

# Advent

— DEVOTIONAL —







## *A Message from Pastor Marty*

One of the greatest joys of being Lead Pastor at Rush Creek is watching our church partner with families to help them live, love, and look like Jesus. This advent devotional is a great tool that will help equip our families have those much-needed faith talks during this season. I'm confident that if you'll make the time to seek His presence through this devotional, you and your family will be blessed by the power of God in remarkable ways.

Thanks for committing to work through this, and may the stories of Jesus come alive in your heart and home this Christmas!

Sharing His purpose,  
Marty Collier  
Lead Pastor, Rush Creek Church



## *How to Set Up Your Advent Spiral*

1. First, find a location in your home where you can set up the Advent Spiral for the month of December. The optimal location would be a place where there is enough space for your family to gather around it daily, like the kitchen table or living room coffee table.
2. Place the Christ Candle in the very center of your spiral. The Christ Candle is the tallest white candle in your set.
3. Next, place purple candles in the first, seventh, and twenty-first holes. Place the pink candle in the fourteenth hole. These are traditional advent candles which will retain their meaning and begin new themes of discussion each week for your family.
4. Finally, place the 19 small white candles in the remaining holes. Now your Advent Spiral is ready for your family to use beginning December 1st!



## *How to Use this Devotional Guide*

Your Advent Spiral features four different types of candles: a pink candle, purple candles, short white candles, and one tall white candle. The purple and pink candles represent the customary advent candles and retain their original, traditional meanings. They also serve the purpose in the Advent Spiral of starting new themes of discussion. For instance, the first candle you will light is a purple candle, traditionally called The Prophecy Candle, which signifies hope. The following five short candles will each represent a prophet God used to foretell the coming of Jesus, the hope of the world. The next purple candle, The Bethlehem Candle represents preparation. It will start new discussions about people and events God used to prepare the world for the arrival of the King of Kings.

Each day you will light every candle previously lit and review the person, place, event, or object each one represented. These simple, quick reviews will reinforce the learning every day and allow your family to retain valuable truths beyond the traditional Christmas story. As an example, on day five you should start your Christmas Advent Devotional time by saying something like, "Okay, who remembers what the first purple candle is called and what it represents? That's right... it's called the Prophecy Candle and it represents hope. Now, the next three candles we lit represented three different prophets God used in the Old Testament to give His people hope that the Messiah would come and bring light to the world. Do you remember their names? Isaiah, Micah, and

Jeremiah? You're right! Now as we light their candles, can you tell me anything about these great prophets of God?" By the end of the month you'll be amazed just how much your family knows about the incredible Christmas story!

Here are a couple of extra tips before getting started:

The Christmas Advent Spiral Devotional works best if it's done daily, but don't get discouraged if you miss a day. The season is busy, and sometimes Christmas functions outside of the home cause families to be out until late. If possible, plan ahead and find better times to do the devotional together on those busy days, but if that's impossible just light two candles the following day and keep moving forward together.

Of course, this content utilizes fire, so make sure to keep all lighters and matches away from small children and stored in a safe location when not celebrating The Christmas Advent Devotional Spiral. Take care to watch shirt sleeves, long hair, and loose clothing. If you'd like your young children to take turns lighting the candles, make sure an adult is close by to assist. If you choose not to let your children assist in lighting candles, a great way to create participation is to allow kids to blow the candles out once your advent devotional time is over.

# *Candle Order Quick Reference Guide*

- o The Prophecy Candle—purple
- o Isaiah
- o Micah
- o Jeremiah
- o Zechariah
- o Malachi
- o The Bethlehem Candle—purple
- o Abraham
- o The Holy Nation
- o The Exodus
- o Old Testament Law
- o Ruth
- o David
- o The Shepherd Candle—pink
- o Zechariah
- o Elizabeth
- o Gabriel
- o The Census
- o The Star
- o The Shepherds
- o The Angel Candle—purple
- o Joseph
- o Mary
- o The Christ Candle

# Glossary

**Covenant:** A special promise between God and people.

**Eternal Life:** Living forever with God, even after we die.

**Holy:** Set apart.

**Hope:** Believing that something good will happen in the future.

**Idol:** An object or thing that people worship instead of God.

**Idolatry:** Worshiping idols or putting something else before God.

**Messiah:** Jesus

**Priest:** A person who helps people connect with God and teaches them about Him.

**Redemption:** Being saved or rescued, especially by Jesus from our sins.

**Righteous:** Living in a right relationship with God.

**Sin:** Anything we think, say, or do that displeases God.

**Worship:** Showing love and respect to God through prayers, songs, and actions.



# DAY 1

**Begin:** Today, we are going to learn about The Prophecy Candle. This candle signifies HOPE.

**Say This:** “Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God used prophets to tell people that a Messiah would come and bring hope and light into the world. A prophet is someone who speaks for God. God used these prophets to share a powerful message- one day a King (Jesus) would be born in a little town called Bethlehem. Jesus would come and save people from their sins! People back then believed this message and it gave them hope! Now Jesus has come, and He is our hope. He is the King who forgives sin, loves us, and gives us eternal life.”

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Peter 1:20-21

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Who did God use to tell people that Jesus would be born and bring hope? Why is Jesus special and how does He help us?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think it was important for God to use prophets to announce the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, hundreds of years before His birth? How does the message that Jesus is our hope, who forgives sin, loves us, and gives us eternal life, impact your daily life and actions?

**Light the candle and pray:** Thank God for sending Jesus to save us from our sins and bringing us hope.

Blow out the candle.

## DAY 2

**Begin:** Ask if anyone remembers what the first candle is called and what it signifies. (Prophecy Candle, Hope). Today, we are going to be lighting the second candle representing ISAIAH.

**Say this:** "Today's candle represents the prophet, Isaiah. He is a major prophet, and his book can be found in the Old Testament in your Bible. Isaiah spoke strong messages to the people, urging them to trust God. He also foretold the birth of Jesus long before it happened. Isaiah said His Name would be called Immanuel, which means 'God with us'."

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 7:14, 9:6

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Who is Isaiah, and what special message did he give about Jesus? What does the name "Immanuel" mean, and why is it important?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why is the prophet Isaiah considered a major prophet, and what makes his messages so important? What does the name "Immanuel," which Isaiah foretold for Jesus, mean and why is this name significant for understanding who Jesus is?

**Light the first two candles and pray:** Thank Jesus for being God with us (Immanuel). Thank Him for being our wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 3

**Begin:** Does anyone remember what the purple candle is called and what it signifies? (Prophecy Candle, Hope) Who was the prophet we learned about yesterday? (Isaiah) Today, we are going to light the third candle representing MICAH.

**Say this:** “Today we are lighting a candle to represent the Prophet, Micah. He lived at the same time as Isaiah. He is considered a minor prophet in the Old Testament (because his book is smaller than the major prophets’ books). Micah has a big message about the coming Messiah (Jesus). God revealed through Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Seven hundred years later, it came true! God keeps every promise He makes.”

**Scripture Reading:** Micah 5:2

**Question for Younger Kids:** Who is Micah, and what special message did he give about where Jesus would be born?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why is Micah considered a minor prophet, and how does his message about Jesus compare to that of the major prophets? What does the fulfillment of Micah’s prophecy about Jesus being born in Bethlehem teach us about God’s promises?

**Light the first three candles and pray:** Thank God for keeping His promises in His word. He is a promise keeper and we can trust Him.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 4

**Begin:** Can you name what the first three candles represent? (Prophecy, Isaiah, Micah). Tell me something you have learned so far. Today, we are going to light the fourth candle representing JEREMIAH.

**Say this:** "About 50 years after Isaiah and Micah died, God raised up Jeremiah to be His prophet. He wrote the second-longest book in the Bible! Jeremiah wrote in his book that the coming King (Jesus) would come from the line of David--- the same David who killed Goliath with a sling and stone and became one of the greatest kings Israel had ever known. Jeremiah shared that God would forgive their iniquity (another word for sin) and never remember their sin again (Jer. 31:31-33). God's people look forward to that day when Jesus' light would shine on the earth and forgive their sins."

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 23:5-6

**Question for Younger Kids:** Who was Jeremiah, and what special message did he share about Jesus coming from David's family?

**Questions for Older Kids:** What is significant about Jeremiah's prophecy that the coming King (Jesus) would come from the line of David, and how does this connect to King David's importance in Israel's history? How does Jeremiah's message about God forgiving iniquity and never remembering sin again offer hope to people, and why is it important in understanding Jesus' role?

**Light the first four candles and pray:** Thank God for sending the Great Light of the World, Jesus, who forgives our sins and then doesn't remember them anymore!

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 5

**Begin:** Can you tell me anything about one of the prophets we learned about the past few days? Today, we will be lighting the fifth candle which represents ZECHARIAH (from the Old Testament).

**Say this:** “We will learn about two men named Zechariah on this Advent Spiral. The first one was a priest and a prophet in Judah. Zechariah said that Jesus would be humble, righteous, victorious, and would come into Jerusalem on a donkey. A week before Jesus died on the cross, He entered Jerusalem as people cheered, waved palm branches, and threw their robes on His path. Guess what He was riding?!” To read more about the Triumphal Entry go to Luke 19:28-44 or John 12:12-19.

**Scripture Reading:** Zechariah 9:9

**Questions for Younger Kids:** What did Zechariah say about how Jesus would come into Jerusalem, and what animal was He riding? How did people show that they were excited about Jesus coming to Jerusalem?

**Questions for Older Kids:** How did Zechariah’s prophecy about Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfill the expectations of how the Messiah would arrive? What does this reveal about Jesus’ character?

**Light the five candles and pray:** Everyone prays today by taking turns finishing this sentence, “Jesus, our family can rejoice greatly because You...” (Possible answers: have done great things for us; brought light into the world; supply all our needs; love us unconditionally; always keep Your promises).

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 6

**Begin:** Can you remember the names of the four prophets we've already talked about? Today, we will be lighting the sixth candle representing MALACHI.

**Say this:** "Malachi wrote the very last book of the Old Testament. He was the last messenger of God for 400 years before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced the birth of Jesus. God used Malachi to let people know that a messenger (John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin) would come before the promised Messiah to proclaim His coming and 'clear the way...' You can read this in Matthew 3:3 and 11:14."

**Scripture Reading:** Malachi 3:1, John 1:29

**Question for Younger Kids:** Who told people that Jesus would be coming soon?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Who was the last messenger of God before Jesus was born, and what did he tell people about the coming of Jesus? What special job did John the Baptist have before Jesus came, and how is this mentioned in the Bible?

**Light the six candles and pray:** Ask God for boldness to be His messengers like Malachi and John the Baptist. Pray that your family can carry His light to others so that they might have hope this Christmas.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 7

**Begin:** Tell me something you learned about one of the candles so far. Can you name the first six candles? The second purple candle that we will be lighting today represents The Bethlehem Candle, which signifies PREPARATION.

**Say this:** "This week, we are learning about some people and events that God used to prepare the world for Jesus' coming. Mary and Joseph experienced a lot of surprises in the months leading up to Jesus' birth. They didn't expect God to choose them, to be visited by an angel, or to have to travel to Bethlehem where Jesus would be born in a barn, but nothing took God by surprise. It all happened according to His plan."

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 16:9

**Question for Younger Kids:** What were some surprises Mary and Joseph had before Jesus was born?

**Question for Older Kids:** What were some of the surprises that Mary and Joseph experienced before Jesus was born, and how did these surprises fit into God's plan?

**Light the first seven candles and pray:** Pray that God will prepare your hearts to celebrate Him this Christmas. Tell Him you trust Him to determine your family's steps.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 8

**Begin:** What does the Bethlehem candle from yesterday represent? (Preparation). Today, we will learn about the eighth candle representing ABRAHAM.

**Say this:** "When God spoke to Abraham, he was an idol worshipper who didn't know God. But God chose him anyway and gave him a covenant (a fancy word for a promise). Long before he had any children, God promised Abraham, that He would make him into a great nation. This great nation would inherit a special land and bless everyone on earth. We see God's heart in Abraham's story. We see that God wants to bless people and have a relationship with them. We saw that even though Abraham didn't deserve it, he was chosen by God anyway. Abraham's belief in God's message made him right before God. Two thousand years later, God would give His one and only son to die on the cross for us." (John 3:16)

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 12:1-3, 15:6

**Question for Younger Kids:** What special promise did God make to Abraham?

**Questions for Older Kids:** What did God promise Abraham even though he didn't know Him yet, and how did this promise show God's plan for a great nation? How does Abraham's story show us that God wants to have a relationship with people and bless them, even when they don't deserve it?

**Light the eight candles and pray:** Pray that God will prepare your hearts to celebrate Him this Christmas. Tell Him you trust Him to determine your family's steps.

Blow out the candles.



## DAY 9

**Begin:** Tell me two things you've learned so far. Today, we will be lighting the ninth candle representing THE HOLY NATION.

**Say this:** "In the Old Testament, God's people were Abraham's descendants—the Israelites. He chose them to be His own treasured possession whom He loved, protected, and helped in times of trouble. At the coming of Jesus, God's promised people expanded from the nation of Israel to anyone who chooses to follow Jesus and make Him King. Now the Holy Nation of God includes Israelites, Americans, Egyptians, Mexicans, Salvadorians, and people from every country who have chosen to give their lives to Jesus. Every nation and tribe can celebrate Christ coming because His Kingdom is for everyone!"

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Peter 2:9

**Question for Younger Kids:** Who were the people that God chose to be special in the Old Testament?

**Question for Older Kids:** What does it mean that Jesus' Kingdom includes people from every country, and why is this important for us to know?

**Light the nine candles and pray:** Pray that Jesus will be worshipped in every language this Christmas and that people all over the world will come to know Jesus. Thank God for sending Jesus so that we can all be a part of His Kingdom—the Holy Nation.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 10

**Begin:** Tell me something you've learned so far that you didn't know before. Today, we will be lighting the tenth candle which represents THE EXODUS.

**Say this:** "The Israelites were not experiencing the light of God at the beginning of the book of Exodus. They were slaves in Egypt who were treated terribly by the people who hated them. They were forced to work really hard jobs for long hours. God saw their struggles and set in motion a rescue plan to save them through His servant Moses. This rescue plan, called The Exodus, showed God's people that He is a Deliverer who can work miracles to save them. At Christmas, Jesus came to deliver people from their sins."

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 3:1-8

**Questions for Younger Kids:** How did God help the Israelites when they were having a hard time in Egypt? Why did Jesus come at Christmas to help us?

**Questions for Older Kids:** How did God use Moses to help the Israelites, and what does this story tell us about how God can work miracles? How does the rescue plan in the book of Exodus compare to how Jesus came at Christmas to save people from their sins?

**Light the ten candles and pray:** Tell God that your family believes He can still work miracles and deliver you from your sin. He is the God who rescues!

Blow out the candles.

# DAY 11

**Begin:** Can you tell me what each candle represents so far? (See the Candle Order Quick Reference Guide). Today, we will be lighting the eleventh candle representing OLD TESTAMENT LAW.

**Say this:** God gave Moses special rules for the Israelites to follow called The Law. It started with ten big rules we call the Ten Commandments that were written on stone tablets. These important instructions included rules like, 'Worship God alone, and 'Don't make idols'. Additional laws were given and if they broke one of the laws, punishment was required. The law helped prepare the world to understand our need for Jesus. In the commandments, we are supposed to see God's standards for holy living and our inability to live without breaking His laws. When we break one of God's laws, it's called sin and our sins deserve punishment. Thankfully, Jesus came to the world at Christmas to pay the penalty we deserve."

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 5:17-18

**Question for Younger Kids:** How does Jesus help us when we make mistakes or do things wrong?

**Questions for Older Kids:** What were some of the important rules given to the Israelites, and why were they important for understanding God's expectations? How do the Ten Commandments help us understand why we need Jesus, and what did Jesus come to do for us at Christmas?

**Light the eleven candles and pray:** Take a moment to silently think about the sins in your own life. Confess those sins to God and ask for His forgiveness. Express your need for Jesus every day!

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 12

**Begin:** Tell me something you've learned this week. Today, we will be lighting the twelfth candle representing RUTH.

**Say this:** "Ruth is one of only five women listed in the genealogy of Jesus. In the Old Testament book, we learn that she was a foreign widow who traveled to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi, after both their husbands die. They were poor, but a relative named Boaz helped them by marrying Ruth and taking care of them. His role was known as a kinsman-redeemer. The role of a kinsman-redeemer refers to someone who agrees to rescue a person and provide support and protection. Boaz took on this role by bringing Ruth and Naomi into his family and home. Jesus is our Redeemer. At our lowest point of need, He accepts us, recuses us, and brings us into the family of God."

**Scripture Reading:** Ruth 2:10-12

**Question for Younger Kids:** How did Boaz help Ruth and Naomi when they needed a place to live and food to eat?

**Questions for Older Kids:** How did Boaz help Ruth and Naomi when they needed food and shelter, and what does this story show about his role as a kinsman-redeemer? How does the story of Ruth and Boaz help us understand what it means for Jesus to be our Redeemer and how He helps us in our time of need?

**Light the twelve candles and pray:** Ask God to prepare your hearts for the light of Jesus by showing you how needy you are for Him. Thank Him for being your Redeemer.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 13

**Begin:** Tell me your favorite Christmas Advent Spiral lesson so far. Today, we will be lighting the thirteenth candle representing DAVID.

**Say this:** “David is a Bible hero! This grandson of Ruth was a man after God’s own heart. His story reveals many roles he played throughout his life. He was a young boy who rose to fame by slaying a nine-foot tall giant. He was a shepherd who led his family’s flock. He was a warrior who proved the power of having faith in God. He was a great king who relied on the Lord for leadership and direction. God promised David that his offspring would rule forever, and Jesus is his descendant. People often called Jesus ‘The Son of David’ during His time on earth because they believed He was the Forever King!”

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 89:3-4

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Who did God use to defeat Goliath? How did David defeat Goliath?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why was it important for David to trust God to defeat Goliath? How can you display a trust in God similar to David?

**Light the thirteen candles and pray:** Thank God for sending Jesus as our Forever King! Pray for your family to be people after God’s own heart.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 14

**Begin:** Name each candle that we've already learned about and name which lesson you think you may have forgotten. Review the lesson, if needed. Today, we are lighting the fourteenth candle! The pink candle is called The Shepherd Candle and signifies JOY.

**Say this:** "Christmas is all about joy! The shepherds experienced joy at the birth of Jesus and celebrated by praising God and sharing the Good News that Christ was born. Just think... God brought light from the darkness through His Son, Jesus. The shepherds were some of the very first witnesses. Can you imagine how awesome it was to be there on that miraculous night?"

Over the next few days, we will discuss the characters and events of the Christmas story found in the books of Luke and Matthew. We will see how God prepared the world for the Light of Jesus through ordinary people and circumstances. Hopefully, as we talk together, the joy of the Lord will grow in us until we burst with praise for God and ache to share the Good News of Jesus!"

**Scripture Reading:** Philippians 4:4

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Who did God send to earth to save us? What was the reaction of the shepherds when they heard the Good News of Jesus?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think the shepherds immediately started praising God? How do you think you would have reacted if you were in the field with the shepherds? How can we praise God with our lives today?

**Light the fourteen candles and pray:** Spend some time worshipping God by proclaiming who He is to you this Christmas. One way to do this is by completing the sentence, "God, You are my \_\_\_\_\_."

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 15

**Begin:** Tell me what all the previous candles represent! Today, we are lighting the fifteenth candle representing ZECHARIAH (from the New Testament).

**Say this:** “This is the second person named Zechariah on the Christmas Advent Spiral! This Zechariah lived 500 years after the first one, so there was never a worry they’d get confused for one another! This Zechariah was a priest, and he was married to Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin. One day, while performing his duties in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and proclaimed his wife Elizabeth would have a child. This child would be named John, and he would go before the Lord to prepare the people to receive Him. This was exciting news! The baby born to Elizabeth would be the messenger promised hundreds of years earlier by Isaiah and Micah! Zechariah didn’t believe Gabriel’s message, though. He thought he and Elizabeth were too old to have a baby. His unbelief caused Gabriel to declare that he would go silent until the child’s birth. And that’s exactly what happened! Zechariah didn’t utter one sound until John’s birth. Eight days after John was born, Zechariah erupted from his silence with praises to God!”

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:67-68

**Questions for Younger Kids:** How did God tell Zechariah that his wife was going to have a baby? What did Elizabeth and Zechariah name their baby?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think Zechariah didn’t believe Gabriel when he told him the news? How did experiencing this miracle with God change Zechariah’s faith?

**Light the fifteen candles and pray:** Pray that your family would not stay silent about the true source of joy this Christmas!

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 16

**Begin:** Who is the Holy Nation of God? Originally the Holy Nation was the nation of Israel, now it includes all people who choose to make Jesus their Lord and King. Today, we are lighting the sixteenth candle representing ELIZABETH.

**Say this:** “As we learned yesterday, Elizabeth is the cousin of Mary and the mother of John the Baptist. Mary went to visit Elizabeth immediately after the angel Gabriel visited her and declared that she was pregnant with the Messiah, Jesus. Something amazing happened the moment these two pregnant women saw each other. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary greet her, Elizabeth’s baby leapt inside of her! John did a somersault in the presence of the King of Kings, even though neither were actually born yet! Elizabeth immediately called Mary ‘blessed among women’ for the privilege of bringing God’s Great Light into the world.”

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:39-45

**Questions for Younger Kids:** What is the name of the mother of Jesus? How did John react to Elizabeth being with Mary?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think John leapt inside his mother when she greeted Mary? Why do you think Gabriel visited both Mary and Elizabeth?

**Light the sixteen candles and pray:** Thank the God of the universe for desiring to be close to you.

Blow out the candles.



## DAY 17

**Begin:** Do you remember which prophet said, "For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 Today, we will be lighting the seventeenth candle representing GABRIEL.

**Say this:** "The Angel Gabriel is one of two angels named in the Bible. He appears three times: once to Zechariah, once to Mary, and once wayyyyyy back in the Old Testament book, Daniel. God used this powerful, heavenly being to speak messages of light into the world. In the first chapter of Luke, Gabriel appears to Mary and calls her 'favored woman,' and announces that she will give birth to a son who will be named Jesus. Mary, shocked and amazed, asks, 'How can this be?' Gabriel replies, 'Nothing is impossible with God.'"

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:26-28

**Questions for Younger Kids:** How many times did Gabriel appear to people in the Bible? What did Gabriel call Mary when he appeared to her?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think God used Gabriel three times in the Bible instead of using other angels? How do you think you would you respond if Gabriel appeared to you?

**Light the seventeen candles and pray:** Spend a few minutes bringing your concerns to God today. Ask for the faith to believe that He can work a miracle in your life.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 18

**Begin:** What rules did God give Moses and the Israelites to follow? The Old Testament Law. Today, we will light the eighteenth candle representing THE CENSUS.

**Say this:** “Old Testament prophets like Micah and Isaiah said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. We discover in Matthew 2:23 other prophets foretold that the Promised King would come from Nazareth. How can someone be born in one place, but call another place his hometown? God miraculously made both prophesies come true through the census! The Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus wanted to know how many people were in his kingdom, so he ordered everyone to return to their hometowns to be counted. Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth, but they were forced to travel to Bethlehem to take part in the census. This trip had to have been incredibly inconvenient and difficult for a couple about to have a baby, but God orchestrated the census from the beginning. Jesus, whose hometown was Nazareth, was born in Bethlehem, fulfilling all the prophesies about His birthplace!”

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 2:1-6

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Where was Jesus born? Why was He born there?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think it is important that Mary was due to have her baby at the same time as the census? How do you feel knowing that God worked out every detail to fulfill all the promises in the Bible?

**Light the eighteen candles and pray:** Pray that your family can trust God’s plan. Sometimes following Jesus is difficult and often it is inconvenient, but He uses all things to bring Himself glory!

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 19

**Begin:** Tell me your favorite Christmas Advent Spiral lesson so far. Today, we are lighting the nineteenth candle representing THE STAR.

**Say this:** "At Jesus' birth, a star appeared in the sky over Bethlehem. Far to the east, some wise men were watching the sky and saw this amazing emergence. The Bible doesn't tell us much about these wise men, but they were probably astronomers. They would study the stars and planets and then try to 'read' them for signs and meaning. To them, this new star meant that a new king had been born! They set out on a journey, guided by the light of the new star, to find the new king. Their travels led them straight to Jesus!"

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 2:1-2

**Questions for Younger Kids:** What appeared in the sky over Bethlehem? Where did the star lead the wise men?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think God used a star to lead the wise men? How does God guide us today?

**Light the nineteen candles and pray:** Pray that your family can shine for Jesus and point others to Him, just like the Bethlehem star did in the sky two thousand years ago.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 20

**Begin:** Tell me one thing you've learned that you hope you'll remember every Christmas from now on. Today, we are lighting the twentieth candle representing THE SHEPHERDS.

**Say this:** "The night Jesus was born, an angel appeared to shepherds in a field and proclaimed, 'Good news of great joy that will be for all people!' (Luke 2:10) No, the angel didn't appear to rich merchants, powerful leaders of the temple, or even Caesar Augustus, the head of the Roman Empire. The angels appeared to lowly shepherds. Two thousand years ago shepherds were considered dirty, smelly outcasts, but they had an important place in God's beautiful story! They first heard the Messiah was born and then experienced a multitude of angels suddenly appear and shout praises to God. What an amazing privilege! They immediately went to see the baby lying in a manger. After the shepherds visited Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, they left to do two things: share the angel's message of good news and worship God."

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 2:8-12

**Questions for Younger Kids:** What was the reaction of the shepherds after they met Jesus? Who did the angels appear to in the field?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think God chose to have the angels appear to lowly shepherds? How can we follow in the shepherd's example by sharing the message of the good news of Jesus and worship God?

**Light the twenty candles and pray:** Praise Jesus for coming and revealing Himself to all people. He didn't come just for rich or powerful people... He came for everyone!

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 21

**Begin:** What appeared in the sky when Jesus was born? A star. The third purple candle that we will be lighting today represents The Angel Candle, which signifies PEACE.

**Say this:** “Imagine yourself out in the field with the shepherds the night Jesus was born. First, one angel appears and tells you unbelievable news. Then, many more angels show up and shout into the night sky, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!’ (Luke 2:14) Wow! That must have been something to see.

Christmas brought glory to God and peace on earth through Jesus. All who choose to follow Him can find rest. We don’t have to struggle or strive to please God. Because of Jesus, we can experience peace in knowing we are loved, accepted, and forgiven forever. We can cast all our cares on God, because He cares for us. No matter what happens in life, nothing can steal our peace in Jesus Christ. All around you may be troubles, busyness, and chaos, but God can give you rest in every circumstance!”

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 2:13-14

**Questions for Younger Kids:** What gives us peace? How would you react if you saw many angels in the field?

**Questions for Older Kids:** How do we experience peace with God? What does it mean that we can find rest in Jesus?

**Light the twenty-one candles and pray:** Pray for your family to experience peace this Christmas. Tell God your burdens and ask for Him to give you rest.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 22

**Begin:** Who was Mary's cousin? Elizabeth. Today, we are lighting the twenty-second candle representing JOSEPH.

**Say this:** "You may know that Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus, but did you know that he was visited by an angel THREE TIMES? The first time was immediately after Joseph found out Mary was pregnant. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and convinced him to take Mary as his wife and to name the baby Jesus. The second and third times were actually after Jesus' birth. Both times, again in dreams, an angel appeared to Joseph and warned him to move his little family. First, they had to flee to Egypt because King Herod was trying to find the newborn King and kill Him! Later, the angel's message was that Herod was dead and it was safe to go back to Israel. Each time Joseph heard a message from an angel, he obeyed perfectly. Because of his obedience, Joseph was blessed to be the earthly father of the Promised Messiah and Jesus was saved from King Herod."

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 2:13-14

**Questions for Younger Kids:** How many times did an angel appear to Joseph? What is the name of the king that was trying to kill Jesus?

**Questions for Older Kids:** Why do you think God chose to have an angel appear to Joseph three times? Joseph obeyed perfectly every time an angel appeared to him. How would you have responded to a message from an angel?

**Light the twenty-two candles and pray:** Pray that your family can be inspired by Joseph's obedience. Pray that God would give you the courage to obey whatever God calls you to do, even if it's hard.

Blow out the candles.

## DAY 23

**Begin:** Who led God's people out of slavery in Egypt? Moses. Today, we are lighting the twenty-third candle representing MARY.

**Say this:** "From the moment Gabriel appeared to Mary, everything in her life changed. One minute she was a young, engaged woman living in Galilee. The next, she was the expectant mother of the Son of God. Any idea she had about how her life would go changed after the angel's visit. She could have gotten upset about the sudden interruption in her life. She could have been angry that she didn't get to live according to her plans. Mary could have experienced many emotions about being chosen to be Jesus' mom. Do you know how she really felt? Blessed.

Mary sang for joy because she was chosen by God. She felt honored to be part of this incredible miracle and believed that God did great things for her. Yes, her life turned out differently than she ever could have imagined, but she trusted in God and wholeheartedly accepted His plan."

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:46-49

**Questions for Younger Kids:** How did Mary respond after she was chosen by God to be Jesus' mom? How did Mary's life change after being visited by Gabriel?

**Questions for Older Kids:** How do you think Mary's life would have been different if she hadn't been visited by Gabriel? How did Mary's response to God show her character?

**Light the twenty-three candles and pray:** Pray that your family would allow God to use you for His purposes even if it interrupts your life.

Blow out the candles.

# DAY 24

**Begin:** Tell me why Christmas is important to you. Today, we are lighting the CHRIST candle.

**Say this:** "It's Christmas Eve! Tomorrow, we will celebrate the birthday of our Savior, Jesus Christ. A long time ago, Christ was born, wrapped in cloth, and placed in a feeding trough for animals. He spent His first night on earth in a stable because there was no room in the Bethlehem inn for His family. Although He came to earth long ago as a baby, Jesus existed long before that. In fact, He has always existed and will always exist. Jesus is eternal! Before the heavens and the earth were created, He was there. He willingly left His home in heaven to become one of us and live with us, and now all of us who call Jesus King of our lives are blessed to experience His light! His light brings us comfort and peace. His light gives us hope and joy. The light of Jesus burns brightly forever, and no darkness can ever overcome it!

Throughout history God was preparing the world for Jesus' arrival. That's what the Christmas Advent Spiral Devotional is all about. God used prophets, people, events, and even a star in the sky to point people toward His Son. And now He has come! He is Immanuel, God with us. His name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Yesterday, today, and forever He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords who is worthy to receive all praise, all honor, and all glory. He is Jesus!"

**Scripture Reading:** John 1:1-5

**Questions for Younger Kids:** Why did Jesus leave his heavenly home and come to earth? What was your favorite part of this spiral devotional?

**Questions for Older Kids:** What is one new thing you learned about God from the advent spiral devotional? How have our lives changed because of Jesus' sacrifice to leave his heavenly home?

**Light all 24 candles and pray:** Thank Jesus for leaving heaven and coming to live with us on earth. Worship Him for being the light of men that shines in the darkness. Pray that you can share His light with the people who need to know hope, peace, joy, and comfort.

Blow out the candles.



## DAY 25

### *Merry Christmas!*

God brought light from the darkness and the world will never be the same. Jesus is our Immanuel, God with us, so celebrate today! Eat great food, open presents, enjoy your family, and spread Christmas cheer. In your festivities, don't forget to celebrate the One whose life is the light of men.

You have come to the end of the *Christmas Advent Spiral Devotional*. There are no more candles to light this year, but that doesn't mean faith talks have to stop in your home. Today, consider reading the Christmas story from the book of Luke, listening to Christ-centered Christmas music, or praying together as a family. As the New Year approaches, decide now to be more intentional about having faith talks together. Let the light of Christ burn brightly in your home all year long. There really is nothing more important to prioritize for your family!

Rush Creek Church has many, many tools to help you talk about faith at home. For more information on our family resources, ask a ministry leader at your campus.

