy Night
Dec 20	Magi from the East Matthew 2:1-2	We Three Kings
Dec 21	A Shepherd King Matthew 2:3-6	Oh Come All Ye Faithful
Dec 22	Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh Matthew 2:7-12	The First Noel
Dec 23	God's Amazing Gift Ephesians 2:8-9; Rev 22:17	Go Tell It On The Mountain
Dec 24	Why Jesus Came John 20:30-31	Joy to the World The Lord has Come

Beautiful Savior

An old song translated into English by Joseph Seiss in 1873

Beautiful Savior, King of Creation
Son of God and Son of Man
Truly I love thee, truly I serve thee
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands
Robed in flowers of blooming spring
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer
He makes our sorrowing spirit sing

Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight
Bright the sparkling stars on high
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels in the sky

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations
Son of God and Son of Man
Glory and honor, praise, adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine

His Mercy Is More

2016, Matt Boswell & Matt Papa

What love could remember no wrongs we have done
Omniscient, all knowing, he counts not their sum
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
Our sins they are many, his mercy is more

Praise the Lord
His mercy is more
Stronger than darkness, new every morn
Our sins they are many, his mercy is more

What patience would wait as we constantly roam
What father, so tender, is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor
Our sins they are many, his mercy is more

What riches of kindness he lavished on us
His blood was the payment, his life was the cost
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford
Our sins they are many, his mercy is more

Nothing But The Blood of Jesus

Written by Pastor Robert Lowry in 1876

What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

O precious is the flow

That makes me white as snow

No other fount I know

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

For my pardon this I see:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

For my cleansing this my plea:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Nothing can for sin atone:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Naught of good that I have done:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

This is all my hope and peace:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

This is all my righteousness:

Nothing but the blood of Jesus

O Come O Come Emmanuel

Translated from a latin text "Veni, veni, Emmanuel" by John Neale and Henry Coffin in the 1850s

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
And drive away the shades of night
And pierce the clouds and bring us light!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1758, Robert Robinson

Come Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise my Ebenezer*
Hither by Thy help I've come
And I know, by Thy good pleasure
Safely shall arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He, to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I delight to be
Let thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, O take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above

* "Ebenezer"- from 1Sam 7:12, a monument to remember God's provision and help

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Written by Charles Westly in 1744

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine own sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

Come Thou Almighty King

Anonymous text found in a 1757 hymnal

Come, thou Almighty King,
Help us thy name to sing,
Help us to praise.
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

Come, thou Incarnate Word,
Gird on thy mighty sword,
Scatter thy foes.
Let thine almighty aid
Our sure defense be made,
Our souls on thee be stayed;
Thy wonders show.

Come, Holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear
In this glad hour.
Thou who almighty art,
Now rule in ev'ry heart,
And ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of power.

To the great One in Three
Eternal praises be,
Hence evermore.
His sov'reign majesty
May we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore.

The Bible Is A Treasure Book

1946 Elizabeth Shields

The Bible is a treasure book
Of stories that are true
It tells of people long ago
Of folks like me and you

The Bible is a treasure book
Of verses old and new
Some make us think of lovely things
Some show us what to do

The Bible is a treasure book
It tells how long ago
Christ Jesus came to live on earth
The Father's love to show

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Written by Joachim Neander in 1680 translated by Catherine Winkworth in 1863

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him;
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Amazing Grace

1779 John Newton

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

All Hail The Power of Jesus Name

1780, Edward Perronet

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, ye ransomed from the Fall
Hail Him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all
Hail Him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all

Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball
To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all
To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all

O that with yonder sacred throng we at His feet may fall
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all

Make Me A Servant

1982 Kelly Willard

Make me a servant
Humble and meek
Lord let me lift up those who are weak
And may the prayers of my heart always be
Make me a servant
Make me a servant
Make me a servant today

Clap Your Hands All Ye People

Clap your hands all you people
Shout unto God with a voice of triumph
Clap your hands all you people
Shout unto God with a voice of praise

Hosanna, hosanna
Shout unto God with a voice of triumph
Praise Him, praise Him
Shout unto God with a voice of praise

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

18th Century English Carol

God rest you merry, gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember, Christ, our Saviour
Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

From God our heav'nly Father,
a blessed angel came;
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born
the son of God by name

"Fear not, then," said the angel,
"let nothing you affright;
this day is born a Savior
of a pure virgin bright,
to free all those who trust in him
from Satan's pow'r and might.

The shepherds at those tidings
rejoiced much in mind,
and left their flocks a-feeding,
in tempest, storm, and wind,
and went to Bethlehem straightway,
the Son of God to find.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1868 Phillips Brooks

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to all on earth!

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

What Child is This?

Written by William Dix in 1865. Dix had been very sick and upon recovery wrote this carol which was later put to the tune of "Greensleeves."

What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ, the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring Him laud*
The Babe, the Son of Mary

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

* "Bring him laud" means to bring him praise

Hark! The Harold Angels Sing

Written by Charles Westly n 1739 it was adapted by George Whitefield and others. The music was arranged a hundred years later to a tune by Felix Mendelssohn.

Hark! the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King
peace on earth, and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise
join the triumph of the skies
with th'angelic hosts proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Angels We Have Heard On High

French carol written in 1862.

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

O Holy Night

Composed by Adolphe Adam in 1847 to the French poem "Minuit, chretiens."

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope--the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the Wise Men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our Friend.

He knows our need-- to our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King, before him lowly bend!
Behold your King, before him lowly bend!

Truly he taught us to love one another;
His law is love and his gospel brings peace.
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his holy name.

Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

We Three Kings

1857 John Hopkins Jr. There are varying traditions about the names, origins, and ages of the Magi.

We three Kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star

O star of wonder, star of light
star with royal beauty bright
westward leading, still proceeding
guide us to thy perfect light

1st King (Gaspard)

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
GOLD I bring to crown him again
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign

2nd King (Melhoir)

FRANKINCENSE to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh
Prayer and praising, voices raising,
Worshiping God on high

3rd King (Balthazar)

MYRRH is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold him arise
King and God and sacrifice
Alleluia, Alleluia
sounds through the earth and skies

O Come All Ye Faithful

Frederick Oakeley translated this ancient Latin text from the 1700's to English in 1841

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem

Come and behold him, born the King of angels

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light eternal,

Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;

Son of the Father, begotten, not created

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:

"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!"

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning

Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing

The First Noel

Traditional English Carol. Noel means Christmas; it can also mean good news.

The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far
and to the earth it gave great light
and so it continued both day and night

And by the light of that same star
three Wise Men came from country far
to seek for a king was their intent
and to follow the star wherever it went

This star drew nigh to the northwest
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay

Then entered in those Wise Men three
full reverently upon the knee
and offered there, in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hat made heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood mankind has bought

Go Tell It On A Mountain

African-American spiritual song, compiled by John Wesley Work Jr., dating back to at least 1865

Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn

Joy To the World

1719 Isaac Watts

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.