

THE nest



CHRISTMAS PACKET | 2012
RE-MASTERED

HOW TO USE THIS PACKET

Christ can easily be overlooked in the hustle and bustle of the Christmas Holiday. The purpose of this packet is to take holiday symbols that surround this season and focus them on Jesus. Hopefully, you will be armed with helpful ways to help draw your little ones closer to our Savior this year. * *Several stories and activities were taken from **The ADVENTure of Christmas** by Lisa Whelchel.*

BEGIN WITH THE BASICS

Finding the Birth of Jesus in the Scripture

- Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-11 (portions of the story)
- Luke 1:26-45, 2:1-20 (the entire account)

Book Resources

- The First Christmas by Carol Heyer
- What is Christmas? By Michelle Medlock Adams
- The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado & Thomas Nelson
- The Pine Parable, The Parable Series #4 by Liz Curtis Higgs & Thomas Nelson

Online Resources

- The Watermark Family Ministries Advent Guide: <http://www.watermark.org/blog/advent-2017>
- Jesse Tree Advent Guide:
<http://www.familytreedition.com/jesse-tree-devotional/>

Scripture memory

Memorize Luke 2:10-11, "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord..."

ACTIVITIES

ADVENT WREATH

The word advent means, “to come.” The advent wreath is to prepare our hearts as believers for the coming of Jesus.

Advent is completed over a four-week period and consists three purple candles, one pink candle and a fifth white candle lit on a circle–shaped wreath of evergreen. The purple candles in the wreath symbolize hope, peace, and These candles are lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The pink candle symbolizes joy and is typically lit on the third Sunday. The fifth, white candle is lit on Christmas Eve/Day and symbolizes the birth of Jesus.



used
of
three
love.

The accumulation of light is an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. The circular wreath represents God’s eternity and unity. Evergreens are a symbol of enduring life.

Creating an Advent Wreath

Materials Needed:

- Garland or greenery attached to a Styrofoam wreath
- Pine cones (optional)
- 3 purple candles, 1 pink candle, 1 white candle
- 5 candle holders

Directions:

1. If using a Styrofoam circle wreath, insert your greens and pinecones into the Styrofoam to make a wreath. If using garland, create a circle with your garland and tie it together. Adorn the garland with pinecones and other items of your choice.
2. Place the wreath around your candleholder. Place four purple candles, one pink candle and one white candle in the center.
3. On the next page you will find an example of an Advent family devotional. Feel free to add verses, carols, and discussions of your own.

Instructions:

1) First Sunday of December: “The Prophet’s Candle” (HOPE)

- Light one purple candle
- Have a time of prayer
- Read Isaiah 60: 2-3
- Extinguish the flame

2) Second Sunday of December: “The Bethlehem Candle” (PEACE)

- Light two purple candles – hope and peace
- Pray
- Read Mark 1:4
- Extinguish the flames

3) Third Sunday of December: "The Shepherd's Candle" (JOY)

- Light two purple candles and one pink to symbolize joy
- Pray
- Read Isaiah 35:10
- Extinguish the flames

4) Fourth Sunday of December: "The Angel's Candle" (LOVE)

- Light all four candles- hope, peace, joy, and love
- Pray
- Read Isaiah 9:6-7
- Extinguish the flames
-

5) Christmas Eve/Day: "The Christ Candle"

- Light all four candles and add the fifth white candle to the light of Christ.
- Prayer/Thanksgiving/Celebration
- Read the Christmas Story... Luke 1:68-79 and Luke 2:1-20
- Keep the candles lit a bit longer, or safely throughout the day/evening.
- Celebrate the highlight of Advent... the birth of Jesus! Discuss ways to celebrate Him all year long!

A CHRISTMAS POEM:

Materials needed:

- 26 pieces of construction paper or plain white paper
- Printout of each letter of the alphabet
- Printed pictures of each letters image. (i.e. Angel, Bethlehem, Cattle, etc)
- Cut out the alphabet poem below
- Glue stick
- Scissors

If you have younger kids, cut out the letters, images and alphabet poem in advance. For each letter, help your child glue the letter with the right picture and poem on a piece of paper. Read them as you make them. Feel free to do 2-3 at a time completing your book over a 2-3 week period. Or do one a day for 26 days.

If you have older kids, provide larger paper for each letter and have them write the letters out. Then they can add the cut-out pictures and poem for each letter.

For reading children, take turns reading the Bible verse and poem as you complete each letter.

A is for Angels, appearing so bright, telling of Jesus that first Christmas night. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." Luke 2:13.

B is for Bethlehem, crowded and old, birthplace of Jesus by prophet foretold. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Micah 5:2.

C is for Cattle, their manger His bed, there in the trough where He laid His head. "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Luke 2:7.

D is for David and his ancient throne promised forever to Jesus alone.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke 1:32.

E is for East, where shone the bright star which Magi on camels followed afar. "Behold, there came wise men from the east asking "Where is the king of the Jews?"" Matthew 2:1,2.

F is for Frankincense, with myrrh and gold, brought by the Wise Men as Matthew has told. "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11.

G is for God, who from heaven above sent down to mankind the Son of His love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

H is for Herod, whose murderous scheme was told to Joseph in a nocturnal dream.

"The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt... for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Matthew 2:13.

I is for Immanuel, "God with us," for Christ brought man back to the Father's house.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14.

J is for Joseph so noble and just, obeying God's word with absolute trust.

"Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife." Matthew 1:24.

K is for King. A true king He would be, coming in power and authority.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation." Zechariah 9:9.

L is for Love that He brought down to earth God enfleshed in lowly birth.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4:9.

M is for Mary, His mother so brave, counting God faithful and mighty to save. "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Luke 1:38.

N is for Night, when the Savior was born for nations of earth and people forlorn. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." Luke 2:8.

O is for Omega, meaning "the last;" He's eternal present, future and past.

"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Revelation 22:13.

P is for Prophets, when living on earth foretold His redemption and blessed birth. "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel." Numbers 24:17.

Q is for Quickly, as shepherds who heard hastened to act on that heavenly word. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Luke 2:16.

R is for Rejoice. The sorrow of sin is banished forever when Jesus comes in. "And you will have joy and gladness; and many will rejoice at his birth." Luke 1:14.

S is for Savior. To be this He came; the angel of God assigned Him His name. "She will bring forth a son, and you will call his name JESUS, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

T is for Tidings of joy, not of danger, telling of Him who was laid in a manger. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10.

U is for Us, to whom Jesus was given to show us the way and take us to heaven. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11.

V is for Virgin, foretold by the sage, God's revelation on prophecy's page.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1:23.

W is for Wonderful, His works and His words, the King of all Kings, the Lord of all Lords. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6.

X is for Christ. It's X in the Greek, Anointed, Messiah, mighty, yet meek.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Acts 10:38.

Y is for Yes, called God's Yes in His Word; God's answer to all is Jesus the Lord. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Z is for Zeal as it burned in Christ's heart. Lord, by thy Spirit to us zeal impart. "And his disciples remembered that it was written, the zeal of your house has eaten me up." John 2:17.

HIDE AND SEEK BABY JESUS

Materials needed:

- Nativity set
- Box (big enough to fit the baby Jesus from the nativity set in)
- Wrapping paper and ribbon (optional)
- Bible

Instructions:

1. Set up your nativity set, but have baby Jesus wrapped in a special box. Set aside.
2. Grab your Bible, show your child the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.
3. Read Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7.
4. Explain that in the Old Testament, many people were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the King spoken about in the Bible, and the Old Testament foretold the birth of God's chosen King and Savior.
5. Have your child unwrap the small gift box with baby Jesus inside.
6. State that the Old Testament was telling of Jesus...now explain that the New Testament is the fulfilling of the prophecies and shows Jesus' ministry and love for us!
7. Sing "Jesus Loves Me" together.
8. Place baby Jesus in the nativity.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS CAKE

Ingredients:

- Baked chocolate cake (no icing)
- Red icing or red fruit layer (strawberries, raspberries, or cherries)
- Baked green cake (white cake with green food coloring)
- White icing
- One candle

Layers:

- Bottom layer: chocolate cake (to represent our sins)
- 2nd layer: red icing or fruit layer (to represent Jesus' blood shed to cover our sins)
- 3rd layer: green cake (to represent our new everlasting life in Christ)
- Top layer: white icing all over (to symbolize Jesus' purity and righteousness)
- *Place candle on top to represent that Jesus is the light of the world.

Additional Layers/Ideas:

- Round cake to show that God's love is never-ending.
- A border of hearts around the sides of the cake to symbolize that we are all witnesses for Jesus around the world (or you could substitute any verse regarding our hearts or Christ's love).
- A star and/or angel to represent the first announcements of Christ's birth to the world.
- 12 candles to represent that Jesus should be our light every month of the year.

CHRISTMAS CARDS TURN PRAYER REMINDERS

After the season has passed, collect all the Christmas cards your family received, hole punch them and place on ribbon or metal ring. Place these near your kitchen table or in the living room and pray for each family throughout the year.

THE GIFT GAME:

Materials needed:

- A gift sack for each of your children.

Instructions:

1. Give each child participating an empty sack.
2. Assign them the name of someone else participating in the game.
3. Ask each child to hunt through the house for something that person would want, then secretly place it in the gift sack once they find it. Double check the gift before it is given. You may have to do a little coaching here. I have had to say, "that is a nice gift and YOU would really like it, but is that something SHE would really like?"
4. When everyone is finished, take turns giving each other these new gifts.
5. The recipient of the gift has two rules: 1) They must say thank you and 2) They have to say one positive thing about the gift that they received.
6. Play the game this way two or three times until they become good at coming up with the positive response. If you have multiple kids they can take turns.
7. Once they have gotten the hang of it ask them to find something that the other person will probably NOT enjoy and bring it back in the gift sack.
8. The recipient still has the same two rules only this time it becomes a little more difficult to find something positive to say. Give your kids help in this area. Good phrases to arm them with are: "Thank you, I don't have one of these." "Thank you, that is a really nice color." "Thank you. I will enjoy sharing this with my brother/sister." You will, however, be surprised at what great things they can come up with when given the chance to think about it.

Play this game periodically throughout the month. When the time comes to open gifts this holiday season, give them a little reminder of what they have been practicing!

GIFTS OF THE MAGI

If you're looking for a different way to look at Christmas gifts with your family this year, here is a different spin. There were three wise men that brought gifts to baby Jesus. They brought gold (something of value), frankincense (something used in worship that brought others closer together), and myrrh (something useful or needed). You could pattern your gift giving in the same fashion. You're children could receive something of value (something they have really been wanting), something the whole family can do together (passes, tickets, new books to read, etc), and something practical that they need (shoes, clothes, etc).

CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS

Christmas Tree: While decorating your Christmas tree discuss...

The Christmas tree is a perfect reminder of why Christ came as a baby. One day, Christ would be nailed to a tree and die for the sins of all mankind. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.”

The Star: Anytime this symbol is around discuss...

Matthew 2:2 says, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

The star plays such an integral part of the birth of Jesus and we use this symbol all through the Christmas season. Even Jesus refers to himself as the bright morning star in Revelation 22:16.

Christmas Lights: While driving around admiring the lights discuss...

Christmas lights scream to us what we are to be – shining through the world’s darkness. Matthew 5:14, 16 read, “You are the light of the world- like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

Other connections:

1. Jesus wants us to shine like these Christmas lights. Can you think of ways we can be a light to our neighborhood?”
2. The Christmas lights that line peoples’ driveways remind me of Psalm 119:105 which says, “Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.” It is a lot easier to see where we are going with all these lights. Lets help one another remember to be reading God’s word so that we are better in step with Him.

Christmas Cards: When sending or receiving cards discuss...

The purpose of the original Christmas card has gotten lost through the centuries. Cute sayings and pictures of ourselves have taken the place of the original purpose of sending greetings during this season. Christmas cards were first produced in 1843. They were illustrated with nativity scenes and would echo the words of the angel who delivered the very first Christmas message, “Behold, I bring you good tiding of great joy which will be to all people.” (Luke 2:10)

Other Connections:

1. Discuss how your family can spread the good news of Jesus by sending cards. Explain the importance of making sure that if we send cards that they depict the true meaning of Christmas.
2. Why do you think people who don’t believe in Jesus still love Christmas so much? (Explain that even people who reject Jesus still long for the peace, joy, and love that he can bring. That’s why it is important that we help others know who can give them all of that and more.)

Gifts: While buying, wrapping, or opening gifts discuss...

Around the 1800s people began purchasing small trinkets rather than making homemade Christmas gifts, which was the custom. In order to make these store bought presents seem more meaningful, people would wrap them in brown paper and decorate the paper themselves... and so began the tradition of wrapping gifts. The greatest gift giver wrapped His gift up in swaddling clothes. Philippians 2:6-7 says, "Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form." The best gift ever given was wrapped and sent to save us all.

Other Connections

1. Why was God's gift to the human race so important?
(discuss hope, grace, and salvation)
2. What difference does it make to us today that God wrapped himself in human flesh and came to earth?
(talk about being able to better understand him as the Son of God when we can relate to Him as the Son of Man).
3. Ask your kids to think of one gift that they are really hoping to get this year. Discuss why it does not come close to comparing to the gift of baby Jesus.