



Advent

Every year our culture is inundated with the sights and sounds of Christmas, there is an excitement that can seem to blanket our communities as we anticipate the coming of Christmas. While it is in the words of the classic Christmas song, "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year," what is wonderful about it can often get lost in the shuffle of all the activities surrounding it. **During Christmas, Rolling Hills observes Advent, joining with Christians throughout history and around the world to focus our attentions on the central reason for all the excitement surrounding Christmas, the Advent of Christ.**

What is Advent? Advent mean "coming" or "arrival" of a notable person, or event. Advent is a significant time in the life of the Church. It is an opportunity for believers to remember God's promise to send His Son, the Rescuer, the event that reshaped history and transforms lives. A time to remember God's promises and rejoice in the fact that He kept that promise perfectly.

This guide consist of five weeks of material that contains a simple reading plan, short devotion, and Christmas Song for each week to help us turn our attention to and meditate on our incredibly faithful God and His redemptive work in sending His son to rescue His creation broken by sin.

Each week has a theme these themes coincide with Rolling Hills Family Ministries Advent Calendar, which is a great resource for families to focus on the coming of Christ, however the guide is not meant to add more work for your family during this busy Christmas season. Use the two resources individually or together - whatever works best for you and your family.

He Will Come

WEEK 1 • NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 1

DEVOTIONAL: ISAIAH 9:6-7

We all know what it means to wait. Whether it's in line at the store or for an important phone call or maybe you remember the excruciating wait for Christmas to finally arrive. As you read through the passages listed for this week, take notice of the promises God makes about sending His Son. But also try to get a sense for the long wait God's people endured longing for the promised Messiah, the Rescuer and Redeemer to finally appear.

READING PLAN

Isaiah 9:6-7 (Key Verse)

Isaiah 9:2-7

Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah 53

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Zechariah 9:9-13

Micah 5:2-5

PRAYER: Lord, with great anticipation Your people waited for You to fulfill Your promise to send Your Son the "Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." And because You so loved Your creation You fulfilled Your promise and sent Jesus Your one and only Son. During the Advent season help us celebrate the wonder of Your coming as a baby born in the little town of Bethlehem, and wait with excitement, anticipation, and steadfast faith for Your triumphant return.

SONG: O Come O Come Immanuel"



He is Here

WEEK 2 • DECEMBER 2-8

DEVOTIONAL: LUKE 2:1-7

There is a rush when it arrives, literally our bodies release a small amount of dopamine every time our phones buzz to alert us of a new message or late breaking news. It is the reason many Doctors suggest we can't stop checking our phones.

As exciting as a text message or notification may be it is nothing to the rush of joy that happened the night God's Son was born. Though not many in the busy town of Bethlehem were even aware what happened in that stable. God pulled out all the stops. Some parents will send a creative birth announcement when their bundle of joy arrives, God hung a star in the sky, one so significant that Wise Men, from a far off land, took notice and traveled a great distance to welcome the Child. But that wasn't enough, God also sent a chorus of Angels not a barbershop quartet this was a choir numbering in the thousands to sing the joyful song announcing the arrival of God's son.

The song "O Holy Night" captures in part what this moment brought.

"O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour'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;"

READING PLAN

Luke 2:1-7 (Key Verse)

Luke 1:1-25

Luke 1:26-56

Luke 2:1-21

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 2:1-12

John 1:1-18

PRAYER: Lord thank You for sending Your Son, His arrival then and the reminder of His arrival today brings with it a rush of joy and excitement that can not be matched by anything we find on earth. His arrival is the brings a "Thrill of Hope" for our weary world.

SONG: "O Holy Night" He Gave

He Gave

WEEK 3 • DECEMBER 9-15

DEVOTIONAL: JOHN 3:16-17

If you think back on all your Christmases can you pinpoint a few of your favorite gifts? Was it something big or meaningful? Was it special because of what it was or because of who gave it to you? Pastor and Author Tim Keller makes this observation about the incredible gift we celebrate during the Christmas Season.

"Jesus Christ came at Christmas, but He didn't just come. He was given. 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given ...' Jesus didn't just come. He was a gift. That's the central event of Christmas, and all the gift giving, in a sense, makes that real. Jesus was given. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ...' Jesus did not just come. He was a gift." Jesus is the gift and He is the gift that changes everything. The Classic Christmas song "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" reminds us what this gift means.

"Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

...

"Born that man no more may die:
Born to raise the son of earth,
Born to give them second birth."

READING PLAN

John 3:16-17 (Key Verse)

John 3:16-21

Romans 5:12-17

Galatians 4:4-7

Isaiah 61:1-7

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 5:19-24

PRAYER: Father thank You for giving Your Son as a gift that changed everything. Help me to grow in gratitude for this overwhelming gift, and for my heart to burst with joy like the Apostle Paul when he joyfully declares "thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

SONG: "Hark the Herald Angel Sing"



He Will Return

WEEK 4 • DECEMBER 16-22

DEVOTIONAL: JOHN 14:1-4

Have you ever meet someone that seems to have a contagious joy? Joy that makes you wonder what's going on with them? As those who have been transformed by the incredible gift that came in the form of the promised Son of God born in the little town of Bethlehem, we have every reason to be the kind of joyful people that causes others to take notice. Because Christ came everything changed.

Along with the readings that remind us that Christ is coming back again to take us to be with Him forever, spend sometime reading through the words of the Christmas Carol "Joy to the World" and meditate on the incredible Joy we have because of the Promise Son who came, gave, and is coming again.

"Joy to the world, the Lord has 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 World, the Savior reigns!
Let men 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 sins and sorrows 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"

READING PLAN

John 14:1-4 (Key Verse)
Acts 1:6-11
Matthew 28:16-20
John 14:1-14
Hebrews 1:1-4
Revelation 4:1-11
Revelation 21:1-8

PRAYER: Gracious God, You came to earth, entering the mess and chaos caused by our sin to defeat sin and redeem Your creation. You gave Your own life on the cross and rose from the dead. Before You ascended to heaven, Your instruction to us was not to let our heart be troubled, rather to place our trust in You because You will return. The Promise of Your return like the promise of Your coming brings our hearts joy. Lord let my heart be filled with Joy, and let that Joy be contagious to those around me.

SONG: "Joy to the World"

He Sends Us to Go Tell

WEEK 5 • DECEMBER 23-31

DEVOTIONAL: DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

For some reason I am surprised at how completely disinterested my kids seem to be when I retell the stories from my younger years. I can't understand why they are not spellbound by my tales of adventure and excitement.

Our key verse being from Deuteronomy this week may seem odd being that it is actually the week of the very event we have been leading up, it is the very climax of the Advent season. Happy Birthday Jesus! The Son has arrived. But these verses give us a strong encouragement especially for this season to be intentional about retelling the story of God's gracious, promise fulfilling, history shaping, life transforming gift of His Son.

In Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people of God after they have been rescued from slavery in Egypt and this holy moment where God gives His people 10 commandments for how to enjoy life with Him, to first let these words work deep into your heart, and secondly, to repeat them to their children. Repeat them to your children not just once but over and over again in all kinds of places and with different kinds of mediums. God's instructions to repeat and retell the story of what He has done is not based on the listener's interest but on the importance of the story they are repeating. His words and the story of Christ's arrival is the most important story we could tell. And we have clear instructions to go tell, and retell, and retell, and retell.

READING PLAN

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Key Verse)
Luke 1:39-80
Luke 2:1-20
Matthew 2:1-12
Luke 4:16-21
Colossians 2:13-15
Romans 5:6-11
2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Revelation 21:1-5

PRAYER: Precious Lord, You gave Your son fulfilling the promise You made centuries before His birth that wonderful night. His arrival reshaped history, and His work reshapes the lives of all those who place their faith in Him. Father, like shepherds and wisemen who heard the story and left to retell what they saw. Let us, as those who have been transformed by Your arrival, repeat over and over again this incredible story of your coming.

SONG: "Go Tell it on the Mountain"