
TSF Kids
Advent Guide
2026

Waiting with Joy

A DEVOTIONAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Waiting for Christmas is hard! A month can feel like a long time, especially for younger children. This month, we want to make the month of December more *joyful* for you and your family.

Over the month of December, we offer a Bible reading and short activity for each day—acts of service, crafts, fun, and reflection. Many are common December activities, but we invite you to do each activity intentionally, filling your life and others with the joy of our Savior.

To help you count down, visit woh.org/AdventCalendar for a printable calendar and crafts.

There, you can also download a matching series for older children and adults. Each day's Bible reading is the same, with the same ideas and similar activities designed to guide your devotional time for the month.

Developing a Devotional Habit
with your children

If you have never done devotions with your children, Advent is a great place to start. Here are a few things to think about before you get started.

1. **Find a time when it is easier for your children** to engage with a reading and activity. After a meal (breakfast/lunch/dinner) are traditional times, but bedtime or snack time are also good. Every family's pattern is different, and what works for one family may not work for you. When you find a good time, try to be consistent (even if you only have time to pray together).
2. **Read as much or as little of the day's reading** as your children are ready for. Start with the Bible verse and questions. If you can, read a little more. We encourage you to adapt each day for your family's needs.
3. **If possible, read through the devotional yourself** before your devotional time and gather materials so you are ready with the activity.
4. **It may be helpful for your children to have something** to do while you read. For example, coloring, drawing, or playing with a quiet toy.
5. **Occasionally, we include a note to parents.** We have addressed these to "Parents", but these notes are intended for any caregiver—if you are a grandparent, babysitter, or teacher, the note applies to you too!
6. **If you miss a day, it's ok!** The activities this month are not designed to be a checklist; they are intentional activities to help you and your children grow in faith together. We hope that the days when you can do devotions together will bless your family.

1

Wait with a Purpose

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. (v. 46)

Are you excited for Christmas? It can be hard to wait all month for Christmas to come!

One thing that makes waiting easier is having something to do. Our verse today comes from Mary, Jesus' mom. While she was waiting for Jesus to be born, she chose to praise and worship God. This month, while we wait for Christmas, we are going to share activities to help you think about God and share God's love with the people around you. We hope they will make the waiting a little easier!

What are you looking forward to the most this month while you wait for Christmas?



prayer

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus.
Help us to be patient as we wait for Christmas!

activity

Make a list or draw a picture of the things that you are looking forward to this month.



2

Look at the Stars

When I look at your heavens . . . the moon and the stars . . . what is man that you are mindful of him? (vv. 3-4)

Have you ever seen the stars? When you go outside on a dark night, you can see stars filling the sky—bright lights in the darkness.

Have you ever tried to count the stars? It's impossible! There are so many stars, they cover the whole sky. Thinking about the number of stars in the sky can be a little overwhelming.

But do you know who can count the stars? God can! God knows every star, and even better, he knows every creature, every rock, every person. God can count the stars, but he still sees you and knows you, he loves you and cares about you.

When you feel scared or small, remember that the God who is big enough to count the stars knows you and loves you.



prayer

Thank you God for loving us. When we feel scared, help us remember you and your love.

activity



Go out after dark and look up at the stars. You can use binoculars or a telescope to see stars more clearly, or just look at them with your eyes. Then share a little starlight wonder by cutting out and decorating a star to hang in your window. Find a template at woh.org/AdventCalendar.

3

Visit a Friend

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. (v. 45)

Do you like to go to someone else's house? It can be fun to play with someone else's toys, and the best part is seeing someone that you love.

In our story today, Mary visited her older cousin, Elizabeth. In that visit, Elizabeth encouraged Mary. God gave Mary an older cousin who showed her love when she really needed it. There is nothing better than having a friend or family member who cares about you!

God gives us friends and family so that we can love each other, and take care of each other. Who are some of your favorite people? How can you show them that you love them?



prayer

Thank you God for friends and family, all the people who love us. Help us to show them love today too.

activity

Call or visit someone, and tell them that you love them.



4

Welcome a Stranger

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (v. 2)

Do you like to talk to new kids?

Most people feel a little scared or shy when they meet new people. It can be hard to go and talk to new kids on the playground, at school, or at church.

Have you ever been the new kid somewhere? How did it make you feel when other kids wanted to play with you? That can be a great feeling.

The next time you are in a situation with new kids, try talking to them and invite them to play. You might make a new friend!



prayer

Thank you God for always loving us.
Help us to show your love to other people.

activity



Talk about a time when you were the new kid. Think about how you could welcome someone new at church, or in your neighborhood. With your parents' help and permission, bake cookies or make a small homemade gift that you could give to someone to introduce yourself. Download printable gift tags and get craft ideas at woh.org/AdventCalendar.

5

Pray for Peace

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. (v. 6)

Do you ever fight with other kids—a brother or sister, a cousin, a friend? Do you ever want a toy that they have? How did it make you feel when the fight was over?

Everyone argues with other people sometimes—even grownups argue and fight with each other. It's normal to disagree sometimes! But when you fight, you might need to apologize and ask for forgiveness. Making up after a fight can be hard work, but the peace that comes after that can feel really good.

Today's Bible verse tells us that when God's kingdom comes, all of creation will be at peace with each other. Even animals that normally fight will be at peace. That's a surprising idea. Can you imagine that kind of peaceful world?



Thank you God for giving us friends and family. Forgive us when we hurt other people, and help us make peace together.

activity

Prepare a snack of bite-sized crackers, pretzels, or other small treat. How can you divide and share the snack so that everyone gets a fair amount? *Parents: Make sure that your snack divides evenly between your children.*

6

Listen to the Elderly

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. (v. 25)

Do you know any older people? Maybe your grandparents, or someone at church?

Today's story is about two very old people. They trusted God, and they told others about God's love. When Jesus' parents took him to the temple for the first time, these old people named Anna and Simeon recognized that Jesus was very special—God's son, sent to Earth to save us from our sins. They were excited to see Jesus, and they told others about him.

Older people have a lot of wisdom to share, and a lot of love. Today, take time to call or visit an older person—a grandparent, or someone else who would love to see you.



prayer

Thank you God for older people who love us and share their wisdom.

activity



Spend time with an older person.
Send a note, make a call, or plan a visit.
Ask questions and listen to the answers. *Parents: Reflect on how you have seen God's faithfulness over your life and think about how you can share your testimony with your kids.*

7

Embrace the Unexpected

But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. (v. 7)

What is the most surprising thing that has ever happened to you?

The Christmas story is full of unexpected events, and today's Bible passage tells us about one of them. Zechariah and Elizabeth were old. They didn't have kids, and they didn't think they would ever have kids. But then God did a miracle, and Elizabeth became pregnant. It was so surprising that they almost didn't believe it!

Think again about a surprise you've had. Did you like the surprise? Remember that in surprises and in normal things too, God is working in your life to do good things, now and in the future.



prayer

Thank you God for surprising us with good things.

activity



Create a surprising experiment. Get out a baking dish or larger plastic container, and put a layer of baking soda on the bottom. Then prepare three small cups of vinegar. Add a few drops of food coloring to each cup to make blue, red, and yellow vinegar. Then take turns pouring the vinegar into the baking soda. What happens? Were you surprised? Did you like this surprise?

8

Feed the Birds

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (v. 26)

Do you like seeing birds? What was the last bird you saw? What were the birds doing?

In the Bible, there are a lot of stories with birds in them. In these stories, birds are usually signs of the way God cares for his people. Today's reading tells us that just as God cares for the birds, he will care for you too.

What do you feel worried about? Share those worries with God in prayer, and trust that he will take care of you.



prayer

Thank you God for taking care of us, just like you take care of the birds.

activity



Set out food for the birds and watch as they eat it. Then add a bird ornament to your Christmas tree and remember that God provides for every need. If you need an ornament, visit woh.org/AdventCalendar to print and color your own.

9

Do Good in Secret

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. (v. 3)

Have you ever done something kind for someone else? How did it make you feel? Did other people notice that you did a good deed? Or did you do it secretly?

In today's Bible reading, Jesus tells his followers to do good in secret. Sometimes when we do a good deed, we want other people to notice! It feels good to get compliments for doing a good deed.

Telling everyone about the good deed can make you do things because of the compliments—not just to help other people. But Jesus says that God sees ALL the good things we do. He knows when we do a good deed, and that's good enough.



prayer

God, help me to do good things to help other people.

activity



Do a good deed for someone without asking for compliments. If you can't think of something, ask a parent or grandparent for ideas.

Parents: Your kids may need help with this. Feel free to suggest things for your kids, and help them accomplish their good deeds. Here are a few ideas to get you started. Help with a chore, like clearing the table or putting away toys. Share a toy, or play with a pet. Help shovel snow at a neighbor's house.

10

List Your Ancestors

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (v.1)

Who are your ancestors? Can you name your parents or step-parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents?

In Matthew, there is a list of Jesus' ancestors. It lists Jesus' great-, great-, great-, great-, great- (and many more great-) grandparents. Many of the names on the list are people from the Old Testament, including Abraham, Jacob, David, Ruth, Rahab, and many more. They are all part of the story of God's love and faithfulness in the Bible.

Jesus' ancestors were part of his story, and your ancestors are part of your story too. But your ancestors aren't just the people you are related to, like your parents, siblings, and grandparents. The Bible tells us that when we follow Jesus, we gain a whole new family—all the believers around the world, and all through history, who chose to follow God's way. You can learn so much from all of your family!



prayer

God, help me to do good things to help other people.

activity



Draw your family. You can do a family tree that shows how you are related, or just a drawing of your family. If you like, include other people who are special to you. Then pray and thank God for your family.

11

Sing "Joy to the World"

[Jesus] emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (v. 7)

Have you ever had a big feeling? When you can't stop laughing, or you get so mad you just want to yell?

Jesus understands big feelings. Jesus experienced all the things you experience, because he was once a kid, just like you. He had good friends and family that he loved. He got angry sometimes. He was disappointed and frustrated sometimes too. But he experienced all those things because he LOVES people. His love is so big that he was willing to leave heaven to save his people—including you.

"Joy to the World" is a famous Christmas song. When we sing "Joy to the World," we can remember that Jesus came to this world to bring joy—joy that would last for always.



prayer

Thank you God for coming into the world and bringing us big joy.

activity

Sing or listen to "Joy to the World."



12

Display Baby Pictures

[Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger. (v. 7)

Do you remember being a baby? Share a story of the babies you know. What are they like?

Go find your baby pictures, take a look, and think about this: there is only one you. No one else is like you, and you are so loved.

Jesus was a baby too. His mother Mary loved him so much! Can you imagine her wrapping Jesus up carefully and holding him? But here's the mystery: Jesus was a baby, but he was also God. God—the creator of the universe—had become a tiny baby, and there in Mary's arms was the proof of it.



prayer

Thank you God for being born as a baby, to be our Savior.

activity



Look at your baby pictures and reflect with wonder on the miracle of Jesus' birth. What do you think Jesus was like as a baby?

13

Be Willing to Cooperate

Behold, I am the servant of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word. (v. 38)

When your mom or dad asks you to do something, how do you respond? Are you happy to help them, or do you argue? Working together is called cooperating.

In our reading today, an angel from God asked Mary to cooperate in God's big plan to rescue us from our sins. She would become Jesus' mom. It was a big and important job. Guess what—she could have said no! But Mary didn't argue with the angel, or fight about it. Instead, she said yes to God's plan.

You can say yes today too. Of course, moms and dads aren't angels from God, but they are part of God's plan to help you grow up. When you cooperate and help them, it's a way to practice cooperating with God's plans. How can you cooperate today?



prayer

Thank you for giving us the choice to cooperate in your plans. Help me to do a good job with whatever I need to do today.

activity



Your mom or dad is going to give you a job to do at home with them. Do that job joyfully! *Parents: use this as an opportunity to work alongside your child in an appropriate small job. Don't ask too much—instead, take it as an opportunity to have fun together, and celebrate as they say yes!*

14

Be Thankful for Someone

I do not cease to give thanks for you,
remembering you in my prayers. (v. 16)

Who are you thankful for? Who helped you today? Who were you glad to see?

One of God's good gifts is people—people who help us, people who love us, and people who we love. Friends, family members, even people like teachers or pastors.

In the Bible, the apostle Paul says that he thanks God for friends and fellow believers. He tells them so that they know how special and important they are to him! Telling other people that you are thankful for them is a great way to share your love, and God's love too.



prayer

Thank you God for the people in my life.

activity



Write a note or draw a picture for someone you are thankful for. Tell them that you thank God for them.

15

Receive God's Good Gift

The free gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord. (v. 23)

What do you do when you receive a gift?

Sometimes when you get a gift, it's hard to know what to do. It can feel a little awkward, especially if you don't like the gift! Maybe you have heard this expression: "It's the thought that counts." That means that someone chose this gift for you because they love you—so even if you don't like the gift, you can appreciate that the person wanted to share it. Whether you like your gift or not, the best thing to say is "Thank you!"

This season, we are celebrating the greatest gift of all—forgiveness from our sins and eternal life with Jesus. You cannot earn this gift. You cannot deserve it. You can only receive it, with a big "Thank you" to Jesus!



prayer

Thank you Jesus for giving your life to forgive our sins. Help us to receive all gifts this season with gratitude.

activity



Prepare thank you notes for gifts that you will receive this season. Practice writing the word "Thank you" and your name, or draw a picture. You can use these cards later when you receive a gift. You can find a printable card at woh.org/AdventCalendar.

16

Name Your Favorite Christmas Smells

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. (v. 15)

Did you know that we can smell Jesus? What do you think Jesus smells like?

Around Christmas, there are so many good smells—smells like Christmas pine trees, or gingerbread cookies. It can be hard to avoid those good smells.

Today's Bible reading tells us that Jesus is a little like that. When we follow Jesus, and do what he wants us to do, it's kind of like a really good smell. People like to be around things that smell good, and they want to learn more about what is making that good smell. The kind things you do for other people help people learn about Jesus. In other words, it's like Jesus smells really good, and when you are following Jesus, you smell really good too!



prayer

God, help us to share your love with other people. Thank you for being as good as a delicious smell!

activity



Gather the supplies for your favorite Christmas smells—things like pine needles, cinnamon sticks, cookies, or oranges (or anything else!!). Take turns smelling these smells, and choose your favorites.

17

Be Still

Be still, and know that I am God. (v. 10)

Have your parents or a teacher ever had to tell you that it was time to be quiet or stop what you were doing? Have you ever had to ask your parents something over and over again because they were busy on their phone?

In today's reading God commands his people to be still—to stop fighting, and just listen to him. In fact, his command is so strong that it breaks bows and arrows, and shatters spears. But God didn't just tell his people to be still. He said, "Be still, and *know that I am God*." It's not enough just to stop—the goal is to stop *and listen*.

All of us need a reminder to be still sometimes. Being still can mean not talking when someone else is talking, or it can mean to stop fighting, or stop using your outside voice while you are inside. But it can also mean slowing down, quieting your body and voice so that you can really listen—to yourself, to your parents or siblings, to God. Let's take a minute to be still together.



prayer

God, help me to slow down when I need to, and remember that you are taking care of me.

activity



Sit quietly, by yourself or with others, and color. Try to use this time to quiet your body and mind, and relax. You can use your own supplies or download a coloring sheet at woh.org/AdventCalendar.

18

Support Others

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). (v. 23)

What makes you feel loved by other people?

The giant sequoia tree is one of the largest tree species in the world, often reaching almost 300 feet tall. However, a sequoia's roots are very shallow. Sequoias grow in groves, or groups, and their roots intertwine, so when strong winds blow, the trees hold each other up. They can grow that tall because they support each other.

Mary was called by God to do something incredible, but so was Joseph, who was called to support and protect her. They probably felt all alone, but they weren't. An angel, a cousin, shepherds, and wise men were with them. And of course, more than anyone else, God was with them.

You aren't alone either. God is with you, but there are lots of people who love and support you too—friends, family, teachers, and people at your church. And you support other people too—by being a good friend and by showing love to your family.



prayer

God, thank you for giving me people to support me. Help me to support other people too.

activity



Send a Christmas card to someone. You can find a printable card to color woh.org/AdventCalendar.

19

Treasure Up All These Things

And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. (v. 51)

Has someone you wouldn't expect surprised you with good advice, or a great idea?

Today's story is about a situation like that. When Jesus was twelve years old, his family took their yearly trip to the temple. When his parents left for home, Jesus stayed behind to teach the religious leaders there. The leaders were amazed by Jesus' wisdom.

However, there was a big problem! Jesus didn't tell his parents where he was going, and they were really, really worried. Here's the surprising part of the story. When Jesus' parents found him at the temple, they listened to what he had to say. The Bible tells us that Mary treasured what she saw and learned. She remembered it much later, and thought about it.

Jesus was unusually wise for his age and unusually confident, and this story shows us why—he was God! Mary is an example for us. She chose to listen to Jesus. Sometimes God teaches us a lot through surprising situations and people.



prayer

Help us to listen and learn from each other.

activity



Share some surprising wisdom or a really good idea that came from someone unexpected. How did it help you?

20

Go Caroling

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! (v. 1)

What is your favorite Christmas song?

Songs are a big part of Christmas for lots of people, and there are so many to choose from! Songs about Jesus that we sing at Christmas are called carols, and those are especially important to Christians—songs like "Silent Night," or "Away in a Manger" that tell the story of Christmas.

Today is "Go Caroling Day"—a day to go out and sing carols to share the joy of Jesus. Is there a place where you could sing some carols today?



prayer

God, thank you for Christmas songs that bring so much joy. Help us to remember the joy of Jesus today.

activity



Gather up friends and family and sing carols together. If you can, go caroling in your neighborhood or somewhere that could use some cheer.

21

Take Sides with the Poor

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. (v. 18)

Is there something you can do to help other people?

The Bible tells us that Jesus has a special interest in people who have big needs—people who don't have a safe place to live, or enough food to eat. He said that in the Kingdom of God, everyone would have enough of everything that they need, and he promises to take care of our needs now too.

We don't live in the Kingdom of God yet, and just like in Jesus' time, there are people who have big needs in your community. Jesus gave us an example of helping each other now, today, with those big needs—we don't have to wait. Look at today's activity for some ideas.



prayer

Thank you God for taking care of my needs.
Help me to take care of other people too.

activity



Do one thing to help other people in your community. Here are a few ideas.
Choose some extra food at the grocery store to donate to a food pantry. Participate in a Christmas gift collection. Give money to an organization that helps people.

22

Watch the Sunrise

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (v. 5)

What is something that happens every day for you?

Here is one thing that is the same for everyone—every day, the sun rises. Even if the clouds cover it, the sun is there. Have you ever seen the sun rise in the morning?

Our reading today describes Jesus as the Light of the World—a light so bright that no darkness can cover it. Jesus's light shines forever, and it can't be turned off. Can you imagine a light like that?



prayer

Thank you God for sending us Jesus, the Light of the World.

Go out and watch the sunrise.

activity



23

Name Your Fears

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27:1)

What do you do when you feel afraid?

Everyone feels afraid sometimes—of big things and little things, or real things and imaginary things. Everyone has things that scare them.

After Jesus was born, the first words from the angels, God's messengers, were "Don't be afraid." Today's Bible reading tells us one thing that we can do when we feel scared. We can talk to God, who is like a strong tower, a tower that can protect you. God is with you, watching over you, especially when you feel afraid.



prayer

God, when I feel scared, help me remember that you will take care of me.

activity



Name something that you are afraid of. Share that fear with your parent, or draw a picture. Then pray and give your fears to God and ask him to be with you.

24

Give Christmas Presence

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. (v. 6)

Who do you want to spend time with today?

There are gifts we can give at Christmas that cost little or nothing, yet they can be very useful, and mean a lot. Gifts like kind words, helping hands, or praying for others.

But have you ever thought about giving the gift of yourself? When you spend time with someone you are giving them the gift of your presence. That's actually what Christmas is all about: God giving the gift of himself. God gives us his presence, in the form of little baby Jesus, born in a manger.



prayer

Thank you God for giving us the best gift of all—yourself!

activity



Give the gift of your presence to a friend, or family member. If you have a younger sibling, offer to play together. Ask that person what they would like to do today, then do it joyfully!

25

Read the Christmas Story

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (v. 7)

Merry Christmas! Today, you are probably doing a lot of holiday activities! What are a few of your favorite things today?

All of the activities today, and all this month, are because we are celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He came into this world to save us from our sins, something he could only do because he was God himself. He gave up heaven because he loved us so much.

Let's take a minute to celebrate Jesus now.



prayer

Thank you God for the gift of Jesus

activity

Read the Christmas story.
If you have a nativity set out, point out each character as you read. If you don't have a nativity set, you can print one out at woh.org/AdventCalendar.

26

Leave the Stable

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (v. 20)

How do you feel when your Christmas celebrations are over?

After the shepherds found Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, they "returned" to their ordinary, ho-hum lives, watching sheep in the hills around Bethlehem. How do you think they felt?

After a big celebration like Christmas, after the presents are unwrapped, the treats are eaten, and you are putting away your decorations, it's okay to feel a little sad. After all the fun, it can be hard to return to ordinary life.

So today, don't return to ordinary life yet. Instead, let's take a minute to think back about this month. What were the best parts of this Christmas season? The Bible tells us that the shepherds returned to their ordinary lives, but they were "glorifying and praising God." How can you keep on glorifying and praising God now that Christmas is over?



prayer

Thank you God for the fun of the Christmas season. Help us to keep learning and growing now.

activity



Think of one way to praise and glorify God that you would like to keep doing. Some examples could be daily prayer and Bible reading, singing carols or other songs, visiting people, or sending cards to people.