

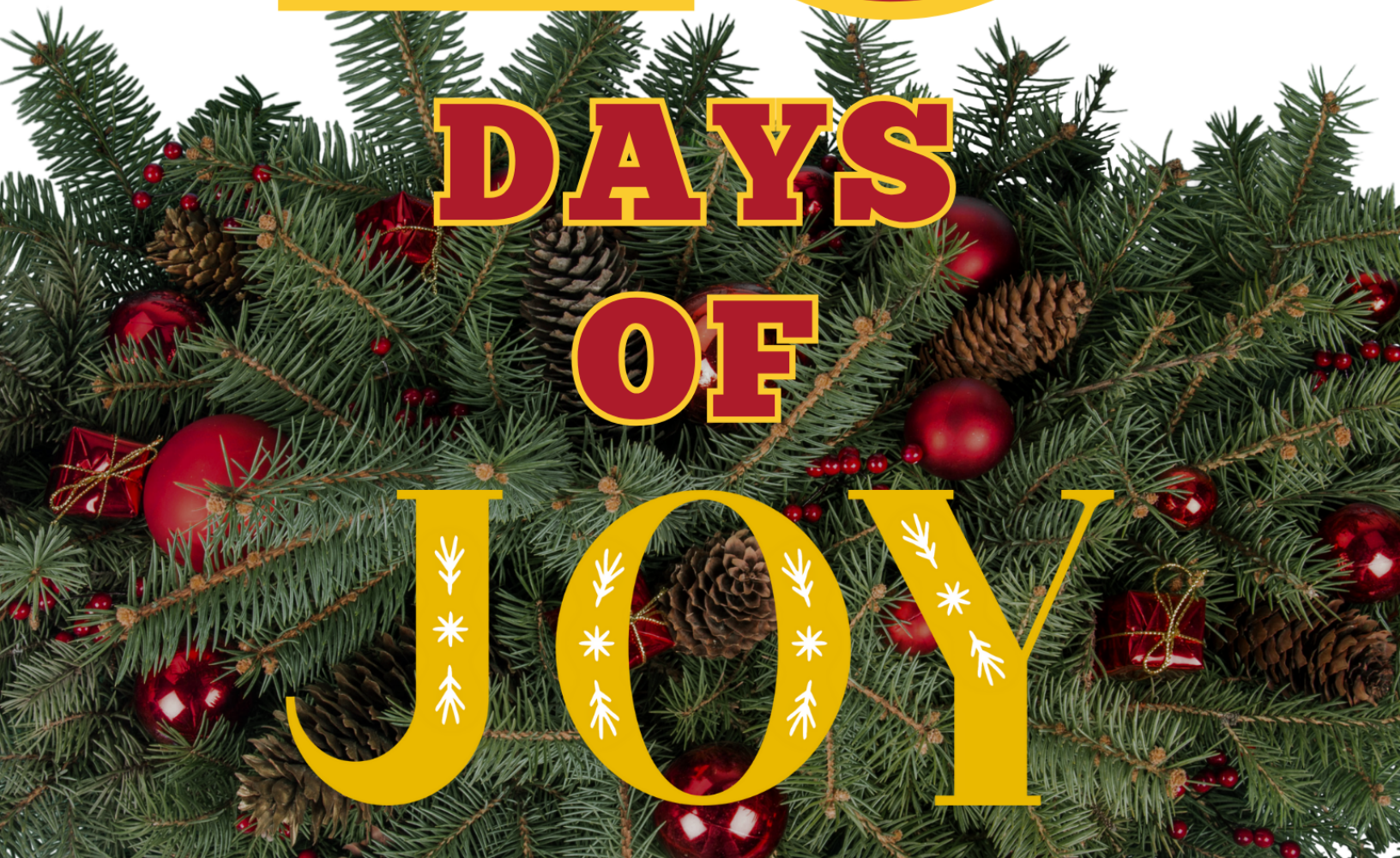
Family Advent Guide **for Pre-K - 5th Grade**

25

DAYS

OF

JOY



Dear TSF Families,

Christmas is such a joyful season—a time to pause and remember how God has been at work in our church and in your family. My prayer is that this Advent season helps you see and celebrate the peace, joy, hope, and love that only Jesus brings.

We're so excited to share this Advent guide from Focus on the Family with you! It's designed to help your family slow down and focus on the true reason we celebrate Christmas. Each day includes a short devotional that highlights one of the themes of peace, joy, hope, or love. As you read the Scripture and devotion together, take a few minutes to talk with your kids about what it means and how it connects to their everyday lives. You'll also find a simple activity to do together that keeps the conversation going and helps make the message stick.

Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to make lasting memories as a family, and this Advent guide can help you build a new tradition centered on Christ. I pray your home is filled with His peace, joy, hope, and love this Christmas season!

With joy,
Pastor Wes



Advent

noun

The arrival of a notable person, thing or event.

origin

from Latin *adventus* 'arrival', from *advenire*, from *ad-* 'to' + *venire* 'come'.

—Oxford Dictionary

Introduction

Celebrate the Advent season with us. Here's how:

1. Make an Advent wreath.
(See [instructions on next page.](#))
2. Print one copy of this Advent activity calendar, which includes a Scripture reading, a devotion and activities.
3. On each day of Advent, read the Scripture and devotion for that day. Light that day's Advent-wreath candle at dinner. If there is time, do the activities with your children.



Make Your Own Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is part of the liturgical countdown to Christmas. You can make one yourself. Here is how:

1. With green crafting wire, fasten live or plastic evergreen branches to a wire wreath circle.
2. After you attach the first branch, lay the second branch over the end of the first so it covers the stem.
3. Continue in this way until you reach where you began.
4. Tuck the ends of your final branches under the foliage of the beginning branches. This circle of evergreen branches reminds us of God, who has no beginning and end, and of His faithfulness.
5. Set four candles in candleholders inside the wreath. Traditionally, the wreath holds three purple candles and one rose-colored candle. A white candle can be added in the center of the wreath.
 - The first purple candle represents hope. We remember the long years that the world waited, in anticipation and hope, for the coming of the Messiah.
 - The second purple candle represents preparation—Israel's preparation for the Messiah and our preparation for the second coming of Jesus.
 - The third candle, the rose candle, represents joy. Christ brought joy to all who believed in Him, and we are filled with joy today as His second coming draws closer.
 - The final purple candle represents peace. God gives His peace to all who wait on Him.
 - The optional white candle in the center of your Advent wreath is lit on Christmas Day as a celebration of Jesus' birth.
6. Light the Advent candles every day at dinner in this manner:
 - Beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, light the first purple candle.
 - Beginning on the third Sunday before Christmas, light the first and second purple candles.
 - Beginning on the second Sunday before Christmas, light the first and second purple candles and the rose candle.
 - Beginning on the final Sunday before Christmas, light all the purple and rose candles.
7. On Christmas day, celebrate Jesus' birth by lighting the white candle in the center of the wreath, if you included it.

—Chris Brack



Begin with Scripture

John 8:58

*Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM.**"*

Ask your children to say or shout "I am" statements from characters surrounding the Christmas story. For example, "I am the one who told the shepherds about Christ's birth." The rest of the family guesses who the child is pretending to be.

We can describe ourselves in many ways: "I am a daughter"; "I am a son"; "I am a student." Jesus described himself as "I am," too, but He didn't always add a title or other description afterward. Through this statement, He was describing himself as God. Jesus is God, and He needs no explanation or title. He simply is and therefore can say, "I am."

Activity

Read the list of creative ideas for "Serving Siblings or Close Friends" on [page 27](#). Then see how many of these ideas each child can do this week.



Dec. 3



Begin with Scripture

John 1:1-3

*In the beginning was **THE WORD**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

The human eye can't see spoken words, but these types of words can be powerful. They can make people feel good or horrible about themselves. They can give information, assist others or comfort a friend. Words can call up feelings or help create exciting events.

God's words are infinitely more powerful than ours. He spoke and created everything in the universe. Only God can do that. That's part of the reason that Jesus is called the "Word." He existed before the world was created. God made all things through the Word. Jesus is the source of all things.

Activities

For Younger Children

Inflate several balloons. Put the balloons on a table and blow them around. Discuss how we can't see the breath that fills the balloons or the air that moves them. Talk about how our words are similar. Jesus, as the Word, can't be seen but He is still there.

For Older Children

Make a bookmark. Cut out the template under Dec. 3 on [page 28](#). Decorate it and glue it to cardstock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it. Punch the hole, loop yarn through it and tie it. Place it in your Bible to remind you that Jesus is the Word.



Dec. 4



Begin with Scripture

Matthew 1:1

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, **THE SON OF DAVID**, the son of Abraham.*

Jesus was called the son of David not because His dad's name was David but because King David was His ancestor. David started as a humble shepherd and became a celebrated king whom God chose to rule over Israel.

David did make some really bad mistakes during his life, but he always asked God for forgiveness. David was a man after God's own heart, and he was given the honor of having the Savior of the world come through his family line. And that Savior is Jesus!

Activities

For Younger Children

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out and decorate the ornament template under Dec. 4 on [page 28](#). To assemble, attach the ends together. Punch two holes on the opposite sides of the ornament circle. Gently tie yarn through the holes to create a new ornament for the season.

For Older Children

Find photos of grandparents, great-grandparents or other distant relatives. Talk about things that have been passed down to your children: beliefs, interests, talents, heirlooms. Discuss how family names are passed down, too. Ask: "If you were able to pick one famous person (not someone in the Bible) to be in your family tree, who would it be?" Talk about King David being Jesus' ancestor.



Dec. 5



Begin with Scripture

John 15:1

*"I am **THE TRUE VINE**, and my Father is the vinedresser."*

Jesus compared himself to a vine in a vineyard. There were many vineyards in the Middle East during this time period. People around Him understood a lot about grapevines.

What does a vine do? It connects the branches to the roots. Through the vine, a plant receives water and food. Jesus used this image to help His followers understand His role in their lives. He would reconnect humanity with God the Father because He was the true vine. Through Jesus, we remain connected to God, who is our source of life.

Activities

For Younger Children

Tie yarn to something solid, such as a chair or table leg, and then weave the rest of the ball throughout the room, around furniture, through the banister, etc. Challenge your kids to trace the yarn back to the source. The yarn is like a vine. It connects your child to the end object.

For Older Children

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out the ornament template with the name of Jesus on it under Dec. 5 on [page 29](#) and set it on a flat surface. Place clear transparency film (these plastic sheets are available in office supply stores) over the template. Outline the word "True Vine" with glue. Use green yarn. Set the yarn over the glue so it covers the letters. Let dry. Cut out the transparency film and punch an ornament hole. Tie twine through the hole. This ornament will remind kids that Jesus is the vine.



Dec. 6



Begin with Scripture

Revelation 5:5

*And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, **THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH**, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."*

Judah was one of Jacob's 12 sons, and Jesus' whole earthly family descended from Judah. That made Jesus' family part of the tribe of Judah. Jewish people in Bible times knew which tribe they belonged to or were adopted into. Prophets said that the Messiah would come through the tribe of Judah.

What does that have to do with lions? Lions are strong and mighty—even ferocious. Jesus, because He is God, is extremely powerful. Thankfully, He uses His power for our good. The name "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" reminds us that our powerful God came through a human lineage to be our Savior.

Activities

For Younger Children

Cut out and decorate the card that has "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" on the front of it (under Dec. 6 on [page 30](#)). Fold the card. Have your kids write their names on the bottom of the inside of the card, and then give the Christmas card to a friend, neighbor or relative.

For Older Children

Have children consider what they have power over, such as having the power to be either kind or mean to others. Ask them to tell you one way that they will exercise that power this week. Will they do what is right by others, just as Christ did what was right by us?



Dec. 7



Begin with Scripture

John 6:48-51

*"I am the **BREAD OF LIFE**. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."*

When Moses and the Israelites were wandering in the desert, God provided manna to keep them alive. Without it, they would have died. But the manna could not keep them alive forever. The Israelites eventually grew old and died.

Just as God provided manna for the Israelites' physical needs, He gave us Jesus to provide for our spiritual needs. Jesus is called the "Bread of Life" because He is the only one who can satisfy our spiritual hunger. But unlike the manna, this Bread of Life has the power to sustain us forever. Eternal life only comes through Him.

Activities

For Younger Children

Ask your kids how much bread they've eaten in the last few days. Remind them that hamburger buns, tortillas and pastries are all forms of bread. Discuss ways that Jesus, the Bread of Life, provides us with spiritual food.

For Older Children

Talk about what might happen if we don't nourish our bodies with healthy food. Make a Christmas bread together to share with others.



Dec. 8



Begin with Scripture

1 Peter 2:6-8

*For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a **ROCK** of offense."*

Jesus is our Rock. We don't stand on Him physically, but He provides the solid and sturdy base on which we build our lives. [Psalm 118:22](#) says that He became the "cornerstone," even though He was rejected by the elite of His people. [Isaiah 8:14](#) says that He will be the rock that we stumble over if we don't build our lives on Him.

Like a building's foundation, Jesus is strong and reliable and is a solid foundation for our faith. He is trustworthy and constant, never losing His love for us. And most important, He will never fail.

Activities

For Younger Children

Ask kids to stand on different items such as a pillow or an empty soda can. What would happen if you had to rely on those items beneath your feet to keep you steady? The pillow would become unstable and the can would flatten. Then have your kids stand on a concrete sidewalk or basement floor. How stable is the sidewalk or floor?

For Older Children

Find a smooth rock outside. Clean it with soap and water. Once it's dry, have kids paint the name "Jesus" on the smooth surface as a reminder that Jesus is our rock.



Dec. 9



Begin with Scripture

1 Timothy 2:5-6

*For there is one God, and there is one **MEDIATOR** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

Tell your family that if they want to talk to you, they must find someone else in the house to "connect" the two of you. The "connector" must hold your hand and a hand of the person who wants to talk with you. After playing this game awhile, explain that the person who serves as a connector is a "mediator."

Jesus is the mediator between God and us. God, who is holy, had separated himself from us because of our sin. But Jesus reconciles, or connects, us with God. Because Jesus suffered and died for humankind's sins, He has become the perfect mediator between humans and God.

Activities

Read the list of creative ideas for "Serving Your Family" found under Dec. 9 on [page 31](#). Then see how many of these ideas your family can do this week.



Dec. 10



Begin with Scripture

Isaiah 9:6

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called **WONDERFUL COUNSELOR**, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Sometimes the choices we face in life can seem overwhelming. It's like we're being asked to navigate an obstacle course wearing a blindfold. We may not know how to work through a tough situation, like when we have disagreements with friends or are tempted to do things we shouldn't do.

One of Jesus' names is Wonderful Counselor. A counselor listens, guides and comforts. Jesus' words can guide us through difficult situations and problems because He sees and knows everything. And He wants what is best for us.

Activities

For Younger Children

With your child, talk about obstacles that might be in the way when walking to another room in your house. Then blindfold the child and guide him or her to the other room using only your voice. Redirect or comfort your child if he or she goes in the wrong direction.

For Older Children

Make a Christmas card that has the Nativity scene and the words *Wonderful Counselor* on it. The template can be found on [page 32](#) under Dec. 10. Have your kids decorate and then cut along the dashed lines on the card. Have them fold it, sign their names and give it to a friend.



Dec. 11



Begin with Scripture

John 1:29

*The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the **LAMB OF GOD**, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

When people sinned in Old Testament times, God accepted a perfect lamb as a sacrifice for their sins. People saw lambs as innocent and gentle.

God sent Jesus to be our lamb. Jesus, though He is powerful, chose to be gentle and offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He died so we can be forgiven. God no longer requires the blood of lambs. Jesus is the Lamb of God. His sacrifice covers all sin.

Activities

For Younger Children

Make handprint lambs with your kids. Trace each child's hand on construction paper, and cut out the shape. The fingers become the legs, and the thumb is the lamb's head. Glue cotton balls on the body, and color the legs and head.

For Older Children

Make a Christmas ornament. Trace the template under Dec. 11 on [page 33](#) onto transparency film (these plastic sheets are available in office supply stores). Use glue and glitter or glitter-glue to trace "Lamb of God" and the outside border. Let the glue dry. Cut out the ornament. Punch a hole in the top, and then string a ribbon or chenille stick through the hole and tie it off. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree.



Dec. 12



Begin with Scripture

Isaiah 9:6

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **PRINCE OF PEACE***

Sin brought chaos into the orderly and peaceful world that God created. But Jesus came to restore peace and to give us the opportunity to have peace in our lives.

John 14:27 says that Jesus told those who were following Him that they didn't have to be afraid or confused because He would give them His peace. Later, after Jesus had returned to heaven, the apostle Paul taught that we could only receive God's peace through Jesus, who took away our sins when He died on the Cross. He is our Prince of Peace.

Activities

For Younger Children

Ask your kids to draw a new picture of a subject they've often drawn before. Tell them if they can keep drawing until you say, "Stop," you'll give them a treat. While they draw, try to distract them with noise, gentle tickling, jokes, etc. Explain that it's hard to accomplish a task with such distractions. Working in a peaceful environment is much easier.

For Older Children

The Christmas season is such a hectic time for families. Ask your children: "In what area of your life would you like God's peace to reign this season?" Talk about this as your child colors the Prince of Peace sheet under Dec. 12 on [page 34](#).



Dec. 13



Begin with Scripture

Hebrews 4:14

*Since then we have a **GREAT HIGH PRIEST** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

What if we had to be perfect all of our lives, never making a mistake? Could we do it? Although we may mess up on schoolwork or in different activities, those usually aren't sins. But sometimes the mistakes we make are sins. And when we sin, Jesus represents us before the Father, asking Him to forgive us and help us do the right thing again.

In this context, "priest" means someone who represents people before God. In Bible times, the high priest was the only one who could go into the holiest place in the temple. But today, Jesus is in heaven, speaking to God on our behalf. That's why He is called the "Great High Priest."

Activities

For Younger Children

Ask your children to walk a "tightrope" (a string laying on the floor) while balancing a book on their heads. Can they do it without dropping the book? If they are unsuccessful, ask them what kind of failure this is: Was it a regular mistake or a sin? Talk about the difference between mistakes and sin.

For Older Children

Discuss these questions with your kids from a goal-oriented and then a moral perspective: "In which part of your life do you wish you could improve? How does God help you in that area?" If there is time, tell your kids what it means to you to have Jesus interceding on your behalf.



Dec. 14



Begin with Scripture

John 14:6

*Jesus said to him, "I am **THE WAY**, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

There is only one way to enter a relationship with God. Jesus is called "the Way" because He is the only path to God. People have tried several other ways (following other gods, doing lots of good deeds, giving money to charity), but none of these ways have helped them start a relationship with the one true God. Jesus is the only way to God.

Activity

Give your child the maze found under Dec. 14 on [page 35](#). After your child completes the maze, discuss how there is only one way to the end of the maze and only one way to God. As a family, consider other areas in life where there is only one way to do something.



Dec. 15



Begin with Scripture

John 8:31-32

*So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and **THE TRUTH** will set you free."*

Jesus represents everything that is honest, good and true. But more than all that, He is the Truth. He came to die for our sins, telling believers that one day we would all live with Him and the Father. This truth has real power. Jesus said that when we know His truth, it will set us free. The Truth defeats sin once and for all.

Activities

For Younger Children

Have children color the page that has the word *Truth* on it under Dec. 15 on [page 36](#). Talk about what truth is.

For Older Children

Make three statements about a toy or other product—two that accurately describe the item and one that is inaccurate. Ask your kids to tell you which statements are true. Next, encourage your kids to look for true and false statements in ads. Talk about why the writers of these ads may try to mislead people. Discuss why we can trust that everything Jesus said is true.



Dec. 16



Begin with Scripture

Isaiah 7:14

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name **IMMANUEL**.*

Jesus has a special name—Immanuel—which means “God with us.” When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He was truly God in human flesh. Today, we can’t see God with our eyes or touch Him with our fingers, but during Jesus’ earthly ministry, people really could see and touch Him. And because Jesus was human (while still being God), He completely understood what it was like to be human—to be tired, hungry, thirsty and tempted.

Activity

Read the list of creative ideas for “Serving Neighbors and Your Community” found under Dec. 16 on [page 37](#). As a family complete as many of these service projects as you can.



Dec. 17



Begin with Scripture

John 4:25-26

*The woman said to him, "I know that **MESSIAH** is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."*

Have you ever been given a special task that only you could do? Jesus was called "Messiah," which means "the Anointed One." God chose (anointed) Him for a special mission on earth—to teach us more about God and to die for our sins. God gave Him the power and ability to help many people.

Activity

Think of your children's abilities and spiritual gifts. Then gather your kids together and pray for them, specifically mentioning their gifts. Ask each child to think of how he or she could use his or her gift to serve others. "Anoint" or task the child to perform one service this week.



Dec. 18



Begin with Scripture

Acts 3:14

*"But you denied the **HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ONE**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you."*

John 15:9-10

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."

Jesus is called the "Holy and Righteous One" because His heart is pure and everything He does is right. When we're motivated to do what is right—keeping His commandments—because of our love for God, we are doing what Jesus did. His desire to do what the Father wanted far outweighed any temptation He encountered.

Activity

Read through the age-appropriate moral dilemmas in "What Will You Do?" scenarios on [pages 38](#) and [39](#) under Dec. 18.

Ask your children what they'd do in these situations. When they make good choices, explain that Jesus may have done the same thing. If they choose poorly, explain that Jesus also felt pressure to make wrong choices when He was on earth, but He chose to do what was right—even when He was a child.



Dec. 19



Begin with Scripture

Luke 1:35

*And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the **SON OF GOD.**"*

Matthew 16:16

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The first time Jesus was referred to as the "Son of God" was in the prophesy of the angel Gabriel. God sent Gabriel to tell Mary that her baby and her baby's Father was none other than God.

Jesus was equal to His Father: He had power to work miracles and had the supernatural knowledge of the Creator. And Jesus had His Father's heart, too: When Jesus healed the sick or fed the hungry crowds, He was behaving like His heavenly Father, who loves all people.

Activities

For Younger Children

Give each child a copy of the comic template under Dec. 19 on [page 40](#). Ask your kids to draw four pictures of how Jesus helps people.

For Older Children

Have your children write a simple announcement (in their own words) about Jesus coming as the Son of God. Roll up the paper like a scroll and allow them to read it aloud to you and your family. If possible, let them dress in all white, like an angel.



Dec. 20



Begin with Scripture

Daniel 7:13-14

*"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **SON OF MAN**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him."*

Even though Jesus was God's Son with all His heavenly qualities, Jesus was also human. He got hungry and thirsty and was tempted like us. That's one of the reasons He was called the Son of Man.

Jesus understood what the prophet Daniel was talking about when he described someone like a Son of Man coming with the clouds. This prophecy was talking about Jesus' divine glory, which would be revealed at His Second Coming. So when Jesus declared himself the "Son of Man," He was telling people His identity as both God and man.

Activities

For Younger Children

Make a bookmark. Cut out the template under Dec. 20 on [page 41](#). Decorate it with your kids and glue it to cardstock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it. Your kids can place it in their Bible to remind them that Jesus is the Son of Man.

For Older Children

On slips of paper, write five miracles of Jesus and five things Jesus did that humans do. Have your children take turns drawing the slips out of a bowl. For each slip, ask, "Was Jesus doing something that most humans do or something only God could do?"



Dec. 21



Begin with Scripture

Job 19:25

*"For I know that my **REDEEMER** lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth."*

The word *redeemer* describes someone who pays the price to buy someone else's freedom. This is what Jesus did for us. As a result of sin, we became prisoners to our evil desires and behaviors. Jesus came to buy us out of our prison of sin—to become our Redeemer. His life and death turned out to be exactly what was needed to redeem us.

Activities

For Younger Children

Hide coins around the house. Next, create a "jail" by cutting openings in a box or turning a laundry basket upside down. Place one of your child's favorite stuffed animals or toys in the jail. Then have your child search the house for the coins. Give clues to find the coins, if necessary. When your child finds all the coins, he or she can choose to buy freedom for the toys or keep the money. Talk about what Jesus did when He was given the choice.

For Older Children

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out and decorate the pattern under Dec. 21 on [page 41](#). Attach the ends together. Punch two holes as directed. Thread yarn through them and tie ends together.



Dec. 22



Begin with Scripture

Revelation 19:15-16

*From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **KING OF KINGS** and Lord of lords.*

What's the strictest rule you've ever heard of? When kings make rules, there is no tolerance for disobedience. There have been many human kings. Each king ruled for a while, and then another king took his place.

Jesus is different. He is truly the King of kings, and He will rule forever. He created this world and everything in it. All other leaders are under His authority, whether they know it or not.

Activities

For Younger Children

Cut out and decorate the "Child of the King" crown pattern under Dec. 22 on [page 42](#). Let children put it on and say, "Jesus is the King of kings!"

For Older Children

Ask your kids who is in charge of your home, their sports teams, their school. Who makes the final decisions? Then ask them to think of a couple of rules that, if broken, bring certain consequences. Talk about how those who make the rules can create them for their own well-being, such as to get rich, or for the well-being of their people, which is what God does. His rules are always what is best for us because He is the King of kings.



Dec. 23



Begin with Scripture

John 10:11-15

*"I am the **GOOD SHEPHERD**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."*

Long ago, shepherds had a difficult but important job. A shepherd lived with his sheep to keep them safe from wild animals. He led the sheep to places where they could find food and water. If a sheep was lost, the shepherd rescued it. Jesus called himself the "Good Shepherd" because He protects and rescues His own sheep—you and me—from harmful things that separate us from God.

Activities

For Younger Children

Make a shepherd's crook. Cut out the template under Dec. 23 on [page 43](#). Decorate it and glue it to cardstock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it. Punch a hole at the top of it and hang it up. Loop yarn through the hole. Let it remind you that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

For Older Children

Ask your children how turtles protect themselves from predators. How do horses protect themselves? Explain that sheep have no way to protect themselves. They would die if someone stronger and wiser weren't caring for them. Ask them to draw sheep that have the defense mechanisms of other animals, such as the powerful kicking legs of a horse. Talk about how a shepherd protects sheep. Explain that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.



Dec. 24



Begin with Scripture

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The sun brings light to our world so we can see people, places, living things and objects. When Jesus came, He called himself the "Light of the World." His light was a new kind of brightness. He brought light so we can see His Truth.

Just as sunlight is necessary for all life, Jesus' light is necessary for our spiritual life. He helps us understand things about God in a way we couldn't clearly understand before, and He makes it possible for us to do the work God wants us to do.

Activity

Set up simple activities in an uncluttered space. Include tasks such as tying a shoe, writing a word and sorting blocks by color. Dim the lights or use flashlights in a dark room and let your children attempt to complete these tasks. Younger children might want to hold a parent's hand. Turn on the lights, and let them try again. Ask your children to compare how it felt to work in darkness versus in the light. Discuss how Jesus brings light to the world and makes our lives better.



Begin with Scripture

Matthew 1:21

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **JESUS**, for he will save his people from their sins."*

Names are special, and when we hear our names spoken, it grabs our attention. Do you know how you were given your name? (Tell your children the stories of how their names were picked.)

God chose Jesus' name for Him. An angel told Joseph that the baby who would be born to Mary should be called Jesus, which means "the Lord saves." God picked the name Jesus to show that He would save us all from our sins.

Activity

Today is a day of celebration. Our Savior is born! Put on some music and have a dance party. Then sit together and talk about how Jesus is the greatest gift the world has ever seen.

Pray for him.

Say something nice.

Do one of her chores.

Surprise him with a *small* gift.

Let her go first when you both want to.

Surprise him by cleaning up a mess he made.

Give him the biggest piece of dessert—*even if it's your favorite.*

Offer her the best seat at the table, in the car or when watching a movie.

Tell your parents (or her parents, if it's a friend) something **good** about her.

Make his bed.

Give her your place in line.

Serving siblings or close friends

If you can't decide which ideas will work best, you can print the list, cut it into slips of paper, put them in a jar or hat and pull out an idea.

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Dec. 3

Make a bookmark. Cut out the template on this page. Color it and glue it to card stock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it. Punch the hole, loop yarn through and tie it. Place it in your Bible to remind you that Jesus is the Word.



Dec. 4

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out and decorate the ornament template on this page. To assemble, attach the ends together. Punch two holes on the opposite sides of the ornament circle. Gently tie yarn through the holes to create a new ornament for the season.



Dec. 5

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out the ornament template on this page and set it on a flat surface. Place clear transparency film (these plastic sheets are available in office supply stores) over the template. Outline the word "True Vine" with glue. Use green yarn. Set the yarn over the glue so it covers the letters. Let dry. Cut out the transparency film around "True Vine" and punch an ornament hole. Tie twine through the hole. This ornament will remind kids that Jesus is the vine.



Dec. 6

Cut out and decorate the card. Fold the card. Have your kids write their names on the bottom of the inside of the card, and then give the Christmas card to a friend, neighbor or relative.



Merry Christmas

As was prophesied, Jesus became the Lion of the
Tribe of Judah and used His strength for our good.
May His joy fill your Christmas season!

Kids: Serve your parents	Parents: Serve your kids
Do something helpful without being asked.	Read 1 extra bedtime story.
B e ready to leave for school or church early, so your parents don't have to wait for you.	 Offer to do the dishes if the kids normally do them.
 Obey without talking back.	 W arm their pajamas in the dryer so they're extra cozy.
W rite a letter or draw a picture to tell your parents you love them.	G ive grace when a child doesn't live up to your expectations.
T hink of something nice you want someone to do for you, and do that same thing for your parents.	Serve a food that is your children's favorite.
 Pick up your toys & art supplies.	 A llow children to do a chore their way, as long as it's done on time.
Go to bed without complaining.	S top getting "everything done" and spend an hour playing.
 Make breakfast in bed for your parents.	 Make hot tea or cocoa; then sit around the table and talk about the day with your children.
Offer to do the dishes even when it's not your night.	 B ring out photographs of your children and share a special story with each one.
 Ask them how their day was and listen to the answer.	 W atch your children's favorite show with them, all the way through.

Serving your family

If you can't decide which ideas will work best, you can print the list, cut it into slips of paper, put them in a jar or hat and pull out an idea.

Dec. 10

Make a Christmas card. Have your kids decorate and then cut along the dashed line on the card. Have them fold it, sign their names and give it to a friend.



Merry Christmas

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted
and free humankind from sin. He is truly
our Wonderful Counselor.

Dec. 11

Make a Christmas ornament. Trace the template below onto transparency film (these plastic sheets are available in office supply stores). Use glue and glitter or glitter-glue to trace "Lamb of God" and the outside border. Let the glue dry. Cut out the ornament. Punch a hole in the top, and then string a ribbon or chenille stick through the hole and tie it. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree.



Dec. 12

"In what area of your life would you like God's peace to reign this season?" Talk about this as your child colors the Prince of Peace sheet.



Dec. 14

Help your child complete the maze on this page. Discuss how there is only one way to the end of the maze and only one way to God. Find the answer key on [page 46](#).



Published in Focus on the Family Clubhouse magazine and called "Town of David"; used by permission.

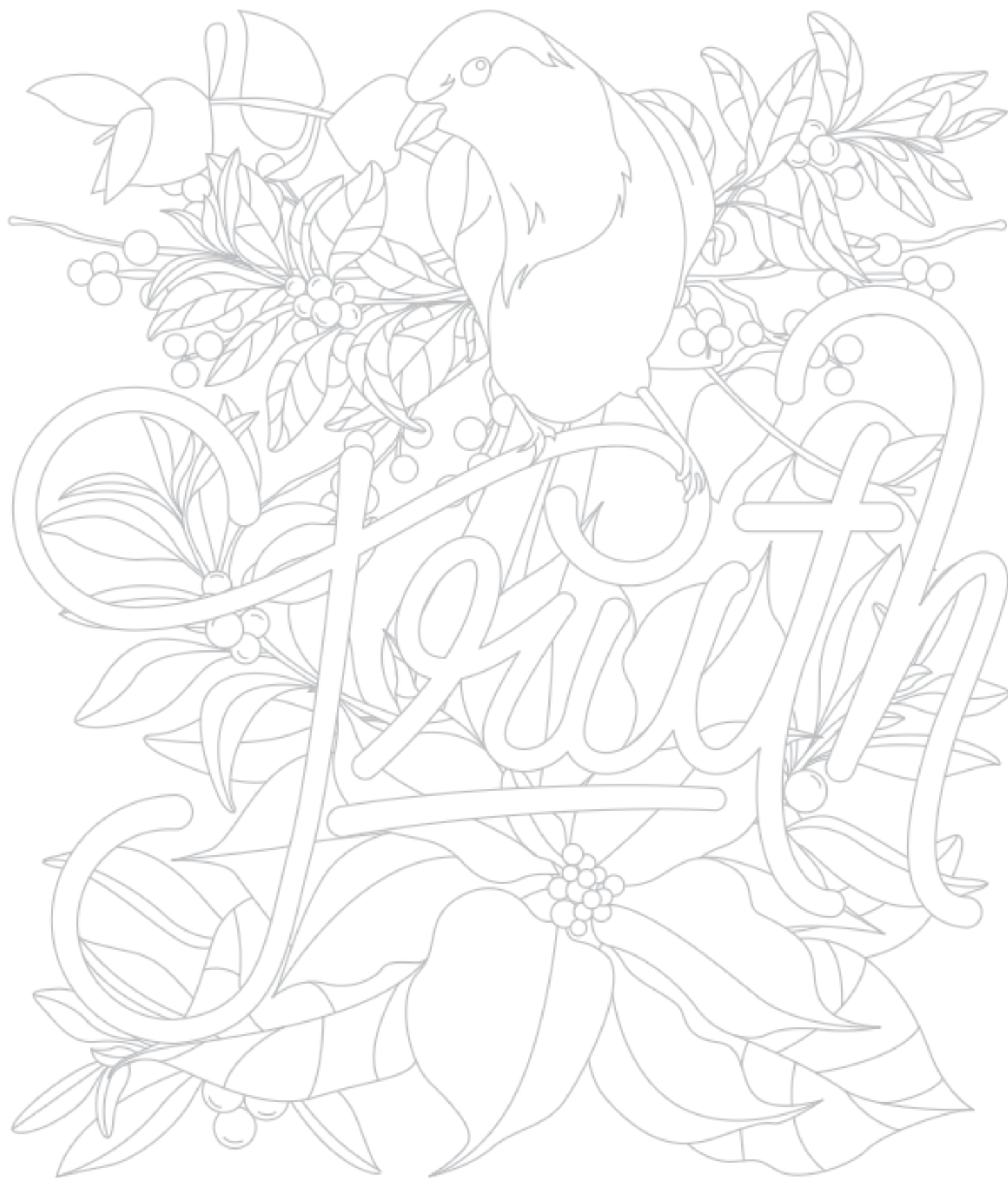


This kids' magazine for ages 8-12 reinforces traditional values and promotes family closeness with hands-on activities, challenging puzzles and exciting stories.

To subscribe, go to store.focusonthefamily.com/clubhouse-magazine.

Dec. 15

Talk about what truth is while you and your children color this page.



Serving neighbors and your community

If you can't decide which ideas will work best, you can print the list, cut it into slips of paper, put them in a jar or hat and pull out an idea.

<i>Pray</i> with them.	Bring them a fresh batch of <i>cookies</i> .	<i>H</i> ost a bake sale and donate the proceeds to a family pursuing adoption.
Bring their <i>trash cans</i> up from the curb.	Offer to take their <i>garbage</i> to the curb for them.	<i>F</i> eed their pets while they're away for a Christmas vacation.
<i>I</i> nvide them to a Christmas service at your church, a play at your school or another Christmas activity.	<i>S</i> ing Christmas carols by their front door with a group of friends.	<i>O</i> rganize a drive to collect things needed by the department of human services, such as backpacks with personal items for each kid in foster care.
<i>S</i> hovel their driveway and sidewalk—and don't accept payment.	<i>W</i> rite a letter or draw a picture to tell them you care about them.	Take <i>baked goods</i> or lunch to the fire department.
<i>A</i> sk them to tell you about Christmas memories when they were your age.	Working with a local agency, plan a party for kids in <i>foster care</i> .	Take the <i>newspaper</i> to their front door so they don't have to go out to pick it up.

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Dec. 18

Read through the age-appropriate moral dilemmas in "What Will You Do?"

Ages 4-7

1. Your dad told you to clean up your toys, but you're having fun. You don't want to stop playing. Besides, the room is messy, and you don't feel like cleaning up. What will you do? [Ephesians 6:1](#)
2. Your mom made only enough cookies for your brother's class. She tells the family not to eat any. You really want a cookie, so you decide to take one. Mom notices a cookie is gone. What will you do? [Psalm 119:30](#); [Proverbs 19:5](#)
3. Pretend you're playing with another child who is younger than you. That child has a toy you want to play with. You could just take the toy if you wanted to. You could switch it with the toy you have. The other child might cry, but maybe you won't get in trouble if you pretend you didn't do anything. No one is looking now. What will you do? [Proverbs 3:3](#); [1 John 3:18](#)
4. You're throwing a ball in the house and break your mom's favorite table decoration. Mom hears the crash and comes running to see what happened. If you tell the truth, you know you will be punished. You could say you accidentally bumped the table. What will you do? [Psalm 51:6](#); [Proverbs 12:22](#)
5. Suppose Mom or Dad has been telling you to do stuff all day. You're tired of it. You want to say, "No" and "I don't have to" and "Leave me alone." You want to walk away and do what you want to do. What will you do? [Exodus 20:12](#); [Leviticus 19:3](#)
6. You got in trouble, and you're angry. Your parents punished you, but you think your sibling deserves to be punished. You could hit, pinch or trip your brother or sister when no one's looking. You could hide or break one of your sibling's toys. What will you do? [Ephesians 4:32](#); [Romans 12:17](#)

Ages 8-12

1. You're with friends when they start teasing an unpopular kid, taking his things and calling him names. If you stick up for him, the group could turn on you. You start to slip away, but someone throws you the boy's backpack. What will you do? [James 4:17](#); [Ecclesiastes 4:10](#)
2. You're in the middle of an intense video game. Just a few more points and you'll beat your high score. You hear Dad say it's time to turn off the game. The game's loud, so it would be easy to pretend you didn't hear. That way, you could finish the game. What will you do? [Colossians 3:20](#)
3. Some of your friends have started using bad language because it makes them feel cool. Each day you hear words you know your parents don't like. Your friends even use the names of God and Jesus as if they were just bad words, and they call you a baby because you won't talk like them. What will you do? [Exodus 20:7](#); [Ephesians 4:29](#)
4. You heard your best friend and some others lying to the principal about who started a fight. You didn't see the fight, but your friend told you another good friend of yours started it. Now an innocent person has been blamed and will be suspended from school. What will you do? [James 4:17](#); [Proverbs 12:17](#)
5. You're playing with two good friends. They both want to be your best friend. You think you like one friend better. That friend says, "Let's go play by ourselves." You know your other friend's feelings will be hurt if she's left out. What will you do? [Proverbs 17:17](#); [Luke 6:31](#)
6. There's a new kid at school who hardly talks and seems to look at the ground a lot. The other kids laugh at him, and they expect you to laugh with them. You know this child needs a friend, but if you become his friend, the other kids might not be your friends anymore. What will you do? [John 15:12-14](#); [1 John 4:11](#)
7. Your friend has invited you over for a fun afternoon doing all your favorite things. You have your parents' permission to go, but you have to get your homework done first. The assignment isn't hard, but it would take time to do well. You could just tell your parents you did the work even though you didn't. They'll never know. What will you do? [Job 31:6](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)

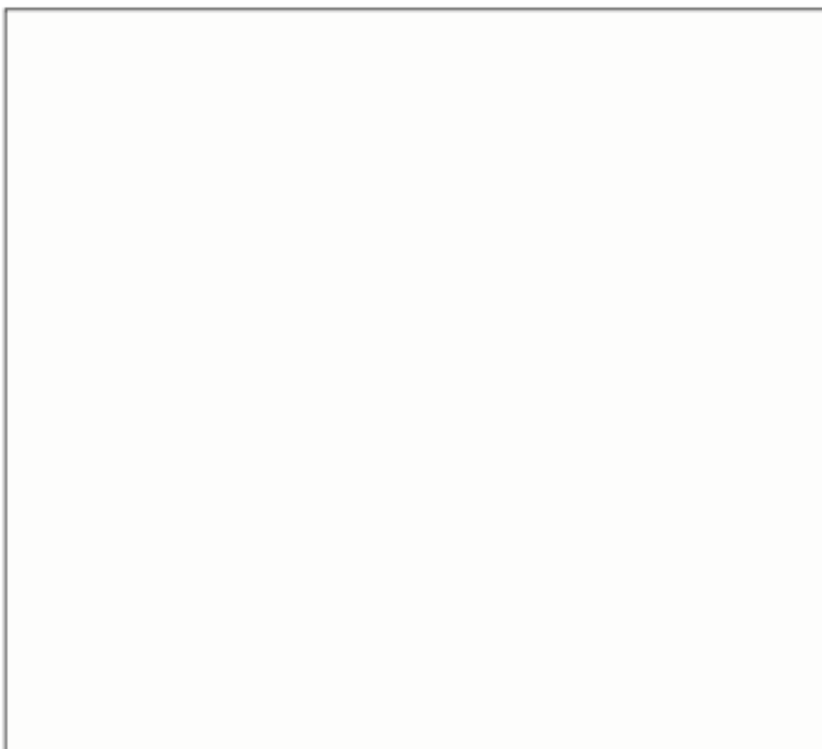
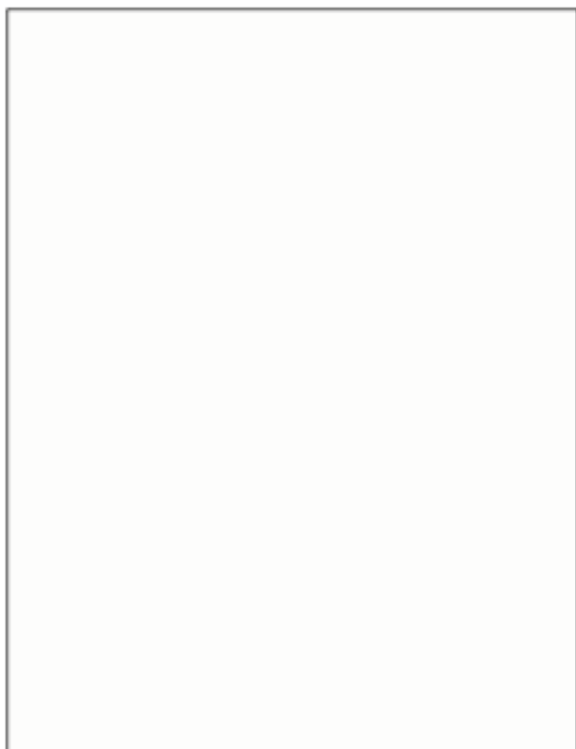
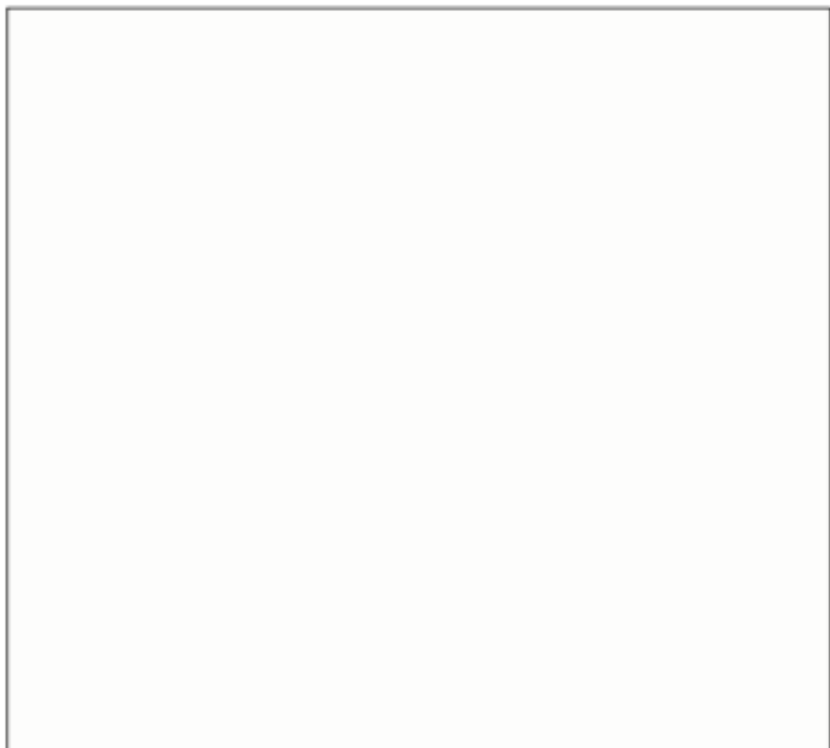
Dec. 18

Ages 13-18

- 1.** You're tired of blending in. You want to be noticed. You're good-looking, and with the right clothing styles, everyone would be able to see that, especially if your clothes fit tighter or showed more skin. Other kids dress that way. What will you do?
[1 Corinthians 8:12-13; 12:23](#)
- 2.** You're at a friend's party. At first, everything seems normal, but then you notice some people pouring something into their cups from a thermos. They're acting weird. Someone offers you a drink from the thermos. What will you do? [1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Peter 2:11](#)
- 3.** Suppose you have one test question left to answer and time is running out. You've studied hard and you know the material, but you just can't bring that answer to mind. You could copy your neighbor's answer without the teacher knowing. Besides, you know the answer is somewhere in your brain, so it only seems fair that you should get credit for it. What will you do?
[Deuteronomy 25:15; Psalm 5:6](#)
- 4.** It seems that just about everywhere you look — grocery stores, convenience stores, TV, billboards — you see pictures of people wearing revealing clothes. Some friends look at magazines and access Internet sites where they can see even more. One friend has figured out how to get past parental blocks on these sites and has offered to show you how. What will you do?
[Luke 11:34; Matthew 5:28; Psalm 101:3-4](#)
- 5.** You love the power you feel behind the wheel, and you want to see what it feels like to drive fast. You get your chance while driving alone in the car. The speed limit is 50, but there's no traffic on the road. What will you do?
[Titus 2:11-12; Romans 13:1](#)
- 6.** You have a teacher or coach who is always getting on you for no reason, and you're tired of it. You're not a kid anymore; you deserve respect. He is coming toward you. You can tell he's angry and you know what's coming. Right now you have to determine how you'll react. What will you do? [Romans 12:19; Proverbs 15:1](#)
- 7.** A group of friends is saying some pretty mean things about another friend. Some of what they're saying is true, but then sometimes those things are true of you, too. "Hey," someone says, calling your name, "you haven't said anything. What do you think? You agree with us, don't you?" What will you do?
[Proverbs 16:28; 26:20; 3 John 1:11](#)
- 8.** Some of your friends have started drinking alcohol, and they seem to be having more fun than you. They've asked you to try it. What will you do?
[Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 15:33](#)

Dec. 19

Ask your kids to draw four pictures of how Jesus helps people.



Dec. 20

Make a bookmark. Cut out the template on this page. Color it and glue it to cardstock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it. Place it in your Bible to remind you that Jesus is both God and human.



Dec. 21

Make a Christmas ornament. Cut out and color the pattern on this page. Attach the ends together. Punch two holes, and thread yarn through them. Tie ends together and hang.



Dec. 22

Cut out and color the "Child of the King" crown pattern. Staple one edge of Band No. 2 to the edge of Band No. 1. If the crown fits the child's head, staple the open sides together. If not, staple Band No. 3 to Band No. 2. Wrap around your child's head. Staple bands to the correct size.



Dec. 23

Make a shepherd's crook. Cut out the template on this page. Decorate it and glue it to cardstock. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate it and punch a hole at the top of it. Loop yarn through the top hole and tie it. Hang the crook on your Christmas tree, and let it remind you that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.



I Am

John 8:58

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM**."

The Word

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was **THE WORD**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Son of David

Matthew 1:1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, **THE SON OF DAVID**, the son of Abraham.

True Vine

John 15:1

"I am **THE TRUE VINE**, and my Father is the vinedresser."

Lion of the Tribe of Judah

Revelation 5:5

And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, **THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH**, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

Bread of Life

John 6:48-51

"I am the **BREAD OF LIFE**. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

Rock

1 Peter 2:6-8

For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a **ROCK** of offense."

Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5-6

For there is one God, and there is one **MEDIATOR** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Wonderful Counselor

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called **WONDERFUL COUNSELOR**, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Lamb of God

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the **LAMB OF GOD**, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **PRINCE OF PEACE**.

Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14

Since then we have a **GREAT HIGH PRIEST** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

The Way

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am **THE WAY**, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Truth

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and **THE TRUTH** will set you free."

Immanuel

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name **IMMANUEL**.

Messiah

John 4:25-26

The woman said to him, "I know that **MESSIAH** is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Holy and Righteous One

Acts 3:14

"But you denied the **HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ONE**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you."

Son of God

Luke 1:35

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the **SON OF GOD**."

Son of Man

Daniel 7:13-14

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **SON OF MAN**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him."

Redeemer

Job 19:25

"For I know that my **REDEEMER** lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth."

King of Kings

Revelation 19:15-16

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **KING OF KINGS** and Lord of lords.

Good Shepherd

John 10:11

"I am the **GOOD SHEPHERD**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Light of the World

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Jesus

Matthew 1:21

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **JESUS**, for he will save his people from their sins."

Answer Key

Find the maze on page 35



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