Rooted Word Studio

2026 · BEGINS NOVEMBER 29

ADVENT DAILY DEVOTIONAL

COMPANION GUIDE TO ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

This year, make the days leading up to Christmas filled with faith, engaging God's Word daily, building your anticipation of the coming Christ child, and growing in the Light of the World.



FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT

HOPE · PEACE
JOY · LOVE

PLUS A BONUS TWELVE DAYS

THE CHRIST CANDLE CHRISTMASTIDE

NOVEMBER 29, 2026 —
JANUARY 6, 2027

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

ISAIAH 9:2

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HOPE

WEEK ONE · THE PROPHECY CANDLE



CANDLE COLOR

Traditionally purple.

LIT ON

Sunday, November 29, 2026 — the first Sunday of Advent.

ALSO CALLED

The Prophecy Candle — for the centuries of prophecy pointing to the Messiah.

THE CANDLE

The first candle is traditionally purple, lit on the first Sunday of Advent. It marks the start of waiting, expectation, and the centuries of prophecy pointing to the Messiah. Lighting it is a way of saying: we remember God's promises, and we are waiting on purpose.

ANCHOR VERSE

ISAIAH 9:2, 6

VERSE 2

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

VERSE 6

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

LIGHTING MOMENT

"We light this candle for Hope. For centuries, God's people waited for the light He promised. Tonight, we remember that we are still people who wait, and still people who hope, because God keeps His word."

THIS WEEK

- **Sunday · Light the Hope candle.** Read Isaiah 9:2-7 and name one thing you're waiting on God for this year.
- **Monday · Darkness and light.** Read Romans 8:24-25; turn off the lights for one meal and light a single candle instead.
- **Tuesday · The promise to Abraham.** Read Genesis 12:1-3; reflect on a promise someone kept to you.
- **Wednesday · The promise through David.** Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16; write down a promise of God you're holding onto.
- **Thursday · Hope in hard seasons.** Read Lamentations 3:22-24; send an encouraging message to someone who's waiting on something hard.
- **Friday · Hope produces action.** Read Philippians 1:6; pray joyfully, thanking God for the gospel work He is going to complete.
- **Saturday · Looking toward Sunday.** Reread this week's verse aloud before bed, ahead of lighting Candle 2 tomorrow.

DID YOU KNOW

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival" — the same root used for the arrival of a king.

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HOPE — GOING DEEPER

WEEK ONE · DAILY REFLECTION & RESPONSE

ICON LEGEND Each day offers four ways in, pick the one that fits your moment, or try them all.

- **Individual — Reflect.** For personal journaling and quiet reflection.
- **Couple — Discuss.** For two people to talk and pray through together.
- **Family — Talk.** For households with kids, younger and older.
- **Group — Share.** For small groups, Bible studies, or friends.

SUNDAY *Isaiah 9:2–7*

Isaiah doesn't just promise a vague "better day." He promises a specific child, given specific names, carrying a specific kind of rule, one of justice, righteousness, and peace without end (v.7). Tonight, as you light the Hope candle, look closely at what's actually promised here.

- **Reflect.** Journal one area of "darkness" where you're asking the Wonderful Counselor (v.6) for hope this Advent.
- **Discuss.** Read verse 4 together ("the yoke of his burden… you have broken"). Share one burden you're each carrying, and pray that God would break it.
- **Talk.** Read the names in verse 6 aloud. Ask which name means the most right now, then light the candle. [Younger kids: draw it. Older kids: write why.]
- **Share.** Read verse 7 together. Discuss where you've seen God's faithfulness increase this year, then close in prayer.

MONDAY *Romans 8:24–25*

Paul makes a strange claim here: hope you can already see isn't really hope at all. Real hope reaches for what hasn't arrived yet, and waits with patience, not anxiety.

- **Reflect.** Journal one thing you're hoping for that you "do not see" (v.25), and what patience looks like this week.
- **Discuss.** Read verse 25 aloud. Share where patience is being tested between you, and pray for endurance.
- **Talk.** Ask, "What's something we can't see yet but are waiting for?" [Younger kids: name it. Older kids: write about patience paying off.]
- **Share.** Discuss what "hope that is seen is not hope" (v.24) means in practice. Pray for each other's unseen hopes.

TUESDAY *Genesis 12:1–3*

Before Abram received the promise, he had to leave something behind. Hope in Scripture usually asks something of us first, a step of trust before the fulfillment is visible.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 1. What is God asking you to "go from" in order to walk in hope this season?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 2 together. Discuss one way your relationship could be a blessing to someone else this Advent.
- **Talk.** Read verse 3 aloud. Talk about a family you could bless this Christmas. [Younger kids: draw a gift. Older kids: write a plan.]
- **Share.** Discuss what it costs to trust a promise before you see it fulfilled. Share a step of faith someone is taking.

WEDNESDAY *2 Samuel 7:12–16*

This promise to David, an eternal throne through his offspring, finds its answer centuries later in Christ. Hope isn't only about your own waiting; it's a promise God has kept across generations.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 16. What does it mean to you that Jesus' kingdom never ends?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 14 together. Discuss what it means that God keeps family promises across generations.
- **Talk.** Ask what "forever" means, then read verse 16. [Younger kids: draw a crown. Older kids: write what makes His kingdom different.]
- **Share.** This promise came hundreds of years before Jesus. Discuss where you've seen God keep a long-term promise.

THURSDAY *Lamentations 3:22–24*

This verse is written from the middle of real grief, yet hope still holds. Hope isn't the absence of hard seasons. It's trusting God's mercy is new again tomorrow.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 23. What would it look like to receive today as a fresh mercy?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 22 together. Share a hard season you've walked through together and where you saw mercy.
- **Talk.** Talk about what "new every morning" means. [Younger kids: mornings as a fresh start. Older kids: journal a hard season.]
- **Share.** Discuss how hope and grief can coexist. Share a hard season someone is in, and pray for one another.

FRIDAY *Philippians 1:6*

Paul is "sure" God will finish what He started. Hope isn't passive waiting, it's confidence that produces action, trusting God's work in you is still moving forward.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 6. What "good work" do you sense God started in you?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 6 together. Share one way you've watched each other grow, and pray for continued growth.
- **Talk.** Talk about something you're each getting better at. [Younger kids: name it. Older kids: journal one way they've grown.]
- **Share.** Discuss Paul's confidence, "sure of this." What does that kind of confidence look like practically?

SATURDAY *Isaiah 9:2, 6 (revisited)*

Reread Isaiah 9:2–7 aloud, the verses that opened this week. Hope is in Abraham's seed, David's throne, mercy during lament, and the completion of what was started. It all points to the same thing: every promise of God is kept in His Son. Hope that is confident in Jesus leads to peace, which becomes our focus next week.

- **Reflect.** Reread verse 2 and thank God for one specific "light" you noticed this week.
- **Talk.** Share favorite moments from Hope week. [Younger kids: a favorite drawing. Older kids: a favorite verse.]
- **Discuss.** Reread verse 6. Which name became most meaningful to you this week, and why?
- **Share.** Share one thing Hope week taught you. Close reading Isaiah 9:2 and 6, praying for peace as next week begins.

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PEACE

WEEK TWO · THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE



CANDLE COLOR

Traditionally purple, lit alongside the first.

LIT ON

Sunday, December 6, 2026 — the second Sunday of Advent.

ALSO CALLED

The Bethlehem Candle — for the town where Christ was born.

THE CANDLE

The second candle is purple, lit on the second Sunday of Advent alongside the first. It points to Bethlehem and to the peace the angels announced at Christ's birth, peace that is bigger than the absence of conflict.

ANCHOR VERSE

LUKE 2:14

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

LIGHTING THE CANDLES Light the Hope candle, then light Peace.

LIGHTING MOMENT

"We light this candle for Peace. The angels announced peace on earth the night Christ was born, not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God with us. Tonight, we remember that His peace is available to us now."

THIS WEEK

- **Sunday · Peace on earth.** Read Luke 2:8-14 and name one place you need peace this year.
- **Monday · Peace with God.** Read Romans 5:1; reflect on what it means to be at peace with God, not just calm.
- **Tuesday · The prophecy of Bethlehem.** Read Micah 5:2 and 5; look up where Bethlehem is on a map, and consider what it means that this promised Ruler would also be called "their peace."
- **Wednesday · Peace with others.** Read Romans 12:18; reach out to reconcile or check in with someone you've had tension with.
- **Thursday · Peace over anxiety.** Read Philippians 4:6-7; name one worry and give it to God in prayer instead of carrying it.
- **Friday · Peace as a gift.** Read John 14:27; do one thing today that lets your heart be "not troubled."
- **Saturday · Looking toward Sunday.** Reread this week's verse aloud before bed. The angels first announced good news of great joy (v.10), then proclaimed peace, tomorrow we light the Joy candle.

DID YOU KNOW

Bethlehem means "house of bread" in Hebrew, fitting for the town where the Bread of Life was born.

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PEACE — GOING DEEPER

WEEK TWO · DAILY REFLECTION & RESPONSE

ICON LEGEND Each day offers four ways in, pick the one that fits your moment, or try them all.

- **Individual — Reflect.** For personal journaling and quiet reflection.
- **Couple — Discuss.** For two people to talk and pray through together.
- **Family — Talk.** For households with kids, younger and older.
- **Group — Share.** For small groups, Bible studies, or friends.

SUNDAY *Luke 2:8–14*

Last week, Isaiah called the promised child the Prince of Peace (9:6). Tonight we watch that title become real. The same night He's born, heaven itself declares it, not to kings or religious leaders, but to shepherds keeping watch in a field. Peace isn't announced from a palace. It arrives in the middle of an ordinary night, to ordinary people, and changes what "glory to God" and "peace on earth" actually mean.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 10 ("Fear not… good news of great joy"). Where do you need to hear "fear not" tonight?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 14 together. Talk about what it means that peace here is tied to God's favor ("those with whom he is pleased"), not the absence of hardship.
- **Talk.** Read verse 12 aloud (the sign: a baby in a manger). Ask why God might have chosen such an ordinary sign for something so big. [Younger kids: draw the manger scene. Older kids: write why an ordinary sign matters.]
- **Share.** Read verse 9 together ("they were filled with great fear"). Discuss a time God's presence felt overwhelming before it felt peaceful.

MONDAY *Romans 5:1*

This peace isn't about calm feelings or the absence of conflict with other people, it's a settled peace with God Himself, secured "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Before you can live peaceably with anyone else, that's Wednesday's focus, this is the peace that has to be true first.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "justified by faith" (v.1). Where do you still try to earn peace with God instead of receiving it?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 1 together. Share what changes when you know peace with God isn't dependent on your performance that day.
- **Talk.** Explain "peace with God" simply: it means the relationship isn't broken anymore. [Younger kids: talk about making up after an argument. Older kids: write what it means that Jesus made the relationship right.]
- **Share.** Discuss the difference between peace with God and just feeling calm. Share where you've confused the two.

TUESDAY *Micah 5:2, 5*

Bethlehem was too small to matter, "too little to be among the clans of Judah" (v.2), yet this insignificant town produced the One who "shall be their peace" (v.5). God's pattern is consistent: He starts small, and the peace He brings is bigger than the place He starts it in.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 2. Where in your life feels "too little" to matter, and how might God be at work there anyway?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 5 together ("he shall be their peace"). Discuss one way your home could be a small place where real peace starts.
- **Talk.** Look up Bethlehem on a map together, then read verse 2. Talk about how something small can still be important. [Younger kids: name something small that matters a lot. Older kids: write about a small thing God used in the Bible.]
- **Share.** Discuss verse 5's claim, "he shall be their peace." What does it mean for a person, not just a message or plan, to be someone's peace?

WEDNESDAY *Romans 12:18*

If Monday was peace with God, today is peace with people, and Paul is honest that it isn't always fully in your control ("so far as it depends on you"). Peace with God is the foundation. Peace with others is where that foundation gets tested.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "so far as it depends on you." Is there a relationship where you've stopped doing your part for peace?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 18 together. Talk honestly about one area of tension between you, and what your part in making peace could look like.
- **Talk.** Ask each person to name one way they can "live peaceably" at home this week. [Younger kids: name one kind thing to do for a sibling. Older kids: write about a friendship that needs peace.]
- **Share.** Discuss what "as far as it depends on you" means when peace isn't fully up to you. Pray for a specific relationship someone in the group is working on.

THURSDAY *Philippians 4:6–7*

This peace "surpasses all understanding" (v.7), it isn't the result of the anxious circumstance being solved. It's a guard over your heart and mind while the circumstance is still unresolved, given in exchange for prayer, not for answers.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 6. Name one thing you're anxious about and "make it known to God" in writing right now.
- **Discuss.** Read verse 7 together. Share one worry you're each carrying, and pray it out loud together instead of just discussing it.
- **Talk.** Ask what "worry" feels like, then talk about giving worries to God in prayer instead of carrying them alone. [Younger kids: draw a worry, then "give" the paper to a parent. Older kids: journal a current worry.]
- **Share.** Discuss the difference between peace that comes from a problem being solved and peace that "guards" you while it isn't. Pray for each other's current anxieties.

FRIDAY *John 14:27*

Jesus distinguishes His peace from the world's version: "not as the world gives." The world's peace depends on circumstances lining up. His peace is a gift, given before the circumstances change, that's why He can say "let not your hearts be troubled" in the same breath as leaving His disciples.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "not as the world gives." How does the peace you usually chase differ from what Jesus offers here?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 27 together. Share a current circumstance where you're tempted to wait for peace instead of receiving it now.
- **Talk.** Talk about the difference between peace that depends on everything going right and peace that doesn't. [Younger kids: talk about feeling safe even when things are scary. Older kids: write about a hard time when they still felt peace.]
- **Share.** Discuss what it looks like practically to receive Christ's peace "not as the world gives." Share where you need that kind of peace this week.

SATURDAY *Luke 2:14 (revisited)*

Reread Luke 2:14 aloud, the announcement that opened this week. Peace with God, peace in Bethlehem's promise, peace with others, peace over anxiety, peace as a gift, all of it traces back to this one announcement in the sky. And in that same moment, the angel had already called it something else first: good news of great joy (v.10). Peace that is real produces joy, tomorrow we light the Joy candle.

- **Reflect.** Look back through what you journaled this week. Reread verse 14 and thank God for one specific place you found peace.
- **Discuss.** Which verse this week (peace with God, peace with others, peace over anxiety, or peace as a gift) did your relationship need most, and why?
- **Talk.** Ask everyone to share their favorite moment from Peace week. Reread verse 14 together before bed. [Younger kids: share a favorite drawing. Older kids: share their favorite verse from this week.]
- **Share.** Go around and have each person share one thing Peace week taught them. Close by reading Luke 2:14 together and praying for joy as next week begins.

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JOY

WEEK THREE · THE SHEPHERD'S CANDLE



CANDLE COLOR

Traditionally rose or pink, lit alongside the first two.

LIT ON

Sunday, December 13, 2026 — the third Sunday of Advent.

ALSO CALLED

The Shepherd's Candle — for the shepherds' joyful response to the angels' announcement.

THE CANDLE

The third candle is traditionally rose or pink, lit on the third Sunday of Advent alongside the first two. It marks a shift in tone, from hope and peace to joy, echoing the shepherds' overwhelmed response to the angels' announcement.

ANCHOR VERSE

LUKE 2:10

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold,
I bring you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people."

LIGHTING THE CANDLES Light the Hope candle, then Peace, and finally Joy.

LIGHTING MOMENT

"We light this candle for Joy. The angels announced good news of great joy to shepherds in a field, ordinary people who became the first witnesses. Tonight, we remember that this joy is for us too, meant to be received and shared."

THIS WEEK

- **Sunday · Good news of great joy.** Read Luke 2:8-20 and name something that's genuinely brought you joy this year.
- **Monday · Joy as strength.** Read Nehemiah 8:10; do something today that celebrates rather than just copes.
- **Tuesday · Joy in God's presence.** Read Psalm 16:11; spend five quiet minutes just being with God, no requests, just presence.
- **Wednesday · Joy made full.** Read John 15:11; ask what it would look like to let your joy in Jesus be "full" today, not partial.
- **Thursday · Joy in hardship.** Read James 1:2-3; name a hard thing you're facing and thank God for what it's building in you.
- **Friday · Joy in anticipation.** Read John 3:29; reflect on what it means to find your joy in someone else's arrival, not your own plans.
- **Saturday · Looking toward Sunday.** Reread Luke 2:10 aloud before bed. The great joy the angels announced was tied to good news, a Savior is born. Tomorrow, we celebrate that act of love as we light the Love candle.

DID YOU KNOW

"Gaudete Sunday," when the rose candle is lit, takes its name from the Latin word that opened the day's traditional reading: "Rejoice."

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JOY — GOING DEEPER

WEEK THREE · DAILY REFLECTION & RESPONSE

ICON LEGEND Each day offers four ways in, pick the one that fits your moment, or try them all.

- **Individual — Reflect.** For personal journaling and quiet reflection.
- **Couple — Discuss.** For two people to talk and pray through together.
- **Family — Talk.** For households with kids, younger and older.
- **Group — Share.** For small groups, Bible studies, or friends.

SUNDAY *Luke 2:8–20*

The shepherds didn't just receive good news, they had to decide what to do with it. Verse 15: "Let us go over to Bethlehem." Verse 20: they returned "glorifying and praising God." Real joy moves toward Christ, then overflows outward.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 20. What would it look like for your joy today to become worship, not just a feeling?
- **Discuss.** What's your "Bethlehem"; where are you being called to worship Jesus and find joy?
- **Talk.** Read verse 17 aloud, the shepherds told everyone. Ask who you could tell about Jesus this Christmas. [Younger kids: name one person. Older kids: write what they'd say.]
- **Share.** Share when you have glorified and praised God most and how you can foster more of that.

MONDAY *Nehemiah 8:10*

The people wept hearing God's Word, but Nehemiah stopped them: don't grieve, celebrate, because "the joy of the LORD is your strength." Joy here isn't a mood, it's fuel for obedience.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "the joy of the LORD is your strength." Where do you need God's joy to strengthen you this week?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 10 together. Talk about a time joy gave you strength to keep going.
- **Talk.** Plan a small celebration together tonight, nothing big, just marking the day as good. [Younger kids: pick a treat. Older kids: plan it.]
- **Share.** Discuss what it means that joy can be a source of strength, not just a result of things going well.

TUESDAY *Psalm 16:11*

David doesn't say joy is found in circumstances, he says it's found "in your presence." Fullness of joy isn't a future reward, it's available now, close to God.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "in your presence there is fullness of joy." What does time in God's presence actually look like for you?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 11 together. Talk about what "fullness" of joy looks like versus what you usually settle for.
- **Talk.** Sit quietly together for two minutes before talking. [Younger kids: think of one good thing. Older kids: journal in the quiet.]
- **Share.** Discuss what stands in your way of having joy in God's presence regularly? How can you help someone else enter into His presence in fullness of joy?

WEDNESDAY *John 15:11*

Jesus says these things, abiding in Him, keeping His commands, so that His joy would be in you, and yours would be full. Joy is the fruit of staying connected to Him, not a separate pursuit.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "that your joy may be full." What's one way you've been chasing joy outside of abiding in Christ?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 11 together. Talk about what "abiding" in Jesus practically looks like in your relationship.
- **Talk.** Ask what it means to stay close to Jesus, like staying close to family. [Younger kids: talk about staying near a parent. Older kids: write one way to abide this week.]
- **Share.** Discuss the connection between abiding and joy. Where have you seen full joy come from nearness to Christ?

THURSDAY *James 1:2–3*

James doesn't say trials are joyful, he says count them as joy, a choice, because of what they produce. Joy this side of heaven can coexist with real hardship.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "count it all joy." Name a current trial and one thing God might be producing through it.
- **Discuss.** Read verse 3 together. Share a hard season that ended up strengthening your faith.
- **Talk.** Talk about a hard thing your family faced and found joy on the other side of. [Younger kids: name something hard that got better. Older kids: journal about steadfastness.]
- **Share.** Discuss what "counting it as joy" looks like in the middle of a trial, without minimizing the real difficulty of life's trials.

FRIDAY *John 3:29*

John the Baptist wasn't the bridegroom, he was the friend, and his joy was complete just hearing the bridegroom's voice. Advent joy works the same way, it's not about being the main character, it's anticipating Christ's arrival.

- **Reflect.** Journal on "this joy of mine is now complete." What would it look like for your joy to come from Christ's arrival, not your own plans?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 29 together. Talk about what it means to rejoice in someone else's moment rather than needing the spotlight.
- **Talk.** Talk about the excitement of waiting for something good, like Christmas morning. [Younger kids: name what they're excited for. Older kids: write about anticipating Jesus.]
- **Share.** Share a moment you took joy in sharing Jesus with others. Discuss the relationship between the bridegroom, the bride, and the bridegroom's friend.

SATURDAY *Luke 2:10 (revisited)*

Reread Luke 2:10 aloud, the verse that opened this week. Strength, presence, fullness, joy through trials, joy in anticipation, all of it starts here: good news of great joy. That news was itself an act of love, a Savior given. Tomorrow, we light the Love candle.

- **Reflect.** Look back through what you journaled this week. Reread verse 10 and thank God for one specific joy you noticed.
- **Discuss.** Which verse this week spoke most to your relationship, and why?
- **Talk.** Ask everyone to share their favorite moment from Joy week. Reread verse 10 together before bed. [Younger kids: a favorite drawing. Older kids: a favorite verse.]
- **Share.** Share one thing Joy week taught you. Close reading Luke 2:10, praying for love as next week begins.

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LOVE

WEEK FOUR · THE ANGEL'S CANDLE



CANDLE COLOR
Traditionally purple.

LIT ON
Sunday, December 20, 2026 — the fourth Sunday of Advent.

ALSO CALLED
The Angel's Candle — for the angelic announcements to Mary and Joseph.

THE CANDLE
The fourth candle is traditionally purple, lit on the fourth and final Sunday of Advent alongside the first three. It represents God's love, most fully shown in the sending of His Son, and points to the angelic announcements made to Mary and Joseph.

ANCHOR VERSE

1 JOHN 4:9

In this the love of God was made manifest among us,
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through him.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES Light the Hope candle, then Peace, then Joy, and finally Love.

LIGHTING MOMENT

"We light this candle for Love. God did not send a message, He sent His Son. Tonight, we remember that His love was costly, and it was for us."

THIS WEEK

- **Sunday · Love sent, not earned.** Read 1 John 4:7-10, look up the word "propitiation," and share how that demonstrates God's love.
- **Monday · The cost of yes.** Read Luke 1:26-38; think about a time it was hard to say "let it be to me according to your word."
- **Tuesday · Love that stays.** Read Matthew 1:18-24; reflect on someone who stayed committed to you through a hard situation.
- **Wednesday · Love defined.** Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; pick the one phrase that's most difficult for you and resolve to practice that aspect of love today.
- **Thursday · Love so great.** Read John 3:16; write your own short version of why God sent Jesus.

DID YOU KNOW

This candle is sometimes called the "Angel's Candle" because two separate angelic announcements, to Mary and to Joseph, set the Christmas story in motion.

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LOVE — GOING DEEPER

WEEK FOUR · DAILY REFLECTION & RESPONSE

ICON LEGEND Each day offers four ways in, pick the one that fits your moment, or try them all.

- **Individual — Reflect.** For personal journaling and quiet reflection.
- **Couple — Discuss.** For two people to talk and pray through together.
- **Family — Talk.** For households with kids, younger and older.
- **Group — Share.** For small groups, Bible studies, or friends.

SUNDAY *1 John 4:7–10*

John doesn't start with our love for God, he starts with His love for us: sending His Son as "propitiation," a costly satisfying of what our sin required. Love, biblically, is proven by a gift, not a feeling.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 10. What does it mean that love was demonstrated toward you before you loved back?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 9 together. Share what "God sent his only Son" cost, not just gave, but sent to die.
- **Talk.** Explain simply: propitiation means Jesus took the punishment we deserved. [Younger kids: talk about someone taking the blame for them. Older kids: write what propitiation means in their own words.]
- **Share.** Discuss what would be different had God's love been shown through incarnation only and not resurrection.

MONDAY *Luke 1:26–38*

Mary's "yes" wasn't simple, it risked her reputation, her marriage, her future. Real love, God's toward us and ours toward Him, often costs something before it's celebrated.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 38. What has it cost you to say yes to something God asked?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 34 together, Mary's honest question. Share a time you doubted before you obeyed.
- **Talk.** Talk about a hard "yes" someone in your family has said. [Younger kids: name a brave choice. Older kids: journal about a costly yes.]
- **Share.** Discuss what it means to trust God with an outcome you can't control, like Mary did.

TUESDAY *Matthew 1:18–24*

Joseph had a way out, and it was the reasonable one. Instead, he stayed, obeyed a dream, and loved a family that wasn't his idea. Love that stays isn't always love that understands everything first.

- **Reflect.** Journal on verse 24. Where is God asking you to stay faithful without full understanding?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 20 together. Share what it means to trust God's direction over your own plan.
- **Talk.** Talk about someone who chose to stay committed even when it was hard. [Younger kids: name someone who kept a promise. Older kids: write about faithfulness.]
- **Share.** Discuss what "righteous" love, like Joseph's, looks like when it's inconvenient.

WEDNESDAY *1 Corinthians 13:4–7*

Paul doesn't define love as a feeling, he defines it as a list of actions: patient, kind, not envious, not easily angered. Love is something you do, especially the parts that are hardest.

- **Reflect.** Journal on the phrase you chose to practice today. Why is it the hardest for you?
- **Discuss.** Read verse 7 together. Share which phrase describes your relationship best right now, and which needs work.
- **Talk.** Pick one phrase and talk about what it looks like at home this week. [Younger kids: act it out. Older kids: journal about practicing it.]
- **Share.** Discuss how the Father's act of sending the Son demonstrates each of these descriptions of love.

THURSDAY *John 3:16*

This is the verse the whole season points to: God's love measured in what He gave, not what He said. Whoever believes receives life, love proven and love offered are the same act.

- **Reflect.** Journal your own short version of this verse, using your own words for "the world."
- **Talk.** Ask why God gave His Son instead of just sending a message. [Younger kids: draw the verse. Older kids: write their own version.]
- **Discuss.** Read the verse together. Share what "whoever believes" means for your own assurance.
- **Share.** Discuss how this verse summarizes everything the group has studied this Advent.

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Rooted Word Studio

CHRIST

WEEK FIVE · THE CHRIST CANDLE

CANDLE COLOR
White

LIT ON
Friday, December 25, 2026, through Tuesday, January 5, 2027 — Christmas Day through Twelfth Night (Christmastide, the Twelve Days of Christmas).

ALSO CALLED
The Christ Candle

THE CANDLE
The fifth candle is white, set at the center of the wreath. Lit on Christmas Day, it remains lit throughout Christmastide, the Twelve Days of Christmas leading to Epiphany, representing Christ Himself, the light of the world, fulfilling everything the first four candles anticipated.

ANCHOR VERSE

JOHN 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life."

LIGHTING THE CANDLES Light all five candles.

LIGHTING MOMENT

"We light this candle for Christ. Every hope, every peace, every joy, every love finds its fulfillment here. Tonight, the wreath is complete: the Light of the world has come, and the darkness has not overcome it."

THIS WEEK

- **Fri, Dec 25 · The Light has come.** John 1:1-5, 14
- **Sat, Dec 26 · A light for all people.** Luke 2:29-32
- **Sun, Dec 27 · Following the light.** Matthew 2:1-2
- **Mon, Dec 28 · Arise, shine.** Isaiah 60:1-3
- **Tue, Dec 29 · Received as children.** John 1:9-13
- **Wed, Dec 30 · Light in the heart.** 2 Corinthians 4:6
- **Thu, Dec 31 · The lamp that never dims.** Revelation 21:23-24
- **Fri, Jan 1 · Walking in the light.** 1 John 1:5-7
- **Sat, Jan 2 · You are the light.** Matthew 5:14-16
- **Sun, Jan 3 · Shining without complaint.** Philippians 2:14-15
- **Mon, Jan 4 · No longer in darkness.** John 12:46
- **Tue, Jan 5 · Twelve days of light.** John 8:12

DID YOU KNOW

The twelve days from Christmas Day to Epiphany, January 6, are called Christmastide. Many families keep the Christ candle burning each of these twelve days as a reminder that the Light has come and remains.

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CHRIST — WEEK FIVE

GOING DEEPER — TWELVE DAYS OF LIGHT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 *John 1:1-5, 14*

Marvel that Jesus in the manger is the Word who spoke light into existence. Who is one person you will intentionally share the Light of the World with this season?

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26 *Luke 2:29-32*

Rejoice that God's grace didn't wait for you to seek Him first, He revealed His salvation to a watching, waiting old man, and to you. Who outside your usual circle will you make sure hears this good news?

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 *Matthew 2:1-2*

Notice that God pursued the wise men across a foreign sky before they ever sought Him by name. What step of obedience have you been putting off until you understand more?

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28 *Isaiah 60:1-3*

Believe that the glory now resting on you is a gift, not something you earned by shining first. Where will you let that glory show today instead of hiding it?

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29 *John 1:9-13*

Treasure that becoming a child of God was never about blood or effort, it was given to you the moment you received Him. Who will you tell that they can be adopted into this same family?

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30 *2 Corinthians 4:6*

Remember that the same God who commanded light out of nothing once shone that same light into your own heart, uninvited and unearned. What part of your heart will you finally let that light reach today?

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31 *Revelation 21:23-24*

Hope in the light that will never need replacing, because it was never yours to maintain in the first place. What habit or fear from this year will you leave behind rather than carry into the next?

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1 *1 John 1:5-7*

Receive that walking in the light was never about being flawless, it's the place where His blood keeps cleansing you as you walk. What sin have you been hiding in the dark that you will finally bring into the light this year?

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2 *Matthew 5:14-16*

Wonder that Christ trusted His own light to people like you, not because you'd earned the privilege, but because He chose to shine through you anyway. Where will you put that light on a hill this week?

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 *Philippians 2:14-15*

Admit that shining as a light was never meant to come from your own strength, gritted teeth and grumbling won't do it, only grace can. What complaint will you release today so His light isn't dimmed by it?

MONDAY, JANUARY 4 *John 12:46*

Rest in this: Christ didn't wait for you to find your way out of the dark, He came looking for you while you were still in it. What is one way you will bring His light into someone's darkness this week?

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5 *John 8:12 (revisited)*

Recall that everything this season gave you, hope, peace, joy, love, light, was a gift you didn't create, only received. As Christmastide ends, what will you carry forward so this season doesn't close when the candles go out?

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