



WAITING FOR GOD

Family Advent Readings & Activities
2015



**TRINITY
MOUNT BARKER**
A TRINITY NETWORK CHURCH

Waiting for God

The weeks leading up to Christmas are an exciting time, filled with anticipation, especially for families with young children. There is plenty to get excited about; upcoming holidays, family time, presents, food, and plenty more. For adults, we might add to that mix; complex family relationships, financial pressures, and frantic busyness. In the midst of all of this, it's all too easy to lose sight of what we're actually celebrating; A God who cares so much for his people that he turns up. Physically. As a baby.

This booklet is called "Waiting for God." We hope and pray that it will help you and your family understand more fully the hopes and expectations of people who were waiting for God; Waiting for God to arrive and rule his people; waiting for God to rescue; waiting for God to free people from sin and rebellion. Because, of course, Jesus didn't stay a baby. Jesus' mission was to die in the place of the very people who rejected him. Us.

The readings, discussion questions, prayers and craft ideas are collected here, in the hope that you and your family will have opportunities in this advent season to consider and give thanks to the God who came and dwelled among his people in the person of Jesus.

The discussion questions and craft activities are written to be at a level suitable for families with primary school or pre-school aged children. Of course, if your household doesn't fit that category, please still feel free to make use of the guided readings for each day in December in the lead up to Christmas. I am sure you will find the time spent reading the Bible a worthwhile investment.

Thanks to Kathy Fopp, Carolyn Hull, Sally-Anne Kerrison, Chanelle McLean, Trudie Langkilde, Katy Walker, Noelene Walker, and Sue Watts for their contributions to this collection. It is our prayer that you find this small collection both encouraging and challenging, as you remember the birth of Jesus, who is Immanuel - God with us.

Clayton Fopp

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1. Jesus' Family

Matthew 1:1 - 6a, 16

Read

Read Matthew 1:1 - 6a, 16

*This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:
²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David.*

¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

Talk

Who is in your family?

Who are some of the people in Jesus' family?

God promised Abraham and David that a king would come from their family. Who do you think this king is?

Do you think God always keeps his promises?

What name is given to Jesus in verse 16?

Make a picture of your family

Cut a circle out of a piece of light cardboard (trace around a jar lid if that helps)

Draw a picture of your family doing something that you like to do.

Attach string or cord to the back and hang on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you for your promise to send a king to look after your people.

Thank you that we know who was in Jesus' family, and that we can see that you kept your promise to the members of that family. Amen.

2. The Branch from Jesse

Isaiah 11:1 - 9

Read

Read Isaiah 11:1 – 9

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.*

²*The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—*

³*and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;*

⁴*but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.*

⁵*Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.*

⁶*The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.*

⁷*The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.*

⁸*The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.*

⁹*They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

Talk

Jesse was the father of King David.

In this passage God promises a descendant of Jesse will rule his people.

Who do you think is the branch?

What will this branch be like?

What are some of the good things that will happen when this branch from Jesse comes?

Make the stump of Jesse with its green shoot

Cut a 10 cm diameter circle out of cardboard. (You can use a large mug as a guide.)

Fix a cinnamon stick, or stick from the garden, to the lower half of the circle, like a clock hand pointing to 6 (you may need to cut your stick). This is your stump.

Glue a leaf onto the cardboard so that it is sticking out of the top of the stump.

Punch a hole in the top of the circle to thread string through, and hang on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you that you always do what is right and just. We thank you that you sent your Son Jesus, from the family of Jesse and David to rule the world with justice.

Help us to always do what is right and just also. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

3. Waiting for God

Psalm 130:5 - 8

Read

Read Psalm 130:5 – 8

*⁵I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

*⁶I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

*⁷Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.*

*⁸He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.*

Talk

What are some things that are very hard to wait for?

Why were people waiting for “the Lord” (v 8)?

What do you think it was like for people who were waiting for Jesus to be born?

What does this Psalm say Jesus is going to do when he arrives?

Make a clock to remind you about waiting

Cut the base out of a take-away style paper cup.

Mark clock numbers around the outside of the face.

In the centre draw a picture of something that you might have to wait for.

Attach string or cord to the back and hang your clock on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear heavenly Father. We know that your people waited a long time for Jesus to come. We thank you that he was born, to save us from our sins. Please help us to remember that Jesus forgives us for all the wrong things that we do. Amen.

4. Sin Enters the World

Genesis 3:1 – 10, 23 - 24

Read

Read Genesis 3:1 - 10, 23 – 24

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

²³So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Talk

- What do you think sin is?
- What happened when Adam and Eve sinned?
- Why did Adam and Eve sin?
- What is life like now that there is sin in the world?

Make the sneaky snake

- Paint a cardboard toilet paper roll green.
- When it's dry, cut along the diagonal spiral seams of the cardboard to create a spiral snake shape.
- Cut an oval shape out of paper for your snake's head. Draw or stick on eyes (use googly eyes if you have some!) and stick on a piece of ribbon for a tongue.

You can draw a diamond pattern on your snake, or decorate it with colours or stickers. Punch a hole in the cardboard tube and thread through a string to hang your snake on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we know that you are saddened when we sin. Please help us to always trust your word and not to ignore it. Help us to remember that you always say what is best for us.

Thank you that because of Jesus our sin can be forgiven, and we can live forever with you. Amen.

5. The Birth of John is Promised

Luke 1:5 - 20

Read

Read Luke 1:5 – 20

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. ⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." ¹⁹ The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Talk

What are Elizabeth and Zechariah like?

What does the angel promise Zechariah?

What is this baby going to be like?

John is going to "go on before the Lord." Who does this mean is coming after John?

How does Zechariah respond to the angel?

Make Zechariah unable to speak

Glue a thin strip of coloured paper/felt/fabric around the top 1 - 2 cm of a toilet paper roll. It can extend past the top of the roll a bit too. This is Zechariah's head covering.

Glue a wide strip of paper/felt/fabric around the bottom half of the roll for Zechariah's robe, leaving about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the roll exposed for a face.

Draw a face for Zechariah on the roll, and stick on googly eyes if desired.

Stick a band-aid across his mouth.

You can give Zechariah hair made from wool, cotton wool, or string if you like.

Punch a hole at the top of the roll, thread through some string and hang Zechariah on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our Father in heaven, thank you for promising to send John the Baptist to prepare people for Jesus.

Help us to always be prepared to hear Jesus, and to obey his Word.

We thank you that this passage reminds us that you always hear our prayers. May we pray confidently to you always. Amen.

6. God's Special Messenger

Isaiah 40:1 – 5, 10 - 11

Read

Read Isaiah 40:1 - 5, 10 – 11

¹*Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.*

²*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.*

³*A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.*

⁴*Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.*

⁵*And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

¹⁰*See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.*

¹¹*He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.*

Talk

What are some things you have to do to get ready for someone special to arrive at your house?

What promise is made to God's people?

Who does Isaiah the prophet say is coming?

How does Isaiah know this?

Since Jesus is a shepherd, how does that mean he cares for us?

Make a sheep

Cut two oval shapes out of paper (black paper is good if you have some), one large to make sheep's body, and one smaller to make a sheep's head.

Cut four legs out of paper and glue to the base of the body, and stick the head onto the body.

Glue cotton wool to the body, and draw or stick on the sheep's eyes.

Shape a pipe cleaner into a shepherd's crook, and tape it to the back of the sheep's body.

Tape a loop of string to the back of the sheep, and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you for promising your people that one day you would come among them.

Thank you that this promise was fulfilled when Jesus was born.

Please help us to follow Jesus, the good shepherd. Amen.

7. The Birth of Jesus is Promised

Luke 1:26 - 31

Read

Read Luke 1:26 – 31

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

Talk

What does the angel promise Mary?

How does the angel describe Mary? What do you think this means?

What is to be the baby's name?

Make the angel who visited Mary

Fold both sides of a small paper plate in towards the centre to make a triangle shape with a round base. This is the angel's body.

Trace around a child's hand, and cut out 2 copies of the hand shape.

Stick the hand cut outs onto the back of the angel's body to make wings.

Cut a small circle (trace around a milk bottle lid) to make a head, and stick it onto the body.

Colour and decorate your angel.

Punch a hole, thread through some string and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you sent Jesus into the world to save us.

Thank you that Mary was obedient to your message to her, and that she became Jesus' mother.

Thank you that because Jesus died in our place, we can be forgiven for all our sins. Amen

8. The Son of God

Luke 1:31 - 38

Read

Read Luke 1:31 – 38

³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end. ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail." ³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Talk

What does the angel say about Jesus' family?

What is Jesus going to do when he grows up?

How does Mary respond to the angel's message?

What does the angel say about God's Word?

Make a decoration with your name

Cut a piece of cardboard into the shape of a baggage tag.

On one side write the angel's words "'He will be called the Son of God' Luke 1:35"

On the reverse side, write "You are called [CHILD'S NAME], child of God."

Colour and decorate your tag.

Punch a hole through one end of the tag and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we praise you because Jesus reigns as king over your people forever.

Thank you that his kingdom will never end.

Help us to be obedient and faithful like Mary, always trusting your word. Amen

9. We're All Like Sheep

Isaiah 53:4 - 9

Read

Read Isaiah 53:4 – 9

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,

yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Talk

What does Isaiah say Jesus is going to do?

What bad things are going to happen to Jesus?

Why did these bad things happen to Jesus?

What happens to us because of Jesus' sufferings?

Did Jesus deserve any of the bad things that happened to him?

Make another sheep

Fold a paper plate in half, and glue popped popcorn, cotton wool, or wool onto it to make a sheep's body.

Cut an oval out of paper for the sheep's head. Draw, or stick on, eyes and a mouth, and then glue the head onto the body.

Tape a loop of string to the back of the sheep and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Father God, we are sorry that we turn away from you.

We thank you that Jesus took the punishment we deserved for ignoring you and turning to our own path.

Thank you that Jesus died so that we could be forgiven. Amen

10. An Angel Visits Joseph

Matthew 1:18 - 23

Read

Read Matthew 1:18 – 23

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Talk

Do you know what your name means?

How are Mary and Joseph described?

What does the angel say to Joseph?

What two names will Mary’s baby be given?

What do each of these two names mean?

What do you think it means for Jesus to be “God with us”?

Make the angel that visited Joseph

Fold a paper cupcake case (patty case), to make a quarter of a circle or slightly more. This is your angel’s body.

Flatten another cupcake case, and cut it into quarters (you will only need 2 of these quarters).

Glue these 2 wings to the back of the angel’s body.

Cut a circle out of paper and draw the angel’s face.

Twist a pipe cleaner to make a halo and tape it on.

Tip: If you don’t have paper cupcake cases, you can use any coloured paper.

Tape a loop of string or ribbon to the back of your angel and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you for Joseph's obedience to your word. Help us to be obedient to your word, also. We thank you that since the birth of Jesus, we can know you as "God with us."

We thank you that you are always with us. In Jesus' name, amen.

11. A Light Has Dawned

Isaiah 9:1 - 7

Read

Read Isaiah 9:1 – 7

¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,

*establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.*

Talk

What is like to be in darkness?

Who is the light that is promised here?

What names are given to Jesus in this section?

Choose one of the names. What do you think it means?

What does Isaiah say is going to be Jesus' job?

Make a scroll for Isaiah the prophet

Cut a strip about 6 cm high from across the top of an A4 piece of paper.

Roll each end of the strip tightly around a pencil, leaving a flat square section in the middle, so that the strip resembles a scroll.

Write one of the names for Jesus that you just read on the centre, flat section of the scroll.

Punch a hole in the scroll, and thread a loop of string through so you can hang your scroll on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our Father, without your help, we live in darkness because of our sin and our disobedience to you.

We praise you for saving your people and giving a king to lead and rule your people forever.

Help us to always follow Jesus, and to remain in the light that you give us. Amen.

12. The Light Shines in the Darkness

John 1:1 – 5, 14, 18

Read

Read John 1:1 - 5, 14, 18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Talk

Who do you think is the Word that John writes about?

What does John say about Jesus?

How does Jesus bring light?

What is Jesus' relationship with his Father?

What does Jesus make known about his Father?

Make a Word decoration that is full of light

Find a piece of cardboard about 5cm high by 10 cm long (half a standard-sized postcard would work well).

Write "WORD" on it in letters that fill the card.

Tear off small pieces of aluminium foil and paste them on top of the letters in collage style, so that WORD is spelled out in foil.

Punch a hole in your card, thread some tinsel or string through, and hang on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we praise you for making yourself known in Jesus.

We thank you Father, that Jesus was with you before the creation of the world.

We thank you that Jesus brings light and life to the world.

Help us to always trust in Jesus, the true light of the world. Amen

13. God Promises Blessing

Genesis 12:1 - 7

Read

Read Genesis 12:1 – 7

¹The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

²“I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. ⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ⁶Abram travelled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Morehat Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Talk

Can you think of a promise that someone has made to you? How did you feel when you heard it?

What is the first instruction that God gave to Abraham?

What promises did God make to Abraham?

How did Abraham respond to God’s instructions?

How does Jesus bless all people on earth?

Make a map for Abraham's long journey

On a small piece of paper (approx 7 cm x 5 cm is fine) draw a map. You might like to include things like rivers, ocean, mountains, trees, roads.

Mark a starting point, and a finishing point with an X. With a red pen or pencil, draw a path from the starting point to the finishing point, like Abraham might have followed. Make a hole in the top of your paper, thread some string through, and hang on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we are amazed at the promises you make! Thank you for being a God who makes and keeps your promises to bless your people.

We thank you for Abraham's faith and trust in you.

Please help us to always trust in you, too. Amen.

14. Mary and Elizabeth

Luke 1:39 - 45

Read

Read Luke 1:39 – 45

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!"

Talk

What can make it hard to believe someone's promises?

What happened to Elizabeth?

What does Elizabeth say to Mary?

What does Elizabeth's baby do when Mary's baby is near?

Make Elizabeth visiting Mary

Draw a face on a wooden clothes peg (the old style), an ice cream stick, or toilet paper roll. You might like to glue on some cotton wool for long hair.

Screw up some paper or aluminium foil to make a marble-sized ball, and tape it to Elizabeth's "stomach."

Wrap a piece of cloth, or hessian around the body like a robe.

Cut out some flame shapes from yellow or red paper, or from white paper and colour them in.

Stick the flames behind Elizabeth's head to symbolise the Holy Spirit coming on her.

Tape a loop of ribbon or string to the back of the body and hang your Elizabeth on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you for sending Jesus, such a special child into the world.

Help us to understand what Elizabeth said through the Holy Spirit, that Jesus is unique.

Thank you for all the promises you have made that are fulfilled in Jesus. Amen

15. Mary's Song

Luke 1:46 - 56

Read

Read Luke 1:46 – 56

- ⁴⁶ *And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord*
⁴⁷ *and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,*
⁴⁸ *for he has been mindful*
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ *for the Mighty One has done great things for me—*
holy is his name.
⁵⁰ *His mercy extends to those who fear him,*
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;*
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones*
but has lifted up the humble.
⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things*
but has sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel,*
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ *to Abraham and his descendants forever,*
just as he promised our ancestors."
⁵⁶ *Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.*

Talk

- Do you like to sing when you are happy?
Who does Mary sing about?
What does Mary say God has done?
What does Mary say about God's promises?
Can you recall any promises from God that we have seen so far in these advent readings? Do you think God keeps those promises too?

Make Mary

Draw a face on a wooden clothes peg (the old style), an ice cream stick, or toilet paper roll

Screw up some paper or aluminium foil to make a marble-sized ball, and tape it to Mary's "stomach."

Wrap a piece of cloth, or hessian around the body like a robe.

Tie a belt of string around the middle. Loop a piece of string through the belt at the back to make a hanger.

Wrap a small piece of cloth over the head to form a head covering and glue in place.

Hang your Mary on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you that you make promises and you keep promises.

We rejoice, just as Mary did, that you always help your people, and that you are merciful; you help us even when we don't deserve your help.

May we always rejoice because you save us from our sins through Jesus. Amen.

16. John is Born

Luke 1:57 - 70

Read

Read Luke 1:57 – 70

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son.⁵⁸ Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. ⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” ⁶¹ They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” ⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbours were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him. ⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

Talk

What do you like to do when you’re really happy?

Do you remember why Zechariah couldn’t speak?

What is this baby’s name?

What happened when Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit?

Have a look at Zechariah’s song. How does God save his people?

What do we all need saving from?

According to Zechariah’s song, who is going to come along after John?

Make Zechariah praising God

Decorate a toilet paper roll as Zechariah - draw a nose and eyes, or stick on googly eyes. Stick on some wool or cotton wool for hair, and wrap a piece of fabric or coloured paper around the cylinder as a robe.

Make him a belt out of some string or ribbon, looping in another piece of ribbon to make a hanger.

Cut a circle out of paper, either coloured paper or white paper decorated with colours on both sides. (Trace around a mug to get a good circle.)

Cut a line from the edge to the centre of the circle so you can roll the circle into a cone.

This trumpet symbolises Zechariah's voice returning.

Cut a small hole in Zechariah's mouth and poke small end of the cone in, taping it on the inside.

Hang Zechariah on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our God in heaven, we praise you for saving your people from sin, and from turning away from you.

We thank you that you have always been good to your people, even though your people have never honoured you as they should.

Help us to honour you, and to give thanks to you for saving us. Amen

17. The Servant of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1 - 4

Read

Read Isaiah 42:1 – 4

¹*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.*

²*He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.*

³*A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;*

⁴*he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*

Talk

What is the role or title given to Jesus in verse 1?

What sorts of things do you think a servant does?

A “bruised reed” (v 3) is like a very fragile twig. What does this verse tell you about what Jesus is like?

What is Jesus going to do?

Make a bruised reed to remember Jesus’ gentleness

From your garden, collect a short stick, up to about 1 cm thick will work well.

Carefully bend the stick so that it breaks partially, but not all the way though.

Tie a loop of string around your stick and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, sometimes we feel fragile and hurt.

We thank you that Jesus, your servant, is gentle and kind.

Thank you that Jesus always wants the best for us, and always does what is right and just.

Help us to always put our hope in Jesus. Amen.

18. Jesus Makes God Known

John 1:14 - 18

Read

John 1:14 – 18

¹⁴ *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

¹⁵ *(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'")* ¹⁶ *Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.*

¹⁷ *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

¹⁸ *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

Talk

What do you like best about your father?

Why do you think Jesus is described as "the Word"?

How does Jesus help us understand what God is like?

What does John the Baptist do for Jesus?

What is Jesus' relationship to his Father?

Make a decoration about God's Son

On some cardboard, draw a triangle with 3 sides of 8 cm each.

Write on the triangle "Jesus is God's only Son".

Decorate the edges with some Christmas colours and glitter (if you have some).

Make a hole in the top corner, thread some wool through the hole and hang it on the Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear Father, we praise you for making yourself known to us in Jesus Christ.

We thank you that Jesus is your Son, who came into the world so that we could know you and be welcomed by you.

Help us to remember that you are our father in heaven who loves us. In Jesus' name, amen.

19. John is God's Special Messenger

Mark 1:1 - 8

Read

Mark 1:1 – 8

¹The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, ²as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"—*

³*"a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"*

⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Talk

What item of clothing do you most like to wear?

What did John do to the people?

What was John's clothing like?

How did John fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah?

What needed to happen to get people ready for Jesus?

Make a picture of John

On some cardboard, trace a round lid or similar, to draw a circle.

Around the edge, write the words "Prepare the way of the Lord".

In the centre of the shape draw a picture of what you think John would have looked like.

Make a hole through the top, thread some wool through and hang it on the Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, you sent John to prepare people for Jesus, so they would listen to what he said.

Thank you that you want people to hear Jesus' words and come to know him.

Help us to always listen to Jesus' words too. Amen

20. The Ruler from Judah

Micah 5:2, 4

Read

Micah 5:2, 4

² *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”*

⁴ *He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.*

Talk

Do you know where you were born?

What did Micah know about where Jesus was going to be born? How did he know this?

Is Bethlehem chosen because it is a great big city?

What occupation or job does it sound like Jesus is going to have?

What are some of the things that a shepherd does?

Make a carpenter's decoration

On some cardboard, trace a round lid or similar, to draw a circle.

Cut out the circle and write “Jesus was a carpenter” around the edge.

Draw a hammer or saw or other tools that Jesus would have used to make things.

Make a hole in the top, thread some wool through and hang it on the Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you that it was your plan to bring a king from Bethlehem.

We thank you that even that small town could play a part in your plans for all of creation!

We thank you that even though Jesus was a ruler, he was humble and served people, never thinking anything was beneath him. Amen

21. The Town of David

Luke 2:1 - 5

Read

Luke 2:1 – 5

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Talk

How many people are in your family?

What big event was happening at the time when Jesus was born?

Where did Mary and Joseph go?

Why did Mary and Joseph go there?

Make a house decoration

Cut a square shape from cardboard with each side measuring about 7cm.

Decorate your square to make it look like what houses looked like in Bible times, leaving enough room to write the word Bethlehem underneath the picture (You can find some ideas here www.mytmb.me/nthouses, or in a children's Bible.)

Make a hole in the top, thread some wool through and hang it on the Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, thank you that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem for Jesus to be born, just as you had promised your people.

We thank you that you rule over everything you have made, and fulfil all your promises. Amen

22. The Branch from David's Line

Jeremiah 33:10 – 11, 14 - 16

Read

Read Jeremiah 33:10 - 11, 14 – 16

¹⁰ *"This is what the LORD says: 'You say about this place, "It is a desolate waste, without people or animals." Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more ¹¹ the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying,*

*"Give thanks to the LORD Almighty,
for the LORD is good;
his love endures forever."*

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the LORD.

¹⁴ *"The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfil the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.*

¹⁵ *"In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;
he will do what is just and right in the land.*

¹⁶ *In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.*

*This is the name by which it will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Saviour.'*

Talk

What is something that makes you really, really happy?
What does Jeremiah say is going to happen when Jesus comes?
What is something you can say thank you to God for?
What does God say Jesus will do for his people?
Whose family is Jesus a part of?

Make a cake to celebrate

Cut the bottom of a take-away style paper cup and glue a 2-3 cm wide strip of paper around the edge to form a cake.
Decorate the cake by colouring it in.

Carefully cut the heads off one or more matches and colour the tips yellow to look like birthday candles.

Punch a small hole in the top of the cake for each candle and poke candle through, sticking with tape on the underside.

Tape a loop of string to the side of the cake and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our loving Father, we thank you that you love to celebrate.

Thank you that the birth of Jesus is a great reason to celebrate.

Thank you that you rescued your people and gave them lots of reasons to celebrate. Amen

23. The Angel and the Shepherds

Luke 2:8 - 14

Read

Read Luke 2:8 – 14

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

Talk

Do you like surprises? What's the biggest surprise you've ever had?

What does the angel say to the shepherds?

What also happens when the angel appears?

How does Jesus bring peace on earth?

The angel describes Jesus in several ways. What do these descriptions tell us about who Jesus is?

Make a shepherd's crook

Cut a shepherd's crook out of brown cardboard, or plain card and colour it in. (Hint: You can get a great shepherd's crook shape by printing out a capital "J" in font like Arial at 550 point! Trace this and then cut it out.)

Cut some circles out of coloured paper by tracing a milk bottle lid.

With a colourful texta or marker, write the letters J, O, and Y on the circles and then colour and decorate them.

Stick the circles on the crook, spelling JOY from top to bottom.

Tape a loop of string to the back of your shepherd's crook and hang it on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Father, thank you for sending an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

Thank you that the birth of Jesus is good news for all people.

Help us to be joyful and give thanks that Jesus came into the world. Amen

24. The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:4 - 7

Read

Read Luke 2:4 – 7

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Talk

From where did Joseph and Mary set out on their journey?

Why was there no room for Mary and Joseph to stay in Bethlehem?

What happened while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem?

What did Mary do when her baby was born?

Why do you think Jesus wasn't born in a palace?

Make a baby Jesus in a manger

Cut out a piece of yellow paper (or paper coloured-in yellow) slightly larger than a matchbox or other small box.

Cut into the paper around all four edges to make a fringing edge like straw or hay. Push into the bottom of the box and stick down.

To make baby Jesus, either stick a large pale coloured bead to a rolled up cylinder of paper, or simply use the rolled up cylinder for the head also.

Draw baby Jesus' face.

Wrap scraps of fabric around the body (your paper cylinder) and around the head.

Loop some tape onto itself to stick baby Jesus into the matchbox manger.

Tape a loop of string to the bottom of the box and hang the manger on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus into the world.

We thank you that you kept all the promises you made to your people, and Jesus, our king, was born in Bethlehem.

Thank you that the king that we need has come to rule us and look after us! Amen.

25. The Magi Visit Jesus

Matthew 2:1 - 12

Read

Read Matthew 2:1 – 12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

*⁶ “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Talk

What is the best present you’ve ever given someone else?

Who comes to visit Jesus?

How did people know that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem?

How do the magi find Jesus?

What do the magi do when they find Jesus?

Make a star

Cut three stars out of paper or cardboard; one small, one medium, one large (templates to trace can be found at the end of this booklet).

Decorate each star differently, with colouring in, stickers, or any way you can imagine. Stick the smallest star onto the middle star, and the middle star onto the large star so that all three are stacked.

Punch a hole in the top of the large star, thread through some tinsel or string and hang on your Christmas tree.

Pray

Our Father in heaven, you guided that magi by a star in the sky so that they could worship Jesus.

Thank you that they honoured Jesus and presented him with gifts.

Please help us to honour and worship Jesus as we should, not just today, but every day of our lives. Amen.

Please join us this Christmas at
Trinity Mount Barker!

Christmas Eve

5:00pm: Kids' Christmas & Sausage Sizzle

10:00pm: Tea, coffee & mince pies

10:30pm: Communion Service

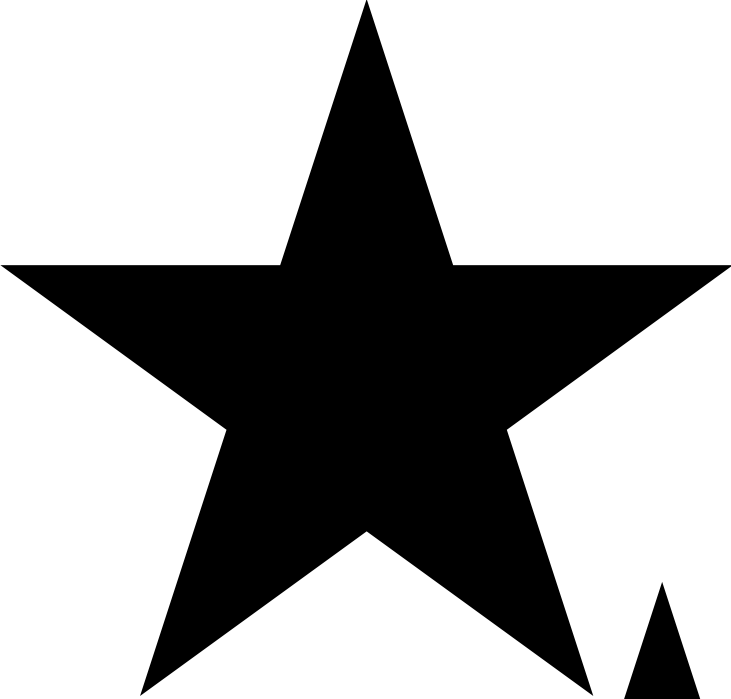
Christmas Day

9:00am: Family Service

All services will be held at

Cornerstone College

68 Adelaide Road, Mount Barker



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