

12 DAYS OF
Christmas



CAROLS
FOR THE FAMILY

CHRISTMAS 2023

12 Days of Christmas: Carols for the Family

Published by Fruit Cove Baptist Church

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Letter from the staff

Merry Christmas! We are thankful that your family will be taking part in our annual Christmas devotional. Each year, we take this time to come together as families and celebrate the real reason for the season as we experience this 12-day devotional journey. For the past four years, the families of our church and throughout our community have used this resource to tell their children the story of Jesus' birth. We are grateful that your family will be joining us!

This year, we are bringing back *Carols for the Family* with an updated playlist and new devotional material featuring the ministry team of Fruit Cove Baptist Church.

Each devotional is paired with a Christmas song, some new and some of the classics. With the aim of cultivating opportunities for family worship.

Our hope is that your devotional times will turn into times of worship as you take a moment to visit our playlist and sing the carol together as a family. Too often, we attend church and sing songs without considering their meaning. As if on autopilot, we enter our church, sing to Jesus, hear the Word taught, and we go home. We encourage you as a family to sing together and to let the words of these songs uplift you this Christmas. May your homes be filled with the joy of Christ this Christmas!

Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!

Instructions

This is a daily devotion for families at Christmas. It begins on December 13, 2023 and finishes on Christmas Eve. The preparation is very simple.

Go to the dated page. There will be a discussion guide for each day. The guide will have a passage of Scripture listed at the top. We encourage you to use a paper Bible and read the passage together as a family.

We selected a different Christmas carol for each daily devotion. Each day, one of the ministerial staff wrote a brief devotional for the passage. This devotional is designed to be a resource for you in engaging with your children and the passage of Scripture. We pray this content will prepare your hearts and minds for the children's activity and discussion questions for older children and adults.

Each day comes with an activity and discussion questions for the different ages. We wanted to keep the activities as simple as possible for the children with as little materials and preparation as possible. Children learn through activity, and our team designed the activity to teach the truths from the carol and devotion.

Finally, each day comes with a short prayer and a Christmas carol to help you process the lesson and participate in family worship. The prayer acts as a conclusion to the family devotion, and the Christmas carol can further reinforce the story of Christmas. Follow the QR code to our Christmas Playlist on Spotify. The first twelve songs are the specific arrangements for the devotion. The other songs are for your family's enjoyment this Christmas!



DAY

1

12/13

O Come All Ye Faithful

Tim Maynard

Psalm 95:1-7

Of all the Christmas carols ever written, and there are hundreds throughout the world, few are played or sung each year more than this beloved song. While the majority of Christmas songs we listen to on popular radio and satellite stations were written between the 1930's and 1970's, this particular carol far predates those. "Adestes Fidelis" as it was originally known in Latin, is sung cross-culturally and cross-denominationally. It has been translated into dozens of languages to be cherished and sung by people all over the world.

Originally written in Latin, the earliest manuscript we have of it is in a book by John Francis Wade in 1711. In 1841, an English Catholic priest translated it into the English form we still sing today. It is an appropriate way to begin our "12 Days of Christmas" celebration this year as a church family.

The words of the carol invite us with a pure call to worship, to come "joyfully and triumphantly" behold Christ the King. It is far too easy in the troubling times we live to forget that the answer to our anxiety, stress, and even fear lies in the identity of Bethlehem's infant son. Wherever this Christmas season finds you this year, it may not be on a pinnacle of joy, but maybe a pit of despair and discouragement – let the joy and light and life promised in Jesus Christ lead you out. The way out of our fears and uncertainty is not surrendering to our fears, but by kneeling at the manger. This carol reminds us of the importance of doing just that. We come. We adore. We worship.

Come again to Bethlehem's manger. There is hope. There is joy. There is victory. There is life everlasting. It is for all who will accept the invitation: **"Come let us adore Him!"**



Children's Activity

Invite your children to gather together. Beforehand, gather items that can be used as instruments, anything that can make a sound on or through. Also have a baby doll to represent the Baby Jesus or the Baby Jesus from a Nativity.

Have each child pick an instrument and then everyone gather around the Baby Jesus. Ask each one to tell something that brings them joy or makes them happy. After they give their answer, have them make a sound with their chosen instrument.

Discuss how Jesus is our Joy and Light in this world.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do the Scriptures tell us to shout triumphantly to God in song? How should we do that?
2. What are some reasons that keep people from coming to adore and worship Jesus?
3. For some people Christmas can be a difficult season. How can you share the joy of Christ with such people?

Prayer

Jesus, we want to pause this Christmas season to come and behold you. We want to worship you in all your glory and majesty as God of God and Light of Light. Jesus, we adore you!

Christmas Carol

"O Come All Ye Faithful" - by Red Rocks Worship





12/14

O Holy Night

Neil Muniz

Colossians 3:15-17

In 1843, the city of Raquemaure, France undertook the project to renovate the church organ. The parish priest wanted to celebrate the renovation and asked a local poet, Placide Cappeau, to write a Christmas Poem. Adolphe Adam would compose the music for the poem. Today, we know this classic Hymn as “O Holy Night.”

This carol beautifully paints the picture in our minds of how that holy night transpired. The night when our Savior was born, was “Holy.” It was set apart as special unto the Lord. The King of Kings entered his created world as a human baby! Simply astonishing. The world needed Jesus to save them from their sins. In this holy night, the shepherds were told to “come and see” by the angel in the field, the star led the wise men from the east, and Mary and Joseph were likely speechless.

Christmas plays and live nativities are not complete without “O Holy Night.” This song is beloved by many. Christian and secular artists alike have their own adaptations of this song. What intrigues me about the secular versions is the lyrics are never altered in respects to the gospel. The second line brings attention to the fact that this was the night of our dear Savior’s birth. There are multiple references to worship him as King. Finally, the last stanza almost invites us to sing at the top of our lungs as we praise His name forever.

Jesus is in so much of the Christmas music played today, especially this song! Use the lyrics about Christ to have on conversations about the Lord with people this Christmas season. As you play this song, worship Jesus, because He deserves all praise.



Children's Activity Spiced Star Ornament

Ingredients

- 1 cup cinnamon
- 1 tbsp. ground cloves
- 1 tbsp. ground ginger
- 1 tbsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 cup applesauce
- 2 tbsp white craft or school glue
- 3 tbsp. all purpose flour for rolling out dough
- Star-shaped cookie cutters
- Drinking straw
- Ribbon or twine

Combine the spices in a mixing bowl. Add the applesauce and glue. Work in all ingredients with your hands until mixed thoroughly. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface to approximately ¼ inch thickness. Use cookie cutters to cut the stars and a straw to punch a hole in the top of each ornament. Bake in the oven at 200 degrees for about 2 hours. When completely cool and dry, tie ribbon or twine through the holes to hang the ornaments.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you see the peace of Christ evident on the day of His birth?
2. How can we allow the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts?
3. How does allowing the Word of Christ to richly dwell in us, and affect our moment-by-moment life?
4. What does “doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” mean to you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for knowing that we would need Jesus and for providing the way for us to know you. Help us to better make you known today. In Christ's Name, Amen.

Christmas Carol

“O Holy Night”- by Kings Kaleidoscope





12/15

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Darin Dunham

Isaiah 9:6-7

When we celebrate the wonder of Christmas morning, do you know we are not only remembering the incredible arrival of Jesus (God) to earth long ago, but we are also looking forward to an even better day when HE will come again? The early church fathers called this anticipation and waiting time, “Advent.” Advent means arrival. Christians use the weeks before Christmas day to remember, reflect, to prepare for Jesus’ Advent.

It was also a time to acknowledge that there is still much to lament. There is still much that is not made right in our world and at times in our hearts. Historically, songs sung leading up to Christmas sounded more sorrowful, remembered great hardships of the past like when ancient Israel was captured by its greatest enemy, when her youth were made captives and taken far away from home as reflected in the great advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emanuel.” Likewise, sin has spiritually captured us. Yet Advent was a call to remember God is faithful. He fulfills the promises of the past and will fulfill the promises of the future.

This year, I would invite you to lead your families in a time of personal Advent. Use the weeks leading to Christmas to reflect, repent if necessary, and make your heart ready to receive our LORD again. There is something about that somber reflection of our desperate need for Jesus in our world and lives that causes Christmas Day to be an absolute explosion of joy in emotional contrast.

On Christmas day, our hearts overflow with the celebration that The Day is coming when pain will be relieved, when wrongs will be made right, when joy will drive out all fears, and when the governments of the earth will submit to the authority of our Heavenly King. Yes, one day there will be “peace on earth and good will amongst men.”

Joy to the world... and to you!



Children's Activity Advent Countdown Chain

Christmas is only 10 days away! For this activity, you will need two sheets of construction paper (or more if you'd like to use multiple colors), markers, scissors, and tape. First, use markers and a sheet of construction paper to color a picture of what Christmas means to you. We suggest drawing a star, or Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. Next, cut one or more pieces of construction paper into (10) 1" x 9" strips. After all your strips of paper are cut, start taping the ends of each strip of paper together to make loops. Interlock each paper link to the previous one to create a chain. For your last link, which will be your first loop at the top, cut a slit close to the bottom of your Christmas picture, and slide the last piece of paper you have into the slit and tape the 2 ends together! Now you have your paper chain countdown! With each day that passes, remove one paper link from the chain and watch the time grow shorter until Christmas arrives!

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that "the government will be upon his shoulders?"
2. What does "Emmanuel" mean? What does it mean to you?
3. What can you give Jesus on his birthday? What does HE want?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, please help me make my heart a place worthy of you. Help me make my life a life that honors you. Thank you for allowing me to find my greatest peace and joy in you... it is the best Christmas present ever.

Christmas Carol "O Come, O Come Emanuel" - by Phil Wickham





12/16

Worth Singing About

Jonathan Wilson

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Today's scripture passage starts with the phrase, "Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ...." What a powerful message to understand! First, everything is from God. Not just some things, or anything, but everything. The very first words of the Bible read, "In the beginning God created..." As we take time to understand the power of "everything is from God," at some point we arrive to the understanding that He and He alone is worthy!

But the next part of our passage is just as powerful: "who has reconciled us to himself through Christ." The word reconcile simply means 'to restore friendly relations between.' And here is why that is important- the Bible tells us that without Jesus we are separated from God - not in friendly relationship with Him. God did create all things in the beginning, but His greatest creation, man and woman, decided to go against His direction and do their own thing. When we do things that are against God's will/way/direction, this is called sin. Sin is what separates us from God. But God sent Jesus to reconcile us to Himself and provide a way for us to be in right relationship with our Heavenly Father. For those who ask Jesus to forgive their sins and claim Him as Lord, reconciliation arrives.

In turn we are called to carry on the ministry of reconciliation, to help others realize the goodness of God. The angels were fully aware of this and knew it was worth singing about. "Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings, Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die, Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth, Hark! The herald angels sing 'Glory to the newborn King!'"



Children's Activity Hark Tank

Give children 5 minutes to gather clothing and supplies to dress up like an angel. When they get back, announce the beginning of a new TV show called, "Hark Tank!"

Each child has another 5 minutes to create a song, poem, story or drawing that explains why Jesus is worth praising. (Parents should also create one)

Each child then shares their song, poem, story, or drawing with the rest of the family. Parents share yours last.

At the end, all contestants are declared winners and share in the festivities by having a Christmas themed snack!

Discussion Questions

1. What does "everything" mean?
2. What are some examples of reconciliation?
3. Are there any relationships you have that need to be reconciled?

Prayer

Father God, thank you for giving us Jesus so we can be restored to the relationship with you that we were designed for!

Christmas Carol

"Hark The Herald Angels Sing" - by Paul Baloche





12/17

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Jason A. Stanland

Haggai 2:7

In 1744, Charles Wesley wrote the hymn, “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus.” Wesley is one of the most influential leaders in western Christianity. His brother John and he would become the founders of the Methodist Movement. Charles was reading Haggai 2:7 when the inspiration for the song began. Haggai 2:7 reads, “And I will shake the nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.” Wesley did not feel like his country was filled with the glory of Jesus. He observed the condition of the orphans and the class divide in Great Britain. In the mid 1700’s there was a large gap between the rich and the poor. The orphans were the poorest of the poor with no one to care for them. Wesley’s prayer was that God would move in such a way that people would love one another and overcome such horrible realities. This is only possible when people place their hope, not in their money, but in Christ, who is the “joy of every longing heart.”

In the lyrics, we read where Jesus was born a king. Very rare is a child born a king. Most often a child is born a prince and must inherit a kingdom. However, Jesus was king even before His birth, and His kingdom is His reign in us. We, His people are His kingdom, and when we are obedient to Him, He rules in our hearts alone. For the Christian, there is not other king but Jesus.

This Christmas, think of ways that King Jesus is ruling in your life? Think of the things that inspired this song. Where is there injustice that can be righted by the good news of Jesus? What are the sins and fears that keep you from enjoying king Jesus in your life and community.



Children's Activity Crowns

Materials

• Paper • Stickers • Crayons or Markers • Glue • Scissors

Let the children make crowns and decorate them with crayons or markers and anything you have around your house (stickers, buttons, sequins, glitter, etc.). If you have large enough paper, you can also have them make a royal robe.

You can have them wear these while you listen to this carol and sing along. Then discuss how Jesus is our King and what that means to them.

Bonus: Have the children lay their crowns near a nativity scene. Talk to them about how we choose to make Jesus the king of our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. How do the days of John Wesley sound like our days? Where do you see some of the same problems?
2. According to Haggai 2:7, for whom did Jesus come? Who is someone for whom Jesus came, that you know does not know?
3. In what areas of your life do you struggle to allow Jesus to reign supremely?

Prayer

Jesus, help us to love you with all our hearts and to let you be King over us. Show us how to love others that we might tell them about you.

Christmas Carol

"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"- by Shane & Shane





12/18

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Karen Roy

Luke 2:13-14

The popular Christmas carol, “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” originated from the poem Christmas Bells by the famous American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. On Christmas day in 1863, Longfellow penned the words to the poem while listening to the bells and singing of “peace on earth” from a nearby church. After suffering through years of tragedy, he had just received news that his son was wounded in the Civil War, possibly leaving him paralyzed. He was overwhelmed with grief. The United States was at war, and Longfellow was surrounded by loss, pain, and frustration. As he listened, filled with despair, he began writing, “I bowed my head. There is no peace on earth, I said.” The beginning paints a picture of how the world felt - bleak and hopeless. But then his tone changes as he recounts hearing the bells “loud and deep” proclaiming Christ is alive. By the end, he declares, “God is not dead, nor doth He sleep,” destroying any depth of pain and capturing the real message of Christmas and of Christ.

In Luke 2:13-14, the angel spoke the message, “Peace on earth, goodwill to men” to frightened shepherds. They heard about the birth of the Messiah, the long awaited Savior of the world. Delivered by an angel with a multitude of heavenly hosts, the message brought hope to a weary world. Like the sound of the bells reminded Longfellow that there is hope, even amid despair and tragedy, the message in these verses is a reminder that Christmas is about hope. Hope that was born to a virgin. Hope that took on flesh. Hope that offers peace on earth and peace in the heart of every believer.



Children's Activity Christmas Bells Hide and Seek

Gather jingle bells or other bells you may have around your house. You can string them on a chenille stem or a string. One person takes the bells and hides somewhere in the home. You can turn out the lights for more fun!

Everyone else in the family are the seekers. They go looking for the person hiding. The hider can choose to make the bells quite or to shake them. If they shake them, then it will be easier to find the person. If they are quiet and do not shake the bells, it will be harder to hear them. Give everyone a turn to hide and decided what to do with the bells.

Discuss as a family why God wants us to find Him. He wants us to know that He loves us, and He wants a relationship with us!

Discussion Questions

1. What is hope?
2. Why does God want us to have hope?
3. How can we share the hope we have in Christ with those around us?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the gift of hope that we have in Christ. As we carry it with us, may we bring peace and joy to those who may be suffering around us this Christmas season.

Christmas Carol

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" - by Casting Crowns





12/19

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Melissa Goodman

John 1:11-13

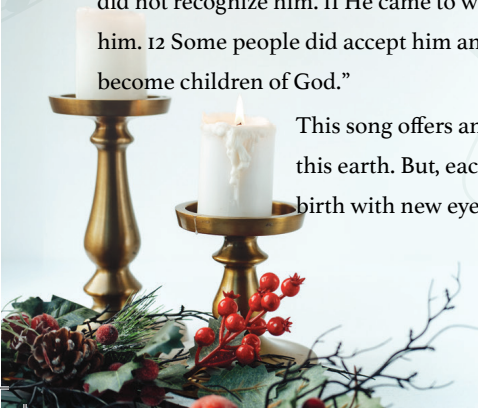
This Christmas song is often mistaken by many to be an old spiritual, sung by slaves of the south in the 19th century. The style is similar to African American spirituals, and the composer, Robert MacGrimsey, intended to portray it as an American slave song. He was a white man from Louisiana who made it his life's work to learn, preserve, transcribe, and make accessible African American folk music. He wrote the song in the early 1930's inspired on a snowy Christmas Eve as he walked past clubs and bars filled with people who were drunk, swearing & shouting. MacGrimsey likely thought, 'What a strange way to celebrate the birth of the most perfect person who ever lived on this earth. How could we be so blind to the true meaning of Christmas, to Jesus?'

The song begins with references from Luke 2; Jesus as a babe born in a manger, no rooms, and the innkeeper turned them away. A baby in a manger was the sign the shepherds were told to look for.

There is also a reference to our spiritual blindness, our inability to see, know, and worship Jesus as Savior and Lord. The prophet, Isaiah said that Jesus, would one day be despised and rejected. Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, rejection met Him at every turn, and people did not acknowledge Him as king.

As written in John 1:9-12, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 The Word was in the world. And the world was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him. 12 Some people did accept him and did believe in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God."

This song offers an apology for not recognizing Jesus when He came to this earth. But, each year we have an opportunity to look again at Jesus' birth with new eyes of understanding and acceptance.



Children's Activity

Gather your family. Have people sit down, turn off the lights. Have a couple people move from their original seats, to new seats, quietly. Have someone try to identify who is sitting across from them, next to them, etc. while sitting in the dark. Then turn the lights on to see if they were correct. You can play several rounds of this.

Discuss: Was it hard to identify people without being able to see them? Talk about how people did not know who baby Jesus was and they could not see that He was the Messiah. Explain how knowing Jesus helps us to see His glory and wonders.

Discussion Questions

1. If the Innkeeper would have known who the expected baby was, how would things have been different?
2. Jesus is the light of the world in a land of deep darkness. How can knowing Jesus help our spiritual blindness?
3. We can expect to experience rejection, ridicule, and possible hatred by identifying with Christ. We know their actions are not against us but against Jesus, so how should we react or respond?

Prayer

Lord, help us to know You and for us to not be blind to you. Give us a renewed love and understanding of your love for us.

Christmas Carol

"Sweet Little Jesus Boy"- by Meredith Andrews





12/20

Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Doug Kowieski

Colossians 1:26

In 2012, Matt Boswell wrote the hymn, “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery” while in the studio recording a different song. Matt took a break and in a span of five minutes penned the hymn. Not completely satisfied with it, he collaborated with Michael Bleecker and Matt Papa to compose the final version. Matt Boswell’s inspiration for writing the song came from “In Christ Alone,” written by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty. Boswell wanted to expand on “In Christ Alone” by establishing the mystery of Christ as being both human and divine; the hope for salvation; and the purpose of His journey. Boswell based his song on a combination of Scripture verses to tell a story within the context of a hymn.

When Boswell wrote the hymn, he referenced several verses of Scripture to encapsulate the mystery of Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection. Colossians 1:26 refers to the mystery of God’s plan for salvation through Jesus Christ. God’s plan for our salvation, since the beginning, was that in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4-5) God would reveal the mystery of reconciliation and salvation to the world; beginning with Jesus’ birth, followed by His ministry on earth, and culminating in His death and resurrection.

This Christmas, let us reflect on the mystery revealed to us with Jesus’ birth. His birth would herald a new era for humanity’s reconciliation to God and death’s defeat through His sacrifice and resurrection. Christmas is a time to celebrate God’s precious gift but also a time to trust in God’s providence and promise of future glory with Christ!



Children's Activity Send a Mystery Blessing

Celebrate the wonder and mystery of Jesus by creating a little mystery of your own. Create a Christmas care package for a neighbor or church member who might not be able to get out very often due to age or health. Drop it off on their doorstep – and don't tell them it was you! Suggestions for the care package include ingredients for a hot chocolate bar, a festive candle, or a book about the Advent season. Let your neighbor experience the joy and excitement of knowing that someone thought about them without seeking any recognition! Remember to pray for this person throughout the Christmas season and beyond.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the mystery of God that Paul talks about in Colossians 1:26?
2. How does the revelation of the mystery of God – Christ in us – inspire you in your Christian journey?
3. Why do you think God waited to reveal His plan for our salvation through Jesus Christ?
4. In what ways can you explain the mystery of God's plan when you share the gospel with others?

Prayer

Father, thank you for revealing your plan for our salvation through your Son, Jesus Christ. Father, help us to truly understand the sacrifice of Jesus's death and the value of His resurrection. We are thankful that you count us worthy and that you would leave Your throne and become human so that we may have eternal life with You. Thank you for the precious gift of Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate and honor during this season.

Christmas Carol "Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery" - by Matt Boswell





12/21

He Shall Reign Forevermore

Jason Hodges

Philippians 2:5-11

Christmas Day approaches, and after weeks of crowded stores, roads, and maybe even church, you are ready for the calm of a “silent night” in a warm quiet house with your family. With the rush and the noise of the holidays we can lose focus on the birth of a baby born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. Philippians 2:6-7 tells us that “though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God as something to be grasped. Instead, he emptied himself and took the form of a servant, stepping down out of heaven and putting on the likeness of men.” It was this child who would humble Himself even further and become obedient (by His choice) to the point of death that our sins could be forgiven.

We know that our forgiveness is real because after His burial, He was resurrected on the third day. And “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,” and “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” For the Father worked in Christ, raising Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavens, placing Him over all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things... Ephesians 1:20-22.

And from this position, He still reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is Jesus – the “baby born for sacrifice.” The one who “made the starry skies.” He is our hope, our promise, our Lord who reigns forevermore. He has overcome sin, death, and the grave and He promises “eternal years” to those who believe in Him and surrender to His reign over our lives now and forevermore.



Children's Activity Wash Each Other's Feet

Philippians 2 tells us that Jesus, "took the form of a servant." In John 13, Jesus completed the ultimate act of service – washing his disciples' feet. The dirt roads they traveled must have been dusty! This was surely not a pleasant task, but Jesus humbled Himself by stooping low to wash the dirt and grime away.

Today, let's grab a bowl, some sudsy water and a towel and wash each other's feet just like Jesus did for the disciples. If our Lord and Savior could lovingly and sacrificially serve the disciples in this way, it is a joy for us to serve each other.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that we get too busy during the Christmas season that can distract us from worshiping Jesus?
2. Do you think people like to think about Jesus as the baby more or as the reigning king? Why?
3. How can you worship Jesus as the reigning king this Christmas?

Prayer

Jesus, we humbly submit ourselves to you as our king. You are worthy of all worship, honor, and praise. Help to remember you as king this Christmas.

Christmas Carol "He Shall Reign Forevermore" - by Chris Tomlin





12/22

Go Tell It On The Mountain

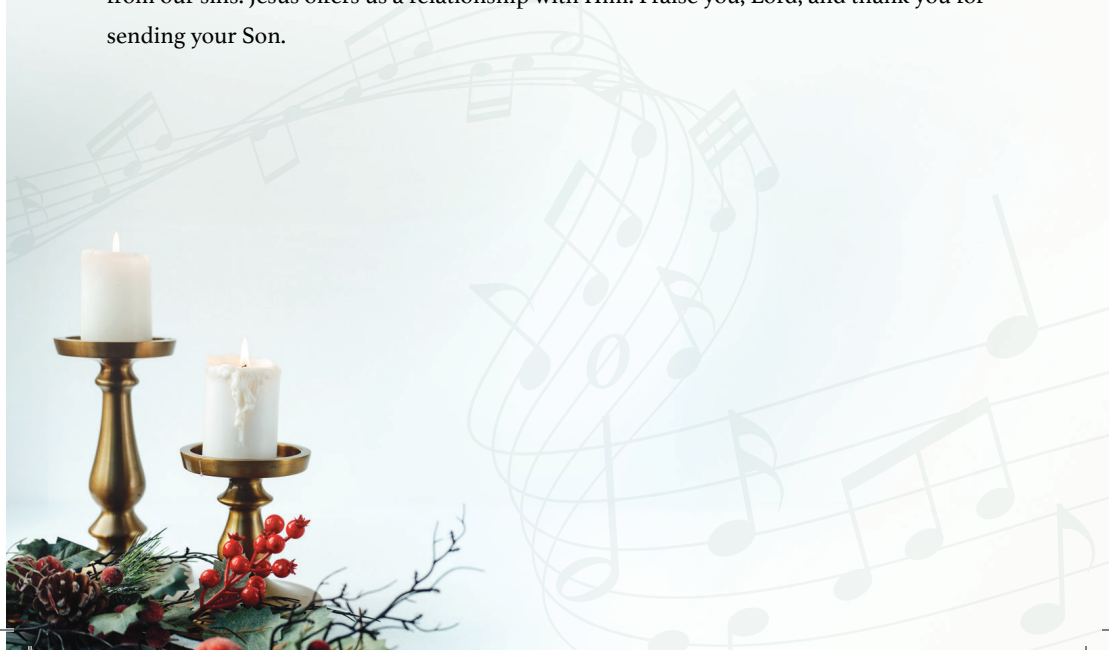
Meghan Roy

Psalm 105:1-3

“Go Tell it on the Mountain” was written by African American Slaves in the mid-1800’s. It was part of African American oral tradition, and its lyrics cannot be credited to any particular author. John Wesley Work arranged the song as we hear it today and first published it in his songbook, *New Jubilee Songs and Folk Songs* in 1907.

In Psalm 105, David encourages his people to call upon the Holy name of the Lord and to make known His wondrous works. We cannot help but notice similar words in the song, “Go Tell it on the Mountain.” The author writes, “Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, that Jesus Christ is born!” with a joyful, reverent tone that matches the one found in Psalm 105. The Psalmist magnifies the Lord’s power, glory, and holiness the same way the author of “Go Tell it on the Mountain” magnifies the name of Jesus.

The song lyrics are a great celebration of Jesus’ birth. Go Tell it on the Mountain joyfully proclaims Jesus’ birth in a similar manner to the Psalmist proclaiming God’s great Holiness. The song reminds us that an Almighty God gave us the gift of Jesus so that He could save us from our sins. Jesus offers us a relationship with Him. Praise you, Lord, and thank you for sending your Son.



Children's Activity 3 Circles for Kids

Parents – watch the video linked on the QR code in advance of this activity. Have children draw and cut out three circles at least 6” or so in diameter. In the three circles, have them draw a heart, the earth and a cross. Present the 3 Circles Gospel presentation to your children using the pictures they draw.



If your children are very young, focus on 1) God made the world, 2) people do things that make God sad, but 3) God still loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. If your children have already made a faith decision, show them how they can do the 3 Circles Gospel Presentation with their friends at school. Practice makes perfect! The more you do the presentation, the more comfortable you will be. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus!

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for Christians to sing? Why would God command us to sing?
2. The song says, “Go Tell it On the Mountain.” What is the It?
3. Watch this video and discuss it together. “3 Circles on YouTube.” If someone in your family knows 3 Circles, have them share.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you so much for sending your son, Jesus, to be our savior. Thank you for giving us joy that covers any disappointments we may experience in this world.

Christmas Carol

“Go Tell it on the Mountain” - by Shane and Shane





12/23

Joy to the World

Lacey Van Doran

Psalm 105:43

There is a profound distinction from the fleeting happiness experienced in the world. Biblical joy is not just a fleeting emotion; it is enduring and born from an unwavering trust in God's promises, and faithfulness, trust, and hope intertwine with the concept of Joy.

A historical example of the joy found in Psalm 105:43 is the liberation of God's chosen people from Egypt. They did more than escape; they escaped with exuberant joy, rejoicing, and celebrating. These chosen people were embarking on a perilous journey into the desert with their future uncertain. Nevertheless, they embraced this uncertainty with joy, singing, and rejoicing as they went forth.

Similarly, those who are in God's family through faith in Jesus Christ have access to this kind of joy. Regardless of the season of life in which we find ourselves, we can hold on to this lasting emotion - whether on a mountaintop showered with blessings or in a valley, where tears of grief flow. Joy emanates from knowing God and being His child.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus during the Christmas season, God reminds us of His love. He took on human form and walked the earth, ultimately sacrificing His life on the cross. This act of sacrificial love brings us hope and eternal life. Having this profound relationship with Him brings unshakable joy.

As we celebrate Christmas and reflect on the birth of Jesus, let us remember the joy of Christ. This joy flows from God's love. This joy remains unshaken by life's trials and tribulations. This joy we can carry with us into every season of life just as His chosen people did when they embarked on their journey to freedom.



Children's Activity Joy Tag

Materials

1. Colorful dot stickers or colorful Post-it notes
2. Sharpie each person pick a different color and write joy on all of them

SAY THIS: This game teaches that joy is contagious. The simple definition is that contagious means spread from one person to another. Bad things like sickness or negativity can be contagious, but so can good things like laughter and joy.

LET'S PLAY: In this game you will chase each other around for one minute trying to stick a joy sticker on every person playing. At the end of the minute, stop and see who was able to spread the most joy by adding up the stickers of their color.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a time when you were unhappy about something but still had joy?
2. How can you help someone else find joy when they are unhappy?
3. How do you think Joy, Hope, and Faith all relate to one another?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for all You are and how You love us. This Christmas season, help us to remember the eternal joy we find in Jesus. You are our faithful Father, the Hope of the World, and Your Joy is our strength. In Jesus' powerful name, AMEN.

Christmas Carol

"Joy To The World (Joyful, Joyful)"-by Phil Wickham





12/24

Silent Night

D. Heath Woolman

Luke 2:1-20

One of my favorite things to do is to sit outside in complete darkness, gazing into the night sky, trying to catch a glimpse of shooting stars, and maybe a satellite or two. It just gives me a sense of peace. Why is this peaceful for me? Maybe, it is the stillness of night, or the quiet calm of sitting in silence and wonder. Maybe, I find peace in the moments where I seem small, and God's creation seems so big. As I read the words of Silent Night, I cannot help but think about what it must have been like that evening in Bethlehem. Was it calm, or was it bustling with all the people in town for the census? Was it peaceful, or was it a chaotic scene of people, and animals, and labor pains, and wait... is that a baby crying in the barn?! That night was probably anything but silent for Joseph and Mary.

But what about those shepherds? On the outskirts of town, in the fields, were shepherds who were quietly watching and protecting their flock. It was probably dark and calm—qualities of a peaceful evening of stargazing. Imagine then, that night... In the silence, the sky erupts! The peaceful joy of staring into the heavens is interrupted by the Heavenly hosts! The shepherds were terrified, but quickly learned that the peace of that night was replaced by joyful celebration. The everlasting God was bringing a new kind of *peace on earth*.

Oh, how in the silence of that night, everything changed! *Christ the Savior was born*, and the darkness was replaced with the *radiant beams of His holy face*. This Christmas Eve, as we sing this age-old hymn together and later lay our heads down in anticipation of Christmas morning, let us not miss the wonder of His redeeming grace – the grace that dawned long ago that one holy night in Bethlehem.



Children's Activity Silent Night Charades

Play Christmas story Charades as a family. Each family member acts out a random chosen character from the Bible, and the rest of the family tries to guess the character. Everyone gets a turn until the whole family has a chance to go. Below are some example characters.

Jesus
Angel
Sheep
Shepherd
Joseph
Mary

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time that God interrupted your life?
2. What in your life tries to take your peace? How does your faith give you peace in those moments?
3. What have you learned about God in this 12 day family devotional?

Prayer

Jesus, you alone are the Prince of Peace. You give us peace when the world seems to be falling apart. Remind us to look to you for peace when we are anxious and scared. Remind us to look to you for peace when we are tempted to sin. Help us to think of you first this Christmas and the peace you brought to us.

Christmas Carol "Silent Night" - by King & Country



Christmas at **Fruit Cove**

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.

If you would like to know more about following Jesus and how you can continue to grow in your faith, then reach to us! You can follow the QR Code to find out more about Jesus, our church, and our ministries.

Share with us if your or your child decided to follow Jesus because of this family devotion! We would love to hear from you!



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