

Letter from Staff

Fruit Cove Baptist Church loves families! We love to partner with families as parents seek to raise their children to love God with all their heart! We believe this is part of who we are as a church. This resource is another way for us to partner with families to grow together and worship the Lord this Christmas season.

The 12 days of Christmas is a family devotion booklet that occurs over 12 days leading up to Christmas Eve. We first produced this resource in 2019, and over the last two years we have loved hearing from families and seeing their pictures and videos of them celebrating Christmas together with this resource. We pray that this resource can become a wonderful, memory making resource for you and your family!

This year, our theme is "Christmas Around the World." Our mission partners have contributed a brief article for each day explaining their various Christmas traditions for you. As a new feature this year, each of our mission partners also created a short video for you to watch as a family. Along with the articles are some suggested crafts for children to create that they can remember the lessons they learned from that day's video and article.

We encourage you each night to watch the video and read the articles as a family that you might celebrate Christmas. Every year we recognize Jesus as savior who was born in a manger. We recognize a baby who was born a king.

"And we have seen and testify that
The Father has sent his Son
To be the Savior of the World."

1 John 4:14 ESV





Instructions

Every article and video is dated. Find the video with the correct date that matches the article. Watch the video first, then read the article together as a family. This is followed by the children's activity. The discussion questions are designed for families with older children, couples, or groups of friends participating together.

To find the videos, go to YouTube and search for "Fruit Cove Baptist Church" to find our channel. There you will find our 12 Days of Christmas 2021 Playlist. If you are using a smart device, scan the QR code below to the link and AirPlay to a streaming device.



Make sure to look ahead for your daily craft to ensure you have all the items! No worries...they are all very easy, and some require no materials at all!



Day 1

Denver, Colorado

Michael Talley of Church 8025

READ: ISAIAH 7:13-14

If I could describe the Christmas season in one word it would be "anticipation." You see it in people's eyes and hear it in their voices. Even right now I feel it in my heart - anticipation.

There is an excitement, an expectancy of something big about to happen because underneath our Christmas trees are presents. They might be sitting under your tree right now, with names on them begging you to open them. If you are anything like my kids - who am I kidding, if you are anything like me - you cannot wait to see what is hidden behind that wrapping paper.

But did you know, that as great as your anticipation for Christmas might be, it can't compare to the anticipation of the first Christmas. For years God's people were waiting for Him to show up and rescue them. They lived with a sense of anticipation that one day God would show up and save the day! This sense of anticipation was as real for them as your anticipation for Christmas is. They expected that a Messiah, a Savior would be coming.

Now, after Isaiah spoke these words, the people waited and waited, but nothing happened for 600 years. No Immanuel. No "God with us. Worse than that, for 400 of those years, there was absolute silence...God wasn't saying or doing anything as far as anyone could tell. Imagine waiting for 600 years to open your presents! What anticipation!

The gifts under your tree that you are anticipating will eventually get old or boring, or broken, but the gift of Jesus is new every day. He never gets old, and he can never be broken. The gift of Jesus is the only gift that can change our lives every single day. The most anticipated gift in history is also the greatest gift in history.

Children's Activity: Paper Chain Countdown

Sometimes waiting is really tough! Let's make a countdown to Christmas as we celebrate Jesus, the best gift of all. You'll need one full sheet of white construction paper and twelve 1" x 12" construction paper strips. First, draw a picture of baby Jesus and his family the way you think they might have looked in the stable that first Christmas night! Then, cut a 1" horizontal slit at the bottom of the page and loop one of your paper strips through the slit. Tape the loop closed. Continue taping the ends of your paper strips together to form loops, interlocking each new loop with the previous one to form a chain. Then, remove a link each day between now and Christmas. When all the links are gone, Christmas will be here!

Materials:

- Construction Paper
- Markers, Crayons or pencil
- Scissors

- What gift or event have you anticipated the most?
- Are you still excited about the gift of Jesus? Why or Why not?
- Have you ever received the greatest gift ever given?
- Who could you share this gift with?



12/14/21 Day 2

Montreal, Canada

James Copeland of Renaissance Church

READ: PSALM 68:6

Do you ever wish you had a white Christmas? Well, most of the time, it is definitely a white Christmas in Montreal, Canada! With winter and snow comes Christmas, and most people in our city celebrate Christmas probably a lot like you do, gathering with family and friends, eating good food, and sharing gifts. For many people in Montreal though, Christmas doesn't have much to do with Jesus. Montreal has a long history of churches and religious belief, but much of that has become a thing of the past.

Every year during the holiday season, it is our prayer and mission to be able to share the true meaning of Christmas with those around us. We want people to know that Christmas is far more than lights, shopping and presents, it is about the Good News that God sent His Son Jesus to earth as the light of the world to rescue people out of their sin and brokenness.

For many people in Montreal, Christmas is not a joyous time. It is a very lonely time. One of the ways our church shares the joy of Christmas with others is by inviting people to join us in our homes for Christmas dinners. In Psalm 68:6a, it says, "God places the lonely in families." In the same way that God loves you and I, and brings us into His family, as Christians we can enjoy the Christmas season by inviting others into our families. When we serve others, and open our lives and homes to them, they can see the true meaning of Christmas through us!

This Christmas season, join us in praying that many people in Montreal will come to know Jesus. Pray together as a family, asking God how you can serve someone or invite someone to join you this Christmas!



Children's Activity: Popsicle Stick Snowflake Ornaments

First, paint the popsicle sticks with glitter glue. If you don't have glitter glue, you can spread a thin layer of glue on the popsicle sticks and sprinkle glitter over the glue. If you paint the glue or glitter glue thin enough, it will be dry in just a few minutes. Next, have mom or dad help you glue the popsicle sticks together in a snowflake shape. You can use regular glue or craft glue instead of hot glue, it will just take longer to dry. Finally, make a loop with twine or yarn and hot glue it to the back of your ornament so you can hang it on the tree!

Materials:

- Popsicle Sticks
- Twine or Yarn

- Gold and/or Silver Glitter Glue
- Hot Glue Gun

Discussion Questions:

- If you had a white Christmas, how would you enjoy it?
- What do you think it means that God places the lonely in families?
- Who could you pray for during this Christmas season?

Joyeux Noë 🛱

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

12/15/21 **Day 3**

Yauco, Duerto Rico

Junior Martinez of Iglesia Bautista la Gracia

READ: MARK 16:15

In Puerto Rico, Christmas is the most anticipated time of the year. It is said that we have one of the longest Christmases in the world. These celebrations start around the middle of November and end with Las Octavitas on January 14. We celebrate Thanksgiving in November, December 24 and 25, January 31 and 1, January 5, 6, and 14. We celebrate Three Kings Day on January 6, and we celebrate Las Octavitas, which is 8 more days of parties.

The month of November is for the preparation for Christmas. In November we prepare for Christmas by decorating our homes and preparing foods and drinks that are specific for the Christmas season. Our native drink is coquito, and our desserts are rice with sweet, dulce de lechosa (candied papaya) and tembleque (coconut pudding). All of these are prepared with different ingredients, but the essential in all is the coconut.

During this time, family members are visited and parties are prepared with neighbors and friends. It is a time when everyone is together, as a family, in unity and in a festive atmosphere.

Now, how will we fulfill the mandate expressed in Mark 16:15: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?" How do we believers use this time to show that Christmas is about Christ?

We use Christmas songs centered on the Birth of Christ and the Gospel. He have a tradition called Los Matutinos. Los Matutinos starts with a secret meeting at the home of one of our Christian brothers. Musical instruments such as tambourines, güiros, maracas, and other instruments are carried. About 2:00 am we caravan in cars to the house of some Christians brothers and sisters. We park the cars far from the house, we walk to the front of the house, and someone in a hushed voice counts 1,2,3 and there the music begins.

This surprises everyone in the house and the neighbors. No one is bothered, but everyone goes out in front of their houses to listen to the music. After several songs, a brother gives a short reflection on the gospel, we pray, and go to the next house. So, we declared the gospel to everyone early Christmas morning.

Children's Activity: Flash Mob Caroling

Gather your family members and several makeshift musical instruments. Suggestions include shakers, recorders, tambourines, buckets used as drums, etc. Gather in front of a neighbor's house. Shh! Try to keep quiet until just time to sing. Have one person knock on the door and then step back with the rest of the family. When your neighbor opens the door, sing a lively Christmas carol! You can sing songs such as "Joy to the World" or "Hark The Harold Angels Sing." Enc with the song, Feliz Navidad. After you sing, invite your neighbors to our Christmas Eve church service, and make sure to HAVE FUN!

- The Puerto Ricans celebrate 3 Kings Day. Do you know what that is?
- What would you do if someone showed up at 2am to play music at your house with gifts?
- Where have you gone to tell people about Jesus?



Day 4

Guantanamo, Cuba

Pastor Natán Gámez in Guaimaro, Cuba

READ: ROMANS 12:1

For Christians in Cuba, Christmas is very special and unique for several reasons:

First, we have a deep sense of worship to Jesus, the center and heart of Christmas. Perhaps because Cuba is a country whose political system does not recognize Christmas among its festivals and traditions, we Christians highly praise its celebration.

Second, each Christian celebrates it from different angles: family and with the church. The family meets together, and they share Christmas Eve (Noche Buena) Dinner, the night of December 24, in which everyone around the table gives thanks for the eve of the birth of Jesus, reaffirms and consecrates the family in a covenant of love. As well as physically and spiritually surrender to Jesus Christ.

As a church, the entire congregation celebrates Christmas Eve on December 24, where each family sits in the place prepared for them in the worship center. There will be Christmas music and a devotional. They spend time in communion and consecration to Jesus Christ.

The next morning, December 25, the entire church gathers to offer the Christmas worship service. There are hymns and Christmas carols are sung, personal and family testimony is given, and many times you can see dramatizations about the birth of Jesus. The Christmas sermon is aimed at knowing, delivering, and consecrating Jesus Christas the Only Savior of mankind.

This is how Christmas in Cuba is a divine tool, in which each Christian feels and celebrates that Jesus is the only King, Lord and Savior.



Children's Activity: Cut Out Nativity Characters

Locate the Nativity characters in the pocket in the back of the book. Cut them out and save them for day 9! We will complete the Nativity activity on that day. Thank you, God, for bringing Jesus into this world to be our Savior!

Materials:

Scissors

Discussion Questions:

- The Cuban church gathers on Christmas morning to worship Jesus. What is something you can do Christmas morning to worship Jesus?
- Why is it important to recognize Jesus as the only savior of humanity?



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

12/17/21 **Day 5**

Port-de-Paix, Haiti

Ebenson Verdule of Mercyland Christian Mission

READ: ISAIAH 9:6

Christmas in Haiti is a national holiday celebrated just like most parts of the world. Whether you are an adult or a child, rich or poor, Christians or non-Christians, it is a special season where everyone puts their differences aside and joins in the relatively jolly and festive mood where everybody shares love and feels loved. It is the only time of year when children can be seen playing with toys and fireworks late in the night even till early morning without fear of their surroundings.

In the beginning of December, houses are repainted, and tree trunks are whitewashed. It is a tradition that most Haitians will cut pine branches to serve as Christmas trees decorated with bright ornaments. And they decorate the fronts of houses with multicolored lights and animation/fanals. Fanals are small lantern-like homes. A candle is placed inside that lights the craft and makes a stained-glass effect. It is an old tradition that was used to light worshipers' way to church.

A majority of Haitians are Christian; although, the majority are in fact Catholic. They celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ by going to midnight mass (Catholics) or special church services (Protestants), and the non-religious would gather in groups to sing classic carols in the spirit of Christmas. Everyone dresses in their very best attire. All this would take place on the 24th, followed by a large family meal served after midnight called "Reveillon" (which means wake up or to revive).

Traditional foods include rice with mushrooms, rice and beans, creole chicken, fried okra, goat, veggie soup, seafood soup, pineapple upside down cake or orange cake, plenty of cremas and many more. Christmas Day is more of a quieter day. After a healthy breakfast people go to church. People exchange gifts in the afternoon among family members and close friends.

Children's Activity: Fanals (Paper Lanterns)

Cut assorted shapes out of your sheet of construction paper. You may use cookie cutters or other household items to trace if you wish. Suggested shapes are Christmas trees, candy canes, hearts, etc. After you cut out your shapes, tape pieces of colored tissue paper over the shapes to create a stain glass effect. The side with the tape will be the back/inside of the lantern. Next, tape or staple the construction paper into a cylindrical shape to create your lantern. Punch two holes in the top on each side of the lantern and tie the yarn to make a handle. Hang your fanal where the whole family can see!

Materials:

- Construction Paper
 Assorted Colors of Tissue Paper
- YarnScissors
- Hole PuncherTapeStaple

- What is one similarity and one difference that you have discovered from the way Christmas is celebrated in Haiti compared to the United States?
- What is the essential purpose of the celebration of Christmas in Haiti?
- What about Christmas that excites you the most?



12/18/21 **Day 6**

Antigua, Guatamala

Alejandra Mendez of Iglesia Del Camino

READ: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Christmas in Guatemala is super exciting. We don't celebrate Thanksgiving, but the second week of November, Christmas is up all over the house. The beautiful weather of autumn makes the perfect combination.

In my family, it is a tradition to wear new formal clothes for Christmas. One thing must be new because when God forgives us, he makes us new. This is not only my family tradition; it is a Guatemalan tradition.

We cook the turkey with creamy potato casserole and baked green beans. We make a famous hot drink called Ponche. It's a combination of raisins, with pineapple, apples, coconut and cinnamon stick). We make tamales bigger than my face!

On the 24th we go to church for a special service. We thank God for the opportunity to spend another Christmas together. We also have a mini family service. My mom or dad will share something from the Bible, and later we have communion. We give thanks to God, for sending his Son and the salvation for our lives. Later we all get ready and we go to Antigua to celebrate with friends. After that we go back home and we spend the night until midnight lighting tons of fireworks and firecrackers. That is when all the neighbors go out and do the same, celebrating Christmas with firecrackers and fireworks. We give each other hugs and wish everyone a Happy Christmas.

But it doesn't end there! We gather to open presents, and we have a second dinner, which is a Tamal. At around 3am it is finally time to go to bed.



Next morning everyone gets up late, and we all continue with the celebration, eating leftovers and watching tv together, always thankful to God for the opportunity that we have to spend it together.

Children's Activity: Ponche and Sparklers

Make the traditional Guatemalan holiday drink, Ponche, and enjoy a cup outside while you light sparklers! To make the Ponche, cut up 3 cups of pineapple and 2 apples. Add to a large stockpot with 4 cups of water, 1 cup dried prunes, 2 cinnamon sticks, $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of granulated or brown sugar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lime juice. Bring it all to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for at least 30 minutes. Serve in mugs and make sure each mug has some fruit in it – it's the best part!

Materials:

- Pineapple
- Apples
- Dried Prunes
- •Brown Sugar

- Cinnamon Sticks
- Sugar
- Lime Juice

Discussion Questions:

- When did your family start decorating for Christmas?
- What are some of your family traditions for Christmas?
- In what ways does Jesus make us into new creations?



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Day 7

Cuenca, Ecuador

Gary Pate of Pate Ministries

READ: LUKE 2:1-7

In Ecuador, Christmas is celebrated mostly as a religious (Catholic) holiday. It is not as commercial as the United States with a focus on presents, Santa Clause, Christmas trees, and Christmas lights. Only in recent years has western (USA) culture infiltrated the Christmas festivities in Ecuador largely due to movies and television. Now, Santa Clause is known as Papa Noel and people start putting up artificial Christmas trees and lights as early as late August.

Ecuadorian celebrations for Christmas begin nine days before Christmas in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Each night, families and neighbors gather to sing villancicos (carols) and to pray for the poor and sick at different homes or in churches. This honors Mary and Joseph's search for shelter before the birth of baby Jesus, and nine days represents the nine months that Mary was pregnant with baby Jesus.

As a reminder of why they celebrate Christmas, each home, will have a small Presebres (Nativity Scene) with Mary, Joseph, the wise men and animals, including llamas and chickens. Jesus is not put in the Nativity scene until Christmas eve.

Christmas Eve, Nochebuena (good night) is the focus of Christmas. The Ecuadorians celebrate all night as they wait for the Christ child to be born. The families gather for a large dinner to include roasted turkey or cuy (guinea pig), sweet rice, corn, and deserts. At midnight the family attends the mass at the Catholic church. Each family brings their baby Jesus statues for the priest to bless. Afterwards, they go back home, put baby Jesus in the manger of the Nativity scene. They stay up all night playing games, singing, dancing, and sharing amigo secreto (secret Santa) gifts. On La Navidad (Christmas Day) they sleep all day and then start planning for New Year's Eve.

Christmas Eve, Noche buena (good night) is the focus of Christmas. The Ecuadorians celebrate all night as they wait for the Christ child to be born. The families gather for a large dinner to include roasted turkey or cuy (guinea pig), sweet rice, corn, and deserts.

Children's Activity: Amigo Secreto

One of Ecuador's traditions is Amigo Secreto (Secret Friend). People anonymously give inexpensive presents or drawings within a group of friends.

Gather your family and make a small ornament or drawing from items around your home. Write a note telling them "Jesus Loves You!" Place it secretly at a friend or neighbor's front door.

- Do you pray or help the sick or poor at Christmas? How can you help the sick and poor at Christmas?
- Do you put up a Nativity Scene in your home at Christmas?
- Do you spend time with your family at Christmas?



Day 8

London, England

Carl Porter

READ: COLOSSIANS 3:16

Despite our rich Christian heritage, England today is sadly post-Christian. This means the church is no longer at the center of the community. Vast swathes of our population have never been in a church, never picked up a bible, and do not know the hope of Jesus or their status in front of God.

It is because of this that our favorite Christmas tradition is to host carol services. A carol service is where Christmas carols with wonderful eternal truths about Jesus can be sung, and the good news that peace with God is available through Jesus the savior of sinners can be proclaimed.

A carol service is still a traditional and popular event in communities, and an invite to one is not deemed offensive but rather received with joy. They are simply amazing opportunities for families to hear and respond to the gospel for the very first time. Christmas and carol services are so important to the church here in England as up and down the country thousands upon thousands will attend and hear the good news of Jesus.

Last year during lock down, we had to find new ways to bring carol services to people and we ended up hosting carol services over Zoom with our friends and colleagues from work. This year we're looking forward to welcoming many into our churches.

I will be hosting one in my office where food and drink will be shared, musicians will come, we'll sing carols together and then I'll give a shor presentation on what Christmas is truly about.



Please do join us in praying for our carol services to be well attended by non-Christians up and down our country, for Jesus to be proclaimed, and many to receive Jesus the greatest, most priceless gift.

Children's Activity: Paper Plate Tambourine

First, gather supplies then decorate the back side (bottom) of your plate with markers/crayons, stickers or glitter. Second, flip your plate over and add a handful of beans, rice or beads. Place them on one side of the plate. Fold the plate in half and either staple or glue the edge of plate together to seal it.

Next, cut pieces of ribbon or yarn. Use the hole punch to place hole around the edge of plate. Tie the ribbon or yarn through the holes. Add jingle bells or buttons for extra decoration. Now it's time to Shake it, Rattle it, Drum it and sing your favorite Christmas song!

Materials:

- Paper Plate
 Markers or Crayons
 Stapler
- Glue
 Dried Beans or Uncooked Rice or Beads
- Hole Punch
 Ribbon or Yarn
 (Extra supplies if you have them; jingle bells, stickers, glitter, buttons)

Discussion Questions:

- What is your favorite Christmas carol and why?
- What is the best gift you've ever received at Christmas?
- How might you make the good news about Jesus known around you this Christmas?

Merry Christmas!

12/21/21 Day 9 Rome, Italy

Alissandro Di Leonardo of Living Word Church

READ: ISAIAH 7:13-14

Food, family, and fun are what Italians are passionate about, and there is no better holiday than Christmas that covers all three! There are tons of foods that are made and eaten only for the Christmas holiday, but non as popular as the panettone, a bread-like cake! Families try their best to get together on Christmas Day to celebrate by eating and playing games. A popular game that is played is Tombola, a game that resembles BINGO.

Of course, apart from food, family and fun, Italians are known to be passionate about the Christmas decorations. From the Christmas tree to the Christmas lights, all is exaggerated! One area Italians take seriously, is the nativity set. These sets can be as small as a plate to as large as the living room. Some people open their homes to strangers just to show case their nativity sets. There are even city competitions to who has the best nativity set.

As Christians of course, we know that we don't get excited for the holiday because of the food, family get-togethers, games, and even presents, although all are great additions. We celebrate because we remember that "Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

As missionaries living in Italy, we participate in displaying a nativity set at home, but we do so with an intention to visually tell the Gospel story. A nativity set, just like the Christmas holiday, focuses only on the birth narrative. We, however, try to paint the whole picture by pointing forward to Christ's death and resurrection. We may do this by including a cross in the background scene and possibly the empty tomb. This is a perfect opportunity to lay out the gospel in front of your guests and anyone else who happens by to your nativity set.

Children's Activity: Gingerbread Nativity

Step 1: Use icing to "glue" a graham cracker flat to your building surface. This serves as the base for your structure.

Step 2: Use a bead of icing to attach a vertical back wall to the base.

Step 3: Use 2 half pieces to create side walls. Angle the walls so the tops are flush with the back wall.

Step 4: Add a roof.

Step 5: Use candy, snacks, or other materials to decorate on and around your nativity.

Step 6: Place the characters (cut out on previous day) around the nativity.

Materials:

- IcingGraham CrackersCandy
- Snacks
 Strong Flat Building Surface

- What dish do you look forward to eating during Christmas?
- Do you and/or family display a nativity scene for Christmas?
- How can you complete the nativity scene with the full gospel?



Bucharest, Romania

Iulian Avremescu of Life Romania
READ: ISAIAH 9:6 & MARK 16:15

In Romania, caroling from house to house is a popular tradition that happens on Christmas Eve. Groups of carolers leave the church and travel to houses with the goal of bringing the good news: the birth of our Savior (Isaiah 9: 6). In all the darkness of the world, we are bearers of Light and fulfill our mandate: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). At night, temperatures can drop as low as 10 degrees below zero (Celsius). Because the carolers leave in the evening and stay until dawn on Christmas day, the tradition carries with it a significant meaning. In a cold dark world, God gave us the gift of Jesus and brought His children from darkness to light.

Sadly, we fallen creatures tend to turn something pleasing to the Lord into something that is only pleasing to us. One of the smaller traditions within the larger caroling tradition is that children who participate receive gifts from the hosts. They may sometimes become more interested in the gifts they receive, not in the message they are sharing with others, which is the gift that God has given to mankind — Jesus Christ.

This year, the discovery of a new lifestyle, of intimacy in the presence of Jesus, is the one true gift that can transform your life. Christmas begins when God awakens our hearts and minds to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What would our lives look like if we truly celebrated the birth of Jesus beyond the month of December? What kind of impact would we have on others for God's Kingdom? Just like the carolers in Romania, sing with joy, the good news of our Savior!



Children's Activity: Nativity Star

A traditional Romanian Christmas carol is the "Star Carol." As part of Christmas celebrations, carolers walk through the streets of the towns and villages holding a star (Steaua). The star displays an image of the Nativity; it is wrapped up in aluminum foil, adorned with bells and colorful ribbons.

You can cut out your star shape and decorate it. Your family could go caroling and hold up your star (Steaua) as you sing or you could place the star on your tree.

Materials:

- Thin Cardboard or Card Stock Paper Glue
- Aluminum Foil Ribbon Bells

- What do you need to prepare your heart for this Christmas season?
- Do you have to make certain changes in your lifestyle in order to align with God's chosen destiny for you?



12/23/21
Day 11

Southeast Asia

Chris

READ: REVELATION 19:6-9

We love eating Christmas lunch with our church family and friends who need to know Jesus. Gathering for a meal is a great way to help others feel welcome and to talk about important things. During his time on earth, Jesus ate meals with many people.

Some of the meals Jesus ate with people showed his miraculous power. At a wedding feast, Jesus turned water into wine at his mother's request. Once Jesus fed 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Another time he fed 4000 people with seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus cared about people's needs and helped them.

Jesus ate meals with people who needed to know him. Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus's house. Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus joyfully, turned away from his sins, and trusted Jesus to save him. Another time, Jesus was eating with a Pharisee. During the meal, a woman came and poured ointment on Jesus's feet and washed them with her hair. The Pharisee thought he was better than this woman. Jesus called the Pharisee out on his wrong thoughts. The Pharisee needed Jesus to save him just like the woman who washed Jesus's feet did.

Jesus ate meals with his followers. At one meal, Jesus encouraged Martha to focus on him and his teaching instead of worrying about all that needed to be done. Jesus also ate a special Passover meal with his disciples. He reminded them how much he cared for them and had served them on earth. He taught them he would die for them. His body would be broken, and his blood would be spilled so that people could be forgiven for their sins.

One day there will be a special marriage super in heaven. All people who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior will be there. What an amazing meal that will be!

Children's Activity: Cook a Christmas Dish

Discuss with your child(ren) what is their favorite food at Christmas. Discuss how some recipes are handed down from generation to generation. Decide what you will cook. Gather ingredients for your favorite Christmas dish.

Prepare and cook that dish together with your child(ren).

Discussion Questions:

- What is your favorite thing to eat during the Christmas season?
- If you could be at one of the meals with Jesus that we just read about, which one would it be? Why?
- Who is someone your family can invite to have a meal with you?



(LANGUAGE OMITTED FOR SECURITY REASONS)



Day 12

North Africa Middle East

Greg and Joanna

READ: ROMANS 10:13-15

So, what do you think about how the Wander people celebrate Christmas? Isn't it neat how they get to milk their goats and how the parents get to go to work and the kids all get to go to school! And you know what, Wander people don't just do these things on Christmas. They do these things every single day. So, you may be asking, "what makes Christmas day special for the Wander People?"

Nothing. Nothing is special about Christmas to the Wanderpeople. December 25th comes and goes without any mentions. Why should they celebrate? Why should they party, or rejoice, or feast?

Even though Jesus was born over 2000 years ago, The Wanderpeople don't know His story. They don't know that God became flesh and lived among men, or that He lived a perfect life, or that he died on the cross and rose from the dead to forgive them of their sins. Without Jesus there is no forgiveness, no reason to celebrate, and no Christmas.

Sometimes in America we can take Christmas for granted. We can let the excitement of the toys, trees, and traditions distract us from why Christmas truly is special. Don't forget what the angels told the shepherds, "... behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day ... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

The angels told the Shepherds that this 'good news of great joy' would be for 'all the people.' Even though the Wander people won't celebrate Christmas this year, we can have faith that God will fulfill the promise made to the shepherds on the night of his birth.



Children's Activity: Read the Christmas Story

Gather together and read the Christmas story from: Luke 2: 1-20

You can take turns reading the passage and have your child(ren) point to the characters in the nativity that you built.
Sing a favorite Christmas song.

Discussion Questions:

- What would you be doing this Christmas if Jesus was never born, or if you had never heard His story?
- Do you know anybody at work or school who doesn't know the Story
 of Jesus? How can you use this season as an opportunity to tell them
 what Jesus has done for them?
- We can praise God because some day the Wanderpeople will know His story and believe in Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. But, "... how can they believe in [Jesus] if they have never heard about him?"

Merry Christmas!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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The Parent Life Podcast is a parenting resource that addresses critical topics facing parents today from a Christian perspective. Every Monday at 8am, a new episode premieres.

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PARENT LIFE SUNDAY

Coming Sunday February 13 Richard Ross will be joining us for a special day of worship!

FEBRUARY 13, 2022



Thank you for participating in our 12 days of Christmas family devotion. We hope that you have a wonderful Christmas this year celebrating Jesus as a family.





