



THE CREEK CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Gather around as a family to celebrate the gift of Jesus and spread joy as you complete Christmas challenges.

BLESSINGS JAR

Throughout the month of December write down at least one blessing a day. On Christmas day, celebrate what God has been doing within your family!

ADVENT WREATH

Take time every Sunday to read the story of how God sent joy, hope, peace, and love to the world with the gift of His Son, Jesus.

JESSE TREE

Starting on December 1, read a passage of scripture together and then place the appropriate sticker on the Jesse Tree.

CHRISTMAS EVE INVITE

Invite someone you know to join you for Christmas Eve services at The Creek!





JESSE TREE



INSTRUCTIONS

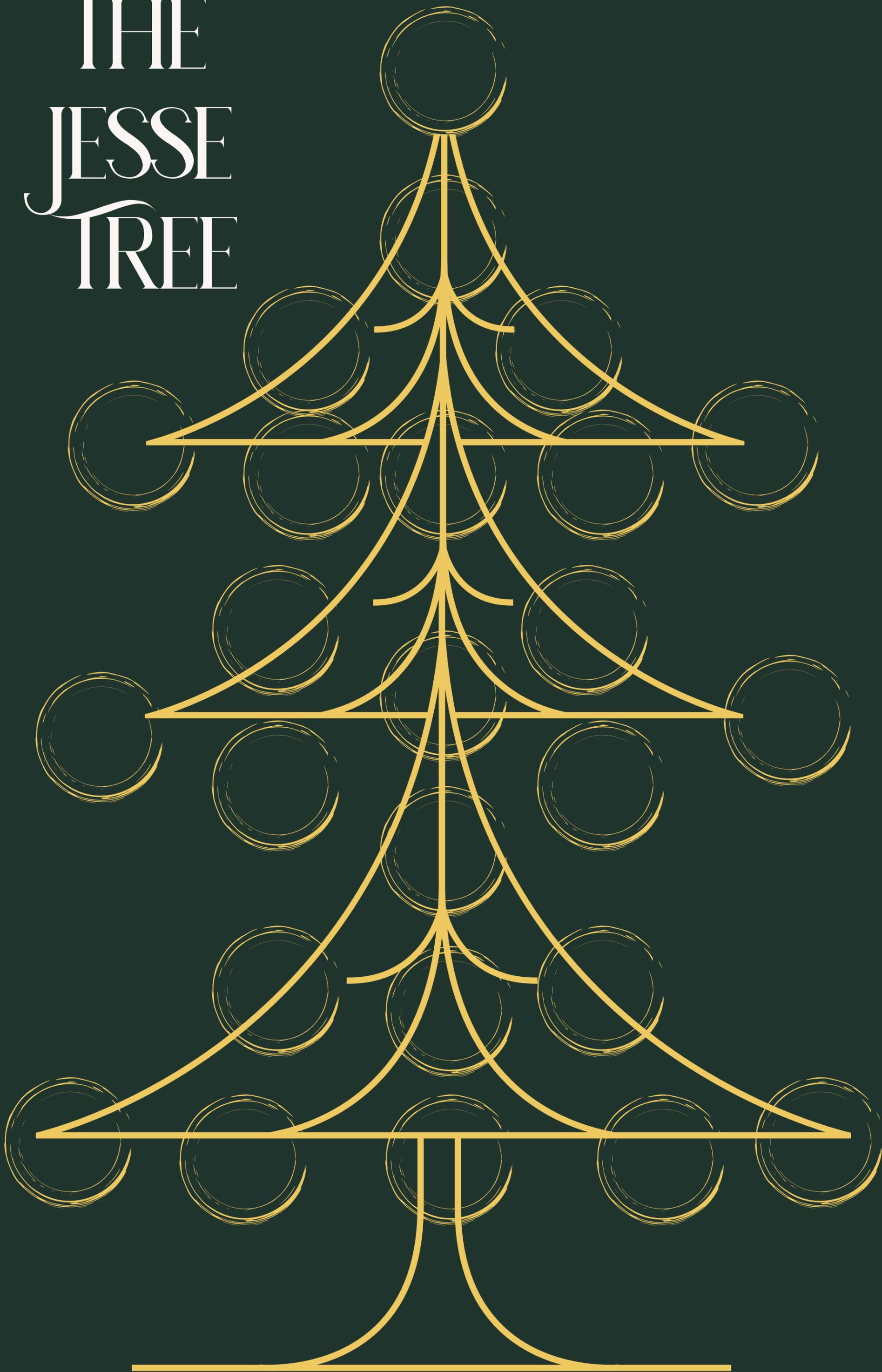
What is a Jesse Tree?

The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories of Jesus' family tree. Each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone from Jesus' lineage and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you'll see how God prepared for Jesus' birth through many generations.

Where does the Jesse Tree come from?

The Jesse Tree tradition is rooted in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. And Jesus is descended from the line of David. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Each symbol represents a story from within this family tree and a step toward the birth of Jesus.

THE JESSE TREE





DECEMBER 1



READ: Isaiah 11:1-2

LISTEN: Long ago, God's people were kicked out of their neighborhood and sent to live somewhere else. Life was hard, and their new neighbors were mean. God's people weren't being kind, either. It seemed like everyone only cared about themselves. Some little kids had no parents and no one took care of them. Some old people had no family and nobody bothered to check in on them.

God was fed up with that behavior. He cares about people and wants them to care about each other! So, he told his people he was going to put a stop to it. Just like when you would cut down a big tree, that's the end. It stops growing. But God made a promise: a tiny branch would sprout out of the dead tree stump. A fresh green shoot would start growing. Things wouldn't be dead anymore.

That little branch is Jesus. He's coming from the stump of his great-great-way-back-greatgrandpa, Jesse. For the rest of Advent, we're going to hear more stories about the people in Jesus' family history and about how they helped God bring new life to his people.

PRAY: God, you give us hope. Thank you for giving us Jesus, like new growth in spring. Would you help us to pay attention to him this Advent? Amen.

DECEMBER 2



READ: Genesis 1:1, 27-31

LISTEN: Did you know that when God made humans, he made us to look like him? God made all the stars and planets, all the beluga whales and blue jays, all the buffalo and begonias—but God didn't make any of those things in his image.

It was only when he made humans that he said, "Let's make them like us." It's true! Something about you is made to look just like God. Is it your eyes? When you smile, do they crinkle at the corners, just like God's do? Is it your hair? Does God have a cowlick in just the same place you do? Maybe it's your laugh. When something is so silly you can hardly breathe, do you sound like God sounds?

It's hard to know exactly what God looks and sounds like—but we know what Jesus is like. Jesus is God in the form of a human being. Jesus looks exactly like God. He is God! So if you're wondering what about you resembles God, you can just think about Jesus. You might not have his hair color, and your body might be built differently than his, but your heart can look just like Jesus' heart.

PRAY: Wow, God! We feel pretty special that you made us like you. Would you help us get to know Jesus so that we can look more and more like him? Amen.

DECEMBER 3



READ :Genesis 3:12-13, 22-23; Isaiah 53:6

LISTEN: Sunshine warms the garden, and big trees make cool, shady spots in just the right places. Flowers bloom wildly. Birds sing. Bunnies scamper. This garden, with a tree right in the middle, is the place where God lives with the people he created.

But when Adam and Eve ate the fruit, God knew he couldn't trust them to live in the garden anymore. He sent them away. Since then, people haven't been able to live as close to God as Adam and Eve did.

The good news is that God has been working hard so we can live with him again. In the Bible, we get a sneak preview of the end of the story. God is building a city—with a tree right in the middle—where we will live with him again! So how do we get from the tree at the beginning to the tree at the end? God uses another tree. That tree got chopped down and put together in the shape of a cross. When Jesus died on that tree, he closed the distance between us and God. Jesus made it so that we could return to a joyful, peaceful life with God.

PRAY: Loving God, we're sorry for doing things that put a gap between us and you. Jesus, thank you for closing that gap when you died. We're excited to live with you one day! Amen.

DECEMBER 4



READ: Genesis 9:8-17

LISTEN: God's desire for his people has always been for them to be close to him and choose to live the way he knows is best. Sadly, during the time of Noah, people were not living lives that honored God. They chose to live their own ways, and this brought God much sorrow. His heart was so grieved by the sins of the people he thought it best to start over with Noah's family.

God instructed Noah to build an ark, load it with animals, and ride out a very long storm. The flood that followed the storm would provide a reset and wash away all the death, destruction, and disconnection that came from people not living the way God knew was best.

After the storm, God made a promise. He promised that never again would he do a reset using a flood. He provided the rainbow in the sky as a visual reminder to all people that he always keeps his promises.

There are two important things we can learn about God from this story: 1. He wants what's best for us and he knows that sin isn't what's best. 2. God provides a way to rescue us from our sins and we can trust his promises. God knew people would continue to sin and always need to be rescued. He promised to send a Savior, his son Jesus, to rescue us permanently. We know from the story of Noah he always keeps his promises, and the promise of Jesus would surely come.

PRAY: God, thank you for rescuing us from sin. Help us to remember your promises when we see rainbows. Amen.

DECEMBER 5



READ : Genesis 12:2-3; 15:5-6

LISTEN: If there's a clear night this week, go outside with your family before you go to bed. Be sure to bundle up if it's cold outside! Find a spot where you can see the sky and look up. Hopefully, the sky is dark enough that you're able to see the tiny pinpricks of stars, way off in the distance. The longer you look, the more stars you'll be able to see.

This is how God showed Abraham how big Abraham's family would be. God promised Abraham that he would have one son and so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren that he wouldn't be able to count them, even if he tried.

Did you realize that you're part of Abraham's family? When God showed Abraham all those stars, he was including you, too! Because of Jesus Christ, we're adopted into that same family—the family of Abraham and the family of God. The people in the stories you're reading this Advent are your great-great-great grandmas and grandpas!

PRAY: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thank you for making me part of your family. I'm thankful that I get to be in the same family as Jesus. Amen.

DECEMBER 6



READ : Genesis 28:10-15

LISTEN: What kinds of things do you dream about? My dreams are usually silly, mixed-up stories. Sometimes they're scary or strange.

Jacob had a pretty strange dream. He dreamed about a stairway that reached from the ground all the way up into the sky, with angels climbing up and down on it. And in his dream, he heard God talking to him. God told Jacob that God was going to give him the land all around him. Jacob's great-great-grandchildren's great-great-grandchildren would move far away and would be a blessing to everyone else. God also promised Jacob He would stay near him wherever he went. What a wonderful promise!

Sometimes, we're so busy during the day that we don't notice God. God waited until Jacob had slowed down, gotten quiet, and fallen asleep to talk to him. Nothing distracted Jacob from hearing God's voice. God's words were so thrilling that they woke Jacob right up, and he promised to serve God in return.

PRAY: God, thank you for your promise to Jacob. Will you help me pay attention to you and listen when you have something to tell me? Amen.

DECEMBER 7



READ : Genesis 37:1-36

LISTEN: Little brothers can be the worst. In Joseph's case, his father, Jacob, loved him more than all his brothers. Jacob gave Joseph a special coat, which made them jealous. And at the breakfast table in the mornings, Joseph liked to tell his family about his dreams. He often dreamed about being in charge of all his brothers. That made his brothers furious. Big brothers can be the worst, too. In this story, Joseph's jealous brothers decided to kill him and his stupid dreams. They didn't kill him, but they did take his special coat and sell him to slave traders for twenty pieces of silver. Joseph isn't the only child to have been his father's favorite and make his brothers want to kill him. The Bible says that Jesus is God's beloved son, which is kind of like God's favorite. And when Jesus started sharing his message with people, they got so mad they tried to kill him. They took his coat, too. The good news is that the story about Joseph and his brothers ends well. Joseph does end up being in charge and helps save his family—just like in the story of Jesus. Jesus is sold for thirty pieces of silver and then killed. But he comes back to life and is king over the whole world. The people that hated Jesus are the same people that he came to save. And do you know who those people are? They are you and me.

PRAY: Wow, Jesus! I'm amazed that you and Joseph were willing to love the people who hated you. I'm also thankful because it means that you love me and have saved me. Amen.

DECEMBER 8



READ : Exodus 3:1-10

LISTEN: God's people were slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years. This made God sad, and he knew it was time to rescue his people from slavery through his servant Moses. In verse 7, the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, to a land flowing with milk and honey."

Did you catch those important parts about God's character?

He sees us.

He hears us.

He knows us.

And because he sees us and hears us and knows us, he is quick to come to our aid when we need him. It doesn't matter if we're a slave struggling in Egypt or a child struggling in modern day America, God always sees us, always hears our prayers, and always knows what we're going through. It's what he does. And he does it because he loves us.

PRAY: God, thank you so much that you see us, hear us, and know us. Thank you for loving us and always being there for us.

DECEMBER 9



READ : Exodus 12:21-23

LISTEN: God's plan to rescue his people from slavery in Egypt involved the sacrifice of a perfect male lamb. Each family was instructed to pick a lamb and keep that lamb in their home with them for several days. At just the right time, each family had to kill their perfect lamb and paint the doorposts of their home with blood from their lamb. The blood marked which families were God's people and needed rescued out of slavery in Egypt. The Passover lambs had the very important job of dwelling with each family and sacrificing themselves for the lives of others.

Does that sound familiar to you? There's another Passover Lamb that came many years later. He, too, had the very important job of dwelling with the people and sacrificing himself for the lives of the people. Can you guess who it is? That's right! It's Jesus. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He lived with us here on Earth. He taught about God's kingdom. He healed people. He showed the world how to live in the way God knows is best for us. And just like the Passover lambs in Egypt, Jesus had to give up his life so all people could be rescued from death, destruction, and disconnection with God. It was his very important job and he completed it perfectly.

PRAY: Jesus, thank you for being the Passover Lamb for us! Thank you for loving us so much and rescuing us from our sins. Help us to remember you in this way.

DECEMBER 10



READ : Deuteronomy 5:1-22

LISTEN: Have you ever seen the list of rules at the pool? Shower first. No running. No diving. No unsupervised children. No food or drinks.

Who made up those rules? Showering first just seems silly, doesn't it? It's like the pool people are trying to spoil all our fun!

The Ten Commandments can seem that way, too. They can feel like a list of rules God gave us to ruin our fun. But God's not like that. He gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to help everyone live together well and to set them apart as his people. He didn't post the Ten Commandments on a wall and leave the Israelites on their own. No, God had already chosen the people of Israel and promised to love them. When he gave the commandments to Moses, he planned to stay with his people and keep loving them.

We should follow God's commandments, not just because they'll keep us safe, like the rules at the pool, but because God loves us. And the best news of all is that Jesus helps us to follow them!

PRAY: God, will you remind me how much you already love me? Help me remember that following your rules shows my love for you. Amen.

DECEMBER 11



READ : Joshua 2:1-21

LISTEN: The Israelites have been wandering in the desert for 40 years, and now it's finally time to move into the land God promised them. That land is called Canaan, and it's filled with people who don't love or trust God.

But when two Israelite spies sneak into the city of Jericho in Canaan, they get help from someone they least expect: a woman named Rahab. Even though she's not an Israelite, she has heard about the God of Israel. And she believes that he is the true God. After she helps the Israelite spies, she asks them to protect her family when the Israelite army comes to knock down Jericho.

The spies agree—if she hangs a red rope in her window so they know which house to protect. The red rope will save Rahab's life.

That red rope hanging in her window looks a lot like a trail of blood, which reminds us of the blood of Jesus. When Jesus died, his blood saved our lives, just like the red rope saved Rahab's life. If we trust in God, like Rahab did, we get to join God's family and be protected.

PRAY: Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice and giving your life on the cross so that I can live. I'm glad I can be part of your family. Amen.

DECEMBER 12



READ : Ruth 3:1-4:17

LISTEN: In Israel, there were rules to protect widows, or women whose husbands had died. Back then, women didn't have jobs, so they couldn't make money to pay for food or a house. Plus, men were the ones to carry on the family name, so if a woman had no sons, the family would end with her. So, there was a special rule made to protect a widow with no sons. The rule was that the brother of the widow's dead husband had to marry the widow (back then, it was sometimes okay to have more than one wife). That brother was called the "kinsman redeemer." Kinsman means a relative and redeemer means someone who rescues you. The brother would rescue the widow and her family by paying for food, giving them a place to live, and carrying on the family name. In this story, Boaz is the kinsman redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. Naomi's husband and Ruth's husband both died, and Naomi and Ruth were helpless without any sons. But they weren't hopeless. Boaz stepped up to marry Ruth so the family could continue. Much later in the Bible, we read about another kinsman redeemer named Jesus. Everyone in the world is as helpless as Ruth and Naomi were. But the Bible says Jesus is like the groom at a wedding, and the church is His bride. Like Boaz, he steps up to marry us, join his life with ours, and rescue us.

PRAY: Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice and giving your life on the cross so that I can live. I'm glad I can be part of your family. Amen.

DECEMBER 13



READ : 1 Samuel 16:1-13

LISTEN: God loves to make the underdog the hero of the story. God doesn't usually pick the strongest, coolest, or oldest person. He likes to use weak, dorky, little siblings.

If you looked at him, you wouldn't think David would make a very good king. He didn't know how to fight in battles. He had never worked in city government. He spent a lot of time with sheep, and that was about it.

But that's exactly the person God wanted to use. The little brother. It's kind of like how God picked the people of Israel—a tiny group of people who weren't very strong or impressive on their own—to be the people he would bless the whole world through.

And it's a lot like God's decision to come to earth as a tiny, fragile baby. If you looked at Jesus, you wouldn't think he would make a very good king. When he was a kid, he spent a lot of time building chairs with his dad. When he grew up, he didn't show everyone how cool and powerful he was. Later, he allowed the government to kill him. In Jesus, God makes himself the underdog so that we can live.

PRAY: Sometimes you surprise me, God! You like to use people whom the world doesn't think are important. Help me remember that you want to use me, too. Amen.

DECEMBER 14



READ : 2 Samuel 5:1-5

LISTEN: Kings and shepherds seem like exact opposites. Kings sit on thrones. They wear expensive clothes and talk to important people. Shepherds, on the other hand, stand on the hillsides. They wear clothes that can get dirty, and they talk mostly to sheep.

David was both. He was a shepherd that God chose to be king. A shepherd would probably make a very good king, since shepherds have to be humble and they probably care more about people than about power.

Can you guess who else is a shepherd-king? If you guessed Jesus, you're exactly right. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He knows all of us as well as a shepherd knows his sheep, and he was willing to die so we could live. Jesus is also the King of kings. He beat the powers of sin and death. Now he sits on His throne, ruling over all of creation.

PRAY: King Jesus, thank you for having the heart of a shepherd! Would you help the leaders of our cities and nations be as kind and gentle as shepherds, too? Amen.

DECEMBER 15



READ : 1 Kings 5-6

LISTEN: The temple was really important. If you read all of 1 Kings 6, you'll see how intricate and beautiful it was! It was very tall, and the whole thing was made of gorgeous wood, with pictures of trees and fruit and angels carved into it. The inside was covered in gold, so everything gleamed and sparkled.

It wasn't just a building. It was the place where God and humans could meet. Before Solomon built the temple, God met his people in a big tent called a tabernacle. Inside the temple, there was a special room, called the Holy of Holies, where God lived. In that place, God and humans could be together.

But God had even better plans. He didn't want people (and not just anyone—only certain people) to have to go into a tiny room to be with him in person. So God decided that he would become the temple. Jesus called himself the temple. He is both God and human, the place where the two meet. We don't have to go into a special room anymore. Now we can know God directly because of Jesus!

PRAY: Jesus, thank you for being the temple, the place where I can meet God. By your Holy Spirit, I am connected with God. Help me sense you with me today. Amen.

DECEMBER 16



READ : 1 Kings 18:17-39

LISTEN: God doesn't often seem very popular. In this story, there were a lot of people who trusted in pretend gods, while only one person—Elijah—trusted in the one true God. But just because God wasn't popular doesn't mean he wasn't powerful. It didn't matter how many people believed in the pretend gods, Baal and Asherah. Those pretend gods were exactly that: pretend. So of course they couldn't actually help anybody!

No matter how hard people prayed to Baal and Asherah, nothing would ever happen. But as soon as Elijah prayed to God, God lit the whole altar on fire!

God is the only one who can really help us. God's power doesn't come from his popularity. God's power comes from himself, from his deep love for other people. God showed his love in the biggest way when he came to earth as Jesus. And God showed his power in the biggest way when Jesus won the fight against evil and death.

PRAY: God, thank you for showing me your power and your love through Jesus. Help me to trust in him. Amen.

DECEMBER 17



READ : Micah 5:1-5

LISTEN: Do you know what a prophecy is? It's kind of like a promise about the future. A prophecy tells us what's going to happen.

When someone tells you something that's going to happen, do you usually believe it? Maybe you believe it if your dad says he'll pick you up from school, but not if your sister says she'll let you play with her toy. It depends on who is making the promise!

When God or his prophets say something, it will definitely happen. So when God's prophet Micah says that someone is coming who will rule Israel, he really means it. A king is coming who will stand and feed his flock—he'll take care of his people. And he will bring peace everywhere he goes. Micah prophesied that many, many years ago. But Jesus actually came! He cared for his people and was full of peace. We can be confident that Jesus will come again and his peaceful kingdom will stay forever. He is the Prince of Peace.

PRAY: Prince of Peace, you are a good and loving. Help prepare me for the day you come back or that I meet you. Amen.

DECEMBER 18



READ : Jeremiah 23:5-6

LISTEN: Today we're going to explore another prophecy. God's prophet Jeremiah shared a promise about the future. This prophecy is about a Branch. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? At the very beginning of the month, we read a prophecy about a Branch that would grow up out of the stump and roots of Jesse – a Branch that would be wise and mighty and honor God.

Jeremiah's prophecy is about the same Branch! The Branch is Jesus, our Lord and Savior! In this prophecy, we're reminded that the Branch would be righteous, deal wisely, and seek justice. We also learn from this prophecy he will reign as king. But he won't reign like the kings of this world; they desire power and money and success. This King would be different. He would be a servant, humble of heart and gentle in spirit, plain and lowly. This Branch would be a king who would lay down his life for the people he cares about. All people.

PRAY: God, thank you for always keeping your promises. We pray we never forget that we can trust you. Amen.

DECEMBER 19



READ : Isaiah 9:2-7

LISTEN: Have you ever been in a place where it's pitch-black? If you've ever gone camping, maybe you know the feeling of not being able to see anything. You're in the woods at night, and you can't see the moon or stars. You can't see anything at all. Or maybe it's just really dark in your bedroom at night. That can feel scary and confusing, can't it?

When you don't know what's around you, you might feel afraid and lonely and not want to move. This is the kind of deep darkness the people of Israel walked in. Well, it wasn't actually nighttime all the time, but it had started to feel that way. They couldn't see the person who was coming to save them. After a while, they started to think he might never come. They had no hope.

This chapter in Isaiah reminds the people of Israel of the light that is coming. The sun will come up in the morning! It won't be nighttime forever. The light that is coming is a person, and his name is Jesus. He is coming to save his people. When he is here, we don't have to be scared or sad anymore. We'll just feel peace and joy. Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is turning night into day. Jesus is on his way!

PRAY: God of light, would you turn the world's darkness into light? Amen.

DECEMBER 20



READ : Isaiah 11:6-9

LISTEN: This scene reminds me of a silly parade! A wolf walks next to a lamb. A baby cow and a bear and a lion march in a line, led by a child. Halfway through, the child stops to play with a snake. And on the edge of the street, a leopard and a baby goat sit on their picnic blanket to watch.

Can you imagine a parade like that? If you've ever been to the zoo, you know those animals can't be together. The wolf would eat the lamb! The bear and the lion would attack the cow. The snake would bite the child. The leopard would gobble up the goat. It would be the worst parade ever! But this is the world God imagines. God is creating a world where that parade is just an average Monday. Predators and prey will get along. Instead of fighting, we'll work together and play together.

That's the world where Jesus Christ is King.

PRAY: God, I'm excited for the day when we can have a parade with lions and bears. Until that day comes, show me how to be more like you. Amen.

DECEMBER 21



READ : Matthew 3:1-6, 11; John 1:6-9

LISTEN: When someone comes to your house, they don't just come right in. They usually knock or ring the doorbell. It's how they announce that they're coming.

If your mom or dad is especially tidy, they might pick up a few toys and stack a few papers before they answer the door. The time between hearing the doorbell and answering the door gives them a chance to clean up—to prepare for the person to come in.

John the Baptist was kind of like a doorbell for Jesus. He let everyone know that Jesus was coming. John came first, giving everyone a chance to prepare their hearts for Jesus. He invited people to confess their sins and be baptized, so that they could be clean when Jesus arrived. Like John and the people he baptized, we can prepare for Jesus to come. We can make our hearts ready to receive Jesus at Christmas!

PRAY: Lord, what parts of my heart are messy? Would you help me clean up so I'm ready for you to come? Amen.

DECEMBER 22



READ : Luke 1:26-38

LISTEN: Ask your mom or dad what it's like to be a parent. They might mention that it's both wonderful and hard, and that lots of it is bittersweet. They think you're the coolest person ever. (Yup, even if you have siblings! Shh, don't tell.) They love seeing the person you're becoming. And every time you grow taller and more independent, they probably want to cry. When Mary agreed to become Jesus's mom, she may not have realized all that she was signing up for. She was probably doing something really normal, like brushing her teeth, reading a book, or walking home from a friend's house. But once that angel showed up, nothing was normal anymore! Now Mary would be Jesus' mom—the mom of the Son of God. Her life was going to change a whole lot. She was going to feel everything your parents feel, except maybe even more. Her son is definitely the coolest person ever, and she got to help raise him! She also had to watch him die, which is maybe the worst thing for a parent. But she also got to see him come back to life as the Savior of the whole world. Thanks to Mary, nothing is "normal" for us anymore, either. We get to live in a world where God became a human being. God has chosen to save the world. Through Jesus, God is making all things new!

PRAY: God, thanks for becoming a human being. Thanks for choosing to become one of us and for saving the world. Amen.

DECEMBER 23



READ : Matthew 1:18-25

LISTEN: Joseph could have said, "No way! I'm not going to marry her anymore. Even though I love Mary, I want to have a normal life. I don't want to be the adoptive dad of the Son of God. That's weird. People will think I'm weird."

But he didn't say that. Joseph said, "Yes, I'll marry her. I'll help raise the Son of God. I'll let people think I'm weird."

Joseph cared less about what other people thought and more about what God thought. He cared more about Mary and less about himself. And because of that, God gave him a pretty cool part in this story. God used Joseph to raise Jesus. Joseph got to teach Jesus how to use a hammer and build a chair, how to read the Bible, and how to love other people. Joseph got to be Jesus' dad.

PRAY: God, Joseph reminds me that you can use me in amazing ways when I let you. Help me to know what part you want me to play in your story. Amen.

DECEMBER 24



READ : Luke 2:1-21

LISTEN: Eep! Have you heard the good news?! Jesus is born! A new branch is finally sprouting from the stump of Jesse. Mary is taking it all in. As she feeds little Jesus, she's thinking about what it means that he is here, ready to save the world.

The angels are celebrating it. They come as a huge choir, singing about how amazing God is.

The shepherds are a part of it, too. God chooses to tell them first. The shepherds aren't fancy or important, but they're the first ones who get to meet Jesus.

And today, you get to be like the shepherds. You get to hear the good news. Jesus is born! You get to go tell other people about it. God has chosen you! He wants you to have a part in his story.

PRAY: Jesus, we're so glad you've come! Thank you for being born into our world. Thank you for loving us enough to come save us and live with us. Amen.

DECEMBER 25



READ : Hebrews 1:1-3

LISTEN: Well, it's here! The day we've been waiting for and working towards. It's Christmas Day – the day we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus, our wise and righteous Branch, our Rescuer, our Passover Lamb, our servant King, our humble Shepherd, our Light, our Prince of Peace, and God's very special Son.

Long ago, before the creation of the universe and everything we know, God knew we would need Jesus. He knew our sin would hurt us and separate us from him. He knew we would need rescuing. God saw how much we need Him. He heard our prayers. He made a promise and kept it. Jesus – the sweet baby born in an ordinary manger one dark night in Bethlehem - the heir of all things, the one who was present at creation, the reflection of God's glory, and the exact imprint of God, took on the very likeness of man and became obedient to death. And on the third day he rose from the grave in victory. The very same power that brought breath back to his dead body is the same power that continues to hold us together.

Pretty incredible, right?! This is the Jesus we celebrate this Christmas Day.

PRAY: Jesus, we are so happy we get to celebrate your birthday today! Thank you for the ways you have shown us who you are through the Bible. Help us to remember that we can celebrate you every single day and share this good news with everyone! Amen.



THE CREEK

Adaptation from: Faithward.org

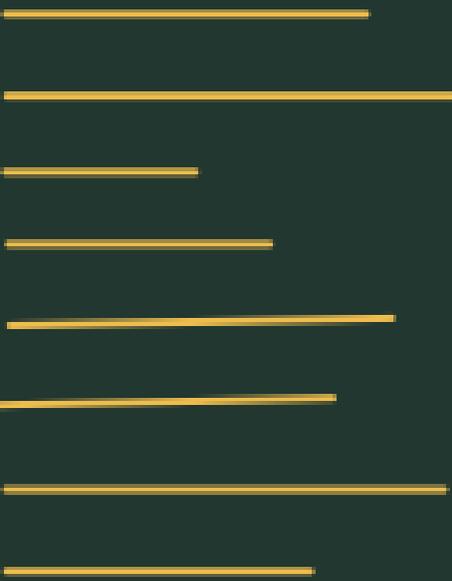


BLESSING

JAR

The Christmas season is a joyful and busy time of the year, and it can be challenging to recognize God's presence with us. Use this jar to celebrate the blessings God gives you each day. For the entire month of December, write down a blessing daily (you could even do more than one a day!).

On Christmas Day, open the jar and read through all of the blessings. As a family, praise God for what He's done this month, leading up to the greatest blessing of all - Jesus!



CHRIST CANDLE



The glass jar candle can be used as a physical expression of God's presence with your family. Light it each day at the beginning of your time together, to remind yourself God is always with you. Take a few moments to pray with your family, thanking God for His presence.





Create new memories and spread joy this Christmas season with The Creek Christmas Challenge! Complete family challenges and share pictures on social

media by tagging @kidustrialpark for a chance to win a very special prize for your family!



Take a meal to a family in need of extra joy!

Send a relative a Christmas card!

Share your favorite Christmas tradition!



Leave a treat for a UPS/mail carrier/ Amazon delivery driver.



Have a snowball fight with real or fake snow!

Pay for another person's meal or drink in the drive-thru line.



Have a "picnic" for dinner next to your Christmas tree.



Create a Christmas chain to count down to Christmas Day!



Drive around and look at Christmas Lights.



Have a family "baking day" and make treats for your neighbors, family, or friends!!

Have a family dance party to a Christmas playlist.



Watch a family-favorite Christmas movie.

Go on a Christmas scavenger hunt!

Bonus points if you bring hot chocolate (or warm chocolate milk.)



Make an ornament for your tree that represents your family's favorite memory of 2021.

Donate food, clothes, or toys.

Take turns praying for each person in your family!

Eat an all red and green breakfast.



Invite a friend or neighbor to Christmas Eve services at The Creek



Help your kids pick out a special present for their teacher.



Share with each other what you want to thank God for (in addition to Jesus)!



Read a Christmas book before bed.

Ask your child write a thank you card for his or her small group leader!



Find a creative way to reuse the kidustrial park Christmas Box.



Get holiday pajamas for the family.

Throw a birthday party for Jesus!



PLEASE join us
for CHRISTMAS EVE
services at THE CREEK.

FRANKLIN ROAD CAMPUS

6430 S Franklin Rd
Indianapolis, IN 46259

2:00, 3:30,
5:00pm

in-person and
online

SHELBY STREET CAMPUS

8435 Shelby St
Indianapolis, IN 46227

3:30 & 5pm

in-person only

Visit thecreek.org/christmas for more details.

ADVENT WREATH

Lighting the candles of Advent is a centuries-old tradition throughout the church. It's a chance to reflect on the significance of the season and look forward to celebrating Jesus. Place tea lights on each circle of the advent wreath. Gather as a family and follow the prompts below. Encourage your family to wonder about God and relish in His gift of Jesus.

HOPE CANDLE

Sunday, Nov. 28

READ:

Isaiah 9:6-7

As God's people were about to head into exile, God delivered hope through a promise. Someday, this will all be over—a King would come who would make all things new. Christmas celebrates the hope that God sent Jesus to fulfill that promise and rescue creation once and for all.

Knowing God has kept His promises in the past gives us hope that God will continue keeping His promises in the future.

ASK:

- What is something you hope for?
- How can you stay hopeful when you don't get what you want?
- When have you seen God take care of our family?

DO:

Light the Hope candle.

PRAY:

"Dear God, thank You for reminding us during this time of year that You keep Your promises—every single time! Thank You for the promise of Jesus. Thank You for the hope that we have in Him. Please help us to remember what You did for Your people—and for us—when You sent Jesus to be our Savior. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

JOY CANDLE

Sunday, Dec. 05

READ:

Luke 1:26-38, 46-47

The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce she would be Jesus' mother. This must have come as quite a surprise. After all, Mary wasn't married yet, and she had a different plan for her life. Gabriel reminded her nothing is impossible with God. She could have been overwhelmed by this startling news, but she chose to respond with a song of joy. Nothing takes God by surprise. We can trust God has an ultimate plan for our lives. Discover the joy that comes from believing in Jesus and God's plan for us.

ASK:

- Who are we planning on seeing this Christmas?
- How do you feel when your plans don't happen like you want?
- How can we remember to have joy, even when our plans change?

DO:

Light the Hope and Joy candles.

PRAY:

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We can see how Mary trusted Your plan, and You filled her heart with joy. Thank You for reminding us You have a good plan for our lives, too. Help us to find our joy in You, because Your plans are ALWAYS good. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

LOVE CANDLE

Sunday, Dec. 12

READ:

Luke 2:1-7

From a human perspective, this whole situation must have seemed crazy to Mary and Joseph. Not only was Mary expecting the baby who would save the world, but now she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem for the census. When they arrive, there's no room for them to stay except for the place they keep the animals. As hectic as this might have seemed, this is exactly how God wanted Jesus to enter the world. Right from the start, God wanted to have a relationship with us. Even when we messed that up with our sin, God continued to love and make a way to rescue us. Jesus is proof God loves us unconditionally.

ASK:

- What are we giving others this Christmas?
- How does it make you feel knowing God loves you so much?
- How can we show God's love to others?

DO:

Light the Hope, Joy, and Love candles.

PRAY:

"Dear God, thank You for showing Your love by sending Jesus. You kept Your promise to send a Savior. Help us to always remember how much You love us—so much that You sent Your own Son. And help us remember the true meaning of Christmas as we celebrate with our family. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

PEACE CANDLE

Sunday, Dec. 19

READ:

Luke 2:8-20A

After Jesus was born, the first people to find out are some unassuming shepherds in a field minding their own business. The angel announced Jesus' birth along with an angel choir proclaiming God's peace for everyone on earth. They rushed to see the baby for themselves. They were so excited they spent the rest of the night telling everyone they could about Jesus. We hope this Christmas you would come to know God's love and believe Jesus truly is the Savior of the world.

ASK:

- What does it mean to have peace?
- Why is it hard to find peace sometimes?
- How can you have peace knowing God loves us and sent us Jesus?

DO:

Light the Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace candles.

PRAY:

"Dear God, thank You for showing Your love by sending Jesus. You kept Your promise to send a Savior. Help us to always remember how much You love us—so much that You sent Your own Son. And help us remember the true meaning of Christmas as we celebrate with our family. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

CHRIST CANDLE

Saturday, Dec. 25

READ:

John 1:1-5, 14

The "Word" John is talking about refers to Jesus. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He has been with God from the beginning, giving life and breath to all things. Christmas is the celebration that Jesus became like us. He lived and died and rose again, so we could have life that lasts forever with God. This Christmas let's celebrate that Jesus came to rescue us and God is always with us.

ASK:

- What's your favorite thing about Christmas? Why?
- How can we focus on Jesus this Christmas?
- How can we stay focused on Jesus throughout the whole year?

DO:

Light the Hope, Joy, Love, Peace, and Christ candles.

PRAY:

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for sending Jesus to be a light in this world that can seem so dark. This Christmas, keep us focused on Jesus, the true reason for why we celebrate. As we remember how much You love us, help us know how we can show Your love to others this Christmas. We love You. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen."

HOPE

JOY

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord."

CHRIST

Luke 2:11, NIV

PEACE

LOVE