



THE CHARACTERS OF CHRISTMAS

GATEWAY CHURCH
CHRISTMAS GUIDE
2025



A MESSAGE FROM PASTORS JEFFERY + JOANNE PORTMANN

DEAR GATEWAY,

WE PRAY THAT THE HOPE, JOY, AND PEACE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE ARRIVAL OF CHRIST WOULD BE FELT IN YOUR HEART AND IN YOUR FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS. AS YOU READ THROUGH THIS GATEWAY CHRISTMAS GUIDE, OUR HOPE IS THAT YOU LAUGH, REMINISCE, AND REMEMBER THAT INTO THE DARKNESS OF OUR BROKEN WORLD CAME A GREAT LIGHT. HE IS, "IMMANUEL - GOD WITH US." JESUS IS NOT OUR LAST HOPE, HE IS OUR ONLY HOPE.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING JESUS WITH YOU THIS CHRISTMAS.

ON BEHALF OF THE GATEWAY TEAM, MERRY CHRISTMAS.



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STAFF FAVORITES



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 1 – God in the Ordinary

LEAD LUKE 1:5-7

ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH WERE ORDINARY PEOPLE FAITHFULLY SERVING GOD. THEY WERE RIGHTEOUS AND OBEDIENT, YET THEY CARRIED THE SORROW OF UNANSWERED PRAYER. THEY HAD NO CHILDREN AND WERE ADVANCED IN AGE. STILL, THEY CONTINUED WALKING IN FAITHFULNESS.

IT WAS IN THAT PLACE OF QUIET OBEDIENCE THAT GOD CHOSE TO MOVE. ZECHARIAH DIDN'T SEEK THE SPOTLIGHT OR CHASE MIRACLES. HE SIMPLY SHOWED UP TO SERVE, AND GOD MET HIM THERE.

SOMETIMES THE MIRACLE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR BEGINS WHEN YOU STAY FAITHFUL IN WHAT FEELS SMALL. GOD DELIGHTS IN TAKING THE ORDINARY AND TURNING IT INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY.

Reflection:

GOD OFTEN MOVES MOST POWERFULLY IN MOMENTS OF QUIET FAITHFULNESS.

Discussion Questions:

1. HOW CAN YOU STAY FAITHFUL TO GOD EVEN WHEN LIFE FEELS ROUTINE?
2. WHAT ARE SOME "ORDINARY" AREAS WHERE GOD MIGHT BE PREPARING SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY?
3. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD OFTEN USES ORDINARY PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLANS?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 2 – When God Interrupts

READ LUKE 1:8–13

WHILE ZECHARIAH WAS PERFORMING HIS TEMPLE DUTIES, GOD INTERRUPTED HIS NORMAL ROUTINE WITH A SUPERNATURAL MESSAGE. AN ANGEL APPEARED AND SAID, “YOUR PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD.”

ZECHARIAH WASN'T EXPECTING AN ENCOUNTER THAT DAY, BUT GOD MET HIM IN HIS WORK. SOMETIMES, WHAT WE SEE AS AN INTERRUPTION IS REALLY AN INVITATION. GOD USES UNEXPECTED MOMENTS TO REVEAL HIS PRESENCE AND RENEW OUR HOPE.

WHEN GOD BREAKS INTO YOUR PLANS, DON'T PUSH HIM AWAY. HIS INTERRUPTIONS ARE OFTEN THE BEGINNING OF YOUR TRANSFORMATION.

Reflection:

INTERRUPTIONS CAN BE GOD'S INVITATIONS TO STEP INTO HIS PLAN.

Discussion Questions:

1. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A MOMENT WHEN GOD INTERRUPTED YOUR PLANS?
2. HOW CAN YOU LEARN TO RECOGNIZE GOD'S HAND IN UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES?
3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WELCOME DIVINE INTERRUPTIONS IN YOUR LIFE?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 3 – Wrestling with Doubt

READ LUKE 1:18–20

WHEN ZECHARIAH HEARD THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE, HE STRUGGLED TO BELIEVE IT. "HOW CAN I BE SURE OF THIS?" HE ASKED. HIS DOUBT DIDN'T DERAIL GOD'S PLAN, BUT IT DID LEAD TO SILENCE.

FOR NINE MONTHS, ZECHARIAH COULDN'T SPEAK. IN THAT SILENCE, GOD WAS STILL WORKING, FORMING A MIRACLE AND SHAPING ZECHARIAH'S HEART. SOMETIMES GOD QUIETS OUR WORLD SO WE CAN BETTER HEAR HIS VOICE.

DOUBT IS A NATURAL RESPONSE WHEN WE FACE THE IMPOSSIBLE, BUT FAITH GROWS WHEN WE TRUST GOD'S WORD EVEN BEFORE WE SEE THE RESULT.

Reflection:

SEASONS OF SILENCE ARE OFTEN GOD'S WAY OF STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH.

Discussion Questions:

1. WHY DO YOU THINK ZECHARIAH DOUBTED THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE?
2. HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN GOD ASKS YOU TO BELIEVE SOMETHING THAT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE?
3. WHAT MIGHT GOD WANT TO TEACH YOU IN A SEASON OF WAITING OR SILENCE?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 4 – Waiting on the Promise

READ LUKE 1:23–25

AFTER ZECHARIAH RETURNED HOME, ELIZABETH BECAME PREGNANT, JUST AS GOD HAD SAID. FOR FIVE MONTHS, SHE KEPT TO HERSELF, REFLECTING ON THE MIRACLE GROWING WITHIN HER.

WAITING SEASONS CAN BE DIFFICULT, BUT THEY'RE OFTEN WHERE FAITH TAKES ROOT. ELIZABETH'S WAITING WASN'T WASTED; IT WAS A TIME OF PREPARATION AND QUIET JOY. GOD WAS WEAVING HIS PLAN, EVEN WHEN NO ONE COULD SEE IT YET.

WHEN GOD GIVES A PROMISE, WE MAY NOT SEE INSTANT RESULTS. BUT HIS TIMING IS PERFECT, AND HIS WORD NEVER FAILS.

Reflection:

WAITING ISN'T WASTED WHEN YOU TRUST THE ONE WHO MADE THE PROMISE.

Discussion Questions:

1. HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO WAITING SEASONS IN YOUR LIFE?
2. WHAT CAN ELIZABETH'S QUIET TRUST TEACH YOU ABOUT FAITH?
3. HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS WHILE YOU WAIT?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 5 – The Power of Obedience

READ LUKE 1:57–63

NINE MONTHS LATER, THE MIRACLE CHILD WAS BORN. FAMILY AND FRIENDS ASSUMED HE WOULD BE NAMED AFTER HIS FATHER, BUT BOTH ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH OBEYED GOD'S INSTRUCTION: "HIS NAME WOULD BE JOHN." AT THAT MOMENT, ZECHARIAH'S VOICE RETURNED, AND HIS FIRST WORDS WERE PRAISE TO GOD. HIS OBEDIENCE UNLOCKED BLESSING AND RESTORED HIS VOICE.

SOMETIMES THE BREAKTHROUGH WE'RE WAITING FOR IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF SIMPLE OBEDIENCE. WHEN WE ALIGN OUR WILL WITH GOD'S, WE EXPERIENCE HIS PROMISES IN FULL.

Reflection:

OBEDIENCE OPENS THE DOOR TO BLESSING.

Discussion Questions:

1. HOW DOES ZECHARIAH'S OBEDIENCE INSPIRE YOUR OWN FAITH JOURNEY?
2. WHEN HAS OBEDIENCE TO GOD LED TO UNEXPECTED BLESSING IN YOUR LIFE?
3. WHAT STEP OF OBEDIENCE MIGHT GOD BE CALLING YOU TO TAKE RIGHT NOW?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 6 – When the Promise Arrives

READ LUKE 1:64–66

WHEN ZECHARIAH'S VOICE RETURNED, HE IMMEDIATELY PRAISED GOD. THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM WERE FILLED WITH AWE, SAYING, "WHAT THEN IS THIS CHILD GOING TO BE?" THEY COULD SEE THAT THE LORD'S HAND WAS UPON THIS FAMILY.

ZECHARIAH'S STORY ENDS WITH WORSHIP, A POWERFUL REMINDER THAT EVERY PROMISE FULFILLED SHOULD LEAD US BACK TO PRAISE. GOD'S TIMING, THOUGH OFTEN MYSTERIOUS, IS ALWAYS PERFECT.

THIS CHRISTMAS, CELEBRATE THE GOD WHO STILL FULFILLS HIS PROMISES. THE SAME GOD WHO BROUGHT JOHN'S BIRTH AND JESUS' ARRIVAL IS FAITHFUL TO COMPLETE HIS WORK IN YOUR LIFE, TOO.

Reflection:

EVERY FULFILLED PROMISE IS AN INVITATION TO PRAISE THE PROMISE KEEPER.

Discussion Questions:

1. HOW DOES ZECHARIAH'S STORY STRENGTHEN YOUR TRUST IN GOD'S TIMING?
2. WHAT PROMISES FROM GOD ARE YOU STILL BELIEVING FOR?
3. HOW CAN YOU MAKE WORSHIP YOUR RESPONSE WHEN GOD'S PROMISES COME TO PASS?

NOTES:



Week 1 - Zechariah

December 7 – God's Faithful Love

READ LUKE 1:78–79

AS ZECHARIAH'S SONG OF PRAISE CONCLUDES, HE DECLARES, "BECAUSE OF THE TENDER MERCY OF OUR GOD, BY WHICH THE RISING SUN WILL COME TO US FROM HEAVEN TO SHINE ON THOSE LIVING IN DARKNESS AND IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, TO GUIDE OUR FEET INTO THE PATH OF PEACE."

ZECHARIAH NOW UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT HIS FAMILY, IT'S ABOUT ALL HUMANITY. THE "RISING SUN" HE SPEAKS OF IS JESUS, THE MESSIAH, WHO BRINGS FORGIVENESS, PEACE, AND A NEW BEGINNING TO ALL WHO BELIEVE.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IS GOD'S LOVE STORY TO THE WORLD. HIS MERCY REACHES INTO EVERY DARK PLACE, BRINGING LIGHT WHERE FEAR ONCE RULED.

Reflection:

THE SAME GOD WHO FULFILLED HIS PROMISE TO ZECHARIAH HAS FULFILLED HIS PROMISE TO US THROUGH JESUS, OUR LIGHT, OUR SAVIOR, OUR PEACE.

Discussion Questions:

1. HOW HAS GOD'S MERCY BROUGHT LIGHT INTO YOUR LIFE?
2. IN WHAT WAYS CAN YOU SHARE THAT LIGHT WITH OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS?
3. WHAT PART OF ZECHARIAH'S STORY REMINDS YOU MOST OF GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 8 – When Heaven Breaks Into Ordinary

READ LUKE 1:26–29

MARY'S STORY BEGINS LIKE MANY OF OURS, AN ORDINARY DAY SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED BY GOD'S EXTRAORDINARY PLAN. IN NAZARETH, A HUMBLE AND OVERLOOKED TOWN, A YOUNG GIRL WAS ABOUT TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE THAT WOULD CHANGE THE WORLD.

GABRIEL'S GREETING STARTLED HER: "GREETINGS, YOU WHO ARE HIGHLY FAVORED! THE LORD IS WITH YOU." MARY WAS "GREATLY TROUBLED" BECAUSE NOTHING ABOUT HER LIFE SEEMED REMARKABLE. YET GOD SAW HER AND CALLED HER FAVORED, NOT BECAUSE OF PERFECTION, BUT BECAUSE OF GRACE.

GOD STILL INTERRUPTS ORDINARY LIVES TODAY WITH DIVINE PURPOSE. HIS FAVOR ISN'T EARNED; IT'S GIVEN. WHAT FEELS LIKE A DISRUPTION MAY ACTUALLY BE GOD INVITING YOU INTO HIS GREATER STORY.

Reflection

GOD'S DIVINE INTERRUPTIONS ARE OFTEN THE DOORWAY TO HIS GREATEST BLESSINGS.

Discussion Questions

1. HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN GOD INTERRUPTS YOUR PLANS?
2. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD CHOSE SOMEONE LIKE MARY FOR SUCH AN IMPORTANT TASK?
3. WHERE MIGHT GOD BE TRYING TO INTERRUPT YOUR ROUTINE TODAY?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 9 – Highly Favored

READ LUKE 1:30–31

GABRIEL TOLD MARY SHE HAD “FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD.” SHE HADN’T EARNED IT, SHE SIMPLY RECEIVED IT. THAT’S THE ESSENCE OF GRACE: UNEARNED FAVOR FROM A LOVING GOD.

WHEN GABRIEL REVEALED SHE WOULD CONCEIVE AND BEAR THE SON OF GOD, MARY’S LIFE CHANGED FOREVER. YET IN THAT OVERWHELMING MOMENT, SHE LEARNED THAT GOD’S FAVOR DOESN’T ALWAYS MEAN COMFORT; IT MEANS CALLING.

WHEN YOU WALK IN GOD’S FAVOR, EXPECT BOTH CHALLENGE AND BLESSING. HIS GRACE EMPOWERS YOU TO CARRY OUT WHAT HE CALLS YOU TO DO.

Reflection

GOD’S FAVOR IS NOT ABOUT STATUS, IT’S ABOUT PURPOSE.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DOES “FAVOR WITH GOD” MEAN TO YOU PERSONALLY?
2. HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED GOD’S FAVOR IN A SURPRISING WAY?
3. HOW CAN YOU LIVE AWARE OF GOD’S GRACE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 10 – When the Impossible Becomes Possible

READ LUKE 1:34–35

WHEN MARY ASKED, “HOW WILL THIS BE, SINCE I AM A VIRGIN?” SHE WASN’T DOUBTING GOD, SHE WAS SEEKING UNDERSTANDING. THE ANGEL REPLIED THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE.

THIS MOMENT REMINDS US THAT OUR LIMITATIONS DON’T LIMIT GOD. WHAT SEEMS HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE IS OFTEN THE VERY STAGE FOR HIS MIRACULOUS POWER.

MARY DIDN’T NEED ALL THE DETAILS, JUST FAITH THAT GOD’S WORD WOULD COME TRUE. WHEN YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND HOW SOMETHING WILL WORK OUT, REMEMBER: GOD SPECIALIZES IN THE IMPOSSIBLE.

Reflection

OUR LIMITATIONS ARE GOD’S OPPORTUNITIES TO REVEAL HIS POWER.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?
2. HOW CAN YOU TRUST GOD WITH THINGS BEYOND YOUR CONTROL?
3. WHAT DOES THIS STORY TEACH YOU ABOUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 11 – Faith Builds Faith

READ LUKE 1:36–37

GABRIEL ENCOURAGED MARY BY MENTIONING ELIZABETH, HER RELATIVE WHO WAS MIRACULOUSLY PREGNANT IN OLD AGE. SEEING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY STRENGTHENED MARY'S OWN FAITH.

THAT'S HOW GOD WORKS: TESTIMONY BUILDS TRUST. WHEN WE SEE OR HEAR HOW GOD HAS MOVED FOR OTHERS, WE'RE REMINDED THAT HE CAN DO THE SAME FOR US. "FOR NO WORD FROM GOD WILL EVER FAIL."

THIS TRUTH ANCHORS OUR HEARTS. GOD'S PROMISES DON'T EXPIRE, THEY ARE ALWAYS FULFILLED IN HIS PERFECT TIME.

Reflection

FAITH GROWS WHEN WE REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE.

Discussion Questions

1. WHOSE TESTIMONY HAS STRENGTHENED YOUR FAITH?
2. HOW CAN YOUR STORY ENCOURAGE SOMEONE ELSE TODAY?
3. WHAT DOES LUKE 1:37 TEACH YOU ABOUT GOD'S RELIABILITY?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 12 – Surrender and Obedience

READ LUKE 1:38

MARY'S RESPONSE TO THE ANGEL WAS SIMPLE YET PROFOUND: "I AM THE LORD'S SERVANT. MAY YOUR WORD TO ME BE FULFILLED."

SHE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, BUT SHE HAD COMPLETE TRUST. HER SURRENDER SET IN MOTION THE GREATEST MIRACLE IN HISTORY.

WHEN GOD REVEALS HIS PLAN, OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO BLESSING. LIKE MARY, WE'RE INVITED TO SAY YES, EVEN WHEN WE DON'T SEE THE FULL PICTURE.

Reflection

TRUE FAITH SAYS "YES" BEFORE KNOWING HOW EVERYTHING WILL WORK OUT.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DOES MARY'S OBEDIENCE TEACH YOU ABOUT FAITH?
2. ARE THERE AREAS WHERE YOU'VE HESITATED TO SAY "YES" TO GOD?
3. HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE SURRENDER IN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 13 – Partnering with God

READ ROMANS 12:1–2; LUKE 1:46–49

GOD DOESN'T JUST WORK FOR US, HE WORKS WITH US. MARY'S OBEDIENCE ALLOWED HER TO JOIN GOD'S REDEMPITIVE PLAN. HER WORSHIP (THE MAGNIFICAT) SHOWS THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD HER ROLE AS BOTH SERVANT AND PARTICIPANT IN GOD'S MISSION.

WHEN YOU OBEY, YOU'RE NOT JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS, YOU'RE PARTNERING WITH THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IN HIS WORK OF LOVE AND RESTORATION.

GOD ALREADY PICKED YOU. THE QUESTION IS, HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

Reflection

OBEDIENCE IS OUR INVITATION TO PARTNER WITH GOD'S PURPOSE.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PARTNER WITH GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE?
2. HOW HAS OBEDIENCE TO GOD PRODUCED UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS?
3. WHAT MIGHT CHANGE IF YOU LIVED AS THOUGH GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN YOU?

NOTES:



Week 2 - Mary

December 14 – Nothing Is Impossible

READ LUKE 1:37; GALATIANS 4:4–5

AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME, GOD SET HIS PLAN IN MOTION THROUGH AN OBEDIENT YOUNG WOMAN. THE ETERNAL ENTERED THE ORDINARY. THE DIVINE BECAME HUMAN.

MARY'S STORY REMINDS US THAT "WITH GOD, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE." FROM THE VIRGIN BIRTH TO THE RESURRECTION, GOD CONTINUALLY PROVES THAT HIS POWER SURPASSES HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

WHATEVER FEELS IMPOSSIBLE TODAY - RESTORATION, HEALING, FORGIVENESS, PURPOSE - CAN BECOME POSSIBLE WHEN PLACED IN GOD'S HANDS. HIS WILL, COMBINED WITH OUR OBEDIENCE, CREATES MIRACLES.

Reflection

WHEN GOD'S WILL IS MADE CLEAR AND WE OBEY, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT "IMPOSSIBLE" SITUATION DO YOU NEED TO TRUST GOD WITH TODAY?
2. HOW DOES MARY'S FAITH INSPIRE YOUR OWN?
3. HOW CAN YOU LIVE THIS CHRISTMAS WITH RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S POWER?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 15 – When Life Catches You Off Guard

READ MATTHEW 1:18

EVER BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD AND NEEDED TO PAUSE TO CATCH YOUR BREATH? THAT'S WHERE WE FIND JOSEPH. EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE FALLING INTO PLACE; HIS FUTURE WITH MARY, HIS REPUTATION, HIS PLANS, UNTIL ONE MOMENT CHANGED EVERYTHING.

MARY, HIS BETROTHED, WAS "FOUND TO BE WITH CHILD." JOSEPH DIDN'T YET KNOW THE FULL STORY. HIS HEART MUST HAVE ACHED WITH CONFUSION AND DISAPPOINTMENT. BUT BEFORE GOD EXPLAINED ANYTHING, JOSEPH'S CHARACTER WAS ALREADY REVEALED.

LIFE'S SURPRISES TEST WHAT'S INSIDE US. WHEN THINGS DON'T GO AS EXPECTED, WE CAN EITHER REACT IN FEAR OR RESPOND IN FAITH. LIKE JOSEPH, WE CAN PAUSE, LISTEN, AND LET GOD SHAPE OUR NEXT STEP.

Reflection

INTERRUPTIONS OFTEN REVEAL OUR FAITH MORE THAN OUR SUCCESSES DO.

Discussion Questions

1. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME LIFE CAUGHT YOU OFF GUARD?
2. HOW CAN YOU RESPOND IN FAITH WHEN PLANS FALL APART?
3. WHAT CAN JOSEPH TEACH YOU ABOUT QUIET TRUST IN CONFUSING MOMENTS?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 16 – Character in the Chaos

READ MATTHEW 1:19

JOSEPH'S WORLD WAS SPINNING, BUT HIS RESPONSE REVEALED HIS HEART. THE LAW GAVE HIM THE RIGHT TO EXPOSE MARY PUBLICLY, YET HE CHOSE MERCY. HE PLANNED TO "DIVORCE HER QUIETLY." THAT'S NOT WEAKNESS, THAT'S INTEGRITY GUIDED BY COMPASSION.

REAL CHARACTER ISN'T MEASURED WHEN EVERYTHING IS GOING RIGHT; IT'S REVEALED WHEN EVERYTHING GOES WRONG. JOSEPH'S CHOICE SHOWS THAT LOVE AND OBEDIENCE CAN COEXIST WITH CONFUSION.

WE CAN LEARN FROM JOSEPH: WE DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING TO CHOOSE WHAT'S RIGHT.

Reflection

FAITHFUL CHARACTER CHOOSES GRACE EVEN WHEN IT HURTS.

Discussion Questions

1. WHY IS JOSEPH'S DECISION TO HANDLE THINGS QUIETLY SO SIGNIFICANT?
2. HOW CAN GRACE SHAPE YOUR RESPONSES IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS?
3. WHAT DOES THIS VERSE REVEAL ABOUT JOSEPH'S TRUST IN GOD'S JUSTICE?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 17 – God Speaks in the Silence

READ MATTHEW 1:20

WHILE JOSEPH SLEPT, GOD SPOKE. THE ANGEL CAME NOT IN THE NOISE OF LIFE BUT IN THE QUIET OF SURRENDER. SOMETIMES GOD SPEAKS MOST CLEARLY WHEN WE FINALLY STOP STRIVING.

JOSEPH'S DECISION WAS INTERRUPTED BY DIVINE REVELATION. GOD GAVE HIM DIRECTION, CLARITY, AND PEACE, ALL WHILE HE WAS RESTING. MAYBE THAT'S A REMINDER FOR US TOO: WHEN WE SLOW DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO LISTEN, GOD WILL SPEAK.

Reflection

GOD'S VOICE OFTEN FOLLOWS OUR STILLNESS.

Discussion Questions

1. WHEN DO YOU FIND IT EASIEST TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE?
2. HOW DOES JOSEPH'S DREAM SHOW US THAT GOD CAN BRING CLARITY IN CHAOS?
3. WHAT MIGHT GOD WANT TO SAY TO YOU IF YOU SLOW DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO LISTEN?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 18 – Do Not Be Afraid

READ MATTHEW 1:20–21

THE ANGEL'S FIRST WORDS TO JOSEPH WERE SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL: “DO NOT BE AFRAID.” FEAR COULD HAVE KEPT JOSEPH FROM OBEDIENCE. FEAR OF SHAME. FEAR OF JUDGMENT. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN.

BUT COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR, IT'S CHOOSING FAITH IN THE MIDDLE OF IT. GOD INVITED JOSEPH TO TRUST HIM WITH SOMETHING BIGGER THAN HIMSELF: RAISING THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.

FEAR OFTEN WHISPERS, “WHAT IF THIS DOESN'T WORK OUT?” BUT FAITH REPLIES, “WHAT IF THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT GOD PLANNED?”

Reflection

FAITH DOESN'T ERASE FEAR, IT REPLACES IT WITH TRUST.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT FEARS MIGHT HAVE TEMPTED JOSEPH TO SAY “NO” TO GOD'S PLAN?
2. WHAT FEARS HOLD YOU BACK FROM OBEYING GOD FULLY?
3. HOW CAN REMEMBERING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS GIVE YOU COURAGE TODAY?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 19 – Aligning with God's Plan

READ MATTHEW 1:22–23

MATTHEW REMINDS US THAT JOSEPH'S OBEDIENCE FULFILLED ANCIENT PROPHECY, GOD'S PROMISE FROM ISAIAH THAT A VIRGIN WOULD GIVE BIRTH TO "IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US."

JOSEPH DIDN'T JUST OBEY A COMMAND, HIS OBEDIENCE ALIGNED WITH ETERNITY. EVERY ACT OF FAITH IN OUR LIVES CONNECTS TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN WE SEE.

WHEN WE OBEY GOD'S WORD, WE PARTICIPATE IN HIS UNFOLDING PLAN. EVEN SMALL STEPS OF OBEDIENCE BECOME PART OF A STORY THAT CHANGES THE WORLD.

Reflection

OUR OBEDIENCE TODAY CONNECTS WITH GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE.

Discussion Questions

1. HOW DOES JOSEPH'S OBEDIENCE REFLECT TRUST IN GOD'S BIGGER PLAN?
2. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN HOW A SMALL ACT OF OBEDIENCE HAD A GREATER IMPACT LATER?
3. WHAT DOES "IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US" MEAN TO YOU PERSONALLY?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 20 – Bold Obedience

READ MATTHEW 1:24–25

“WHEN JOSEPH WOKE UP, HE DID WHAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM.” NO HESITATION. NO SECOND GUESSING. JUST OBEDIENCE.

JOSEPH RISKED REPUTATION AND COMFORT TO FOLLOW GOD. HE CHOSE GOD’S APPROVAL OVER MAN’S APPLAUSE. THAT’S WHAT BOLD OBEDIENCE LOOKS LIKE, IT MAY COST SOMETHING, BUT IT’S ALWAYS WORTH IT. WHEN WE CHOOSE OBEDIENCE, WE STEP INTO THE CENTER OF GOD’S WILL, AND THAT’S WHERE MIRACLES HAPPEN.

Reflection

BOLD OBEDIENCE BRINGS US INTO THE MIDDLE OF GOD’S BEST.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT MADE JOSEPH’S OBEDIENCE SO COURAGEOUS?
2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO OBEY GOD IMMEDIATELY?
3. WHERE MIGHT GOD BE INVITING YOU TO ACT BOLDLY TODAY?

NOTES:



Week 3 - Joseph

December 21 – Standing in the Center of God's Will

READ GALATIANS 1:10; MATTHEW 1:25

JOSEPH'S STORY REMINDS US THAT LIVING IN GOD'S WILL IS NOT ABOUT COMFORT, IT'S ABOUT CALLING. HIS OBEDIENCE DIDN'T MAKE LIFE EASIER; IT MADE IT MEANINGFUL.

HE COULD HAVE CHOSEN THE APPROVAL OF PEOPLE, BUT HE CHOSE THE APPROVAL OF GOD. IN DOING SO, JOSEPH BECAME PART OF THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD.

WHEN WE WALK IN OBEDIENCE, WE STAND IN THE VERY CENTER OF GOD'S WILL. THAT'S THE SAFEST, STRONGEST, AND MOST JOY-FILLED PLACE TO BE.

Reflection

GOD ALWAYS RESPONDS TO OUR OBEDIENCE WITH BLESSING.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO LIVE IN THE CENTER OF GOD'S WILL?
2. HOW CAN JOSEPH'S EXAMPLE SHAPE THE WAY YOU RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL?
3. WHAT STEP OF OBEDIENCE COULD YOU TAKE THIS WEEK TO ALIGN WITH GOD'S PLAN?

NOTES:



Week 4 - Shepherds

December 22 – Good News for the Least Likely

READ LUKE 2:8–12

WHEN GOD CHOSE TO ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH OF HIS SON, HE DIDN'T SEND ANGELS TO KINGS OR PRIESTS, HE SENT THEM TO SHEPHERDS. THESE MEN WERE ORDINARY, OFTEN OVERLOOKED, AND CONSIDERED SOCIAL OUTCASTS. YET GOD'S MESSAGE OF HOPE CAME FIRST TO THEM.

THE ANGEL'S WORDS STILL RING TRUE TODAY: "DO NOT BE AFRAID. I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE."

THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYONE, NO MATTER YOUR BACKGROUND, PAST, OR POSITION. GOD DELIGHTS IN REACHING THE LEAST LIKELY, TRANSFORMING ORDINARY PEOPLE INTO BEARERS OF EXTRAORDINARY NEWS.

Reflection

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS IS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO FEEL UNSEEN.

Discussion Questions

1. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD CHOSE SHEPHERDS TO RECEIVE THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH?
2. HOW DOES THIS STORY SHOW GOD'S HEART FOR ALL PEOPLE?
3. WHO IN YOUR LIFE MIGHT NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT GOD'S LOVE INCLUDES THEM TOO?

NOTES:



Week 4 - Shepherds

December 23 – From Spectators to Messengers

READ LUKE 2:15–20

AFTER THE ANGELS LEFT, THE SHEPHERDS DIDN'T STAY WHERE THEY WERE. THEY SAID, "LET'S GO TO BETHLEHEM AND SEE THIS THING THAT HAS HAPPENED." THEY WENT QUICKLY, FOUND JESUS JUST AS THE ANGEL SAID, AND THEN BEGAN TELLING EVERYONE WHAT THEY HAD SEEN.

THE SHEPHERDS MOVED FROM SPECTATORS TO PARTICIPANTS, FROM HEARING THE GOOD NEWS TO SHARING IT. THEIR STORY REMINDS US THAT ENCOUNTERING JESUS ALWAYS LEADS TO ACTION. WE DON'T JUST KEEP THE MESSAGE, WE CARRY IT.

AS YOU REFLECT ON CHRISTMAS, ASK YOURSELF: AM I CONTENT TO SIMPLY WATCH, OR AM I WILLING TO GO AND TELL?

Reflection

WHEN WE EXPERIENCE JESUS, WE CAN'T HELP BUT SHARE HIM.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MOVE FROM BEING A SPECTATOR TO A PARTICIPANT IN GOD'S STORY?
2. HOW DID THE SHEPHERDS RESPOND DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHERS MIGHT HAVE?
3. WHO COULD YOU SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS WITH THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON?

NOTES:



Week 5 - Wisemen

December 24 - Worship That Costs Something

READ MATTHEW 2:1-11

EVERY MANGER SCENE INCLUDES THE WISE MEN, TRAVELERS FROM THE EAST WHO FOLLOWED A DIVINE SIGN ACROSS THE DESERT TO FIND AND WORSHIP THE NEWBORN KING. THEIR STORY ISN'T JUST ABOUT A JOURNEY; IT'S ABOUT WORSHIP THAT COSTS SOMETHING.

WHEN THEY FINALLY SAW THE CHILD, "THEY BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED HIM." THAT MOMENT OF REVERENCE CHANGED EVERYTHING. THEY HAD FOUND THE ONE THEIR HEARTS WERE SEARCHING FOR. THIS CHRISTMAS, MAY YOUR WORSHIP, BOTH IN SONG AND IN LIFE, REFLECT THE SAME PASSION AND FOCUS. WORSHIP ISN'T CONFINED TO A SEASON OR A SUNDAY; IT'S A DAILY DECISION TO BRING YOUR BEST TO THE KING WHO GAVE HIS ALL FOR YOU.

Reflection

WORSHIP BEGINS WITH A SEEKING HEART AND ENDS WITH A SURRENDERED LIFE.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT DISTRACTIONS MOST OFTEN PULL YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM WORSHIP?
2. HOW CAN YOU MAKE YOUR WORSHIP MORE INTENTIONAL THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON?
3. WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU TO OFFER SOMETHING THAT TRULY COSTS YOU IN YOUR WORSHIP TO JESUS?

NOTES:



Week 5 - Wisemen

December 25 - Come and see the King

READ MATTHEW 2:9-12

THE WISE MEN DIDN'T FIND JESUS BY ACCIDENT, THEY FOLLOWED A SIGN GOD PLACED IN THEIR SKY. A STAR APPEARED, UNLIKE ANYTHING THEY HAD SEEN BEFORE, AND IT STIRRED THEIR HEARTS WITH A SIMPLE BUT LIFE-CHANGING INVITATION: COME AND SEE THE KING.

GOD STILL PLACES "STARS" IN OUR LIVES, MOMENTS, PEOPLE, SCRIPTURE, OR UNEXPECTED PEACE, THAT POINT US TOWARD JESUS. THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT GOD ISN'T SPEAKING; IT'S THAT WE OFTEN STOP LOOKING UP LONG ENOUGH TO NOTICE.

THIS CHRISTMAS, PAY ATTENTION TO THE SIGNS GOD IS SENDING YOU, BIG OR SMALL. FOLLOW THEM. THEY WILL ALWAYS LEAD YOU TO JESUS. ONCE YOU MEET HIM, YOUR LIFE WILL NEVER FOLLOW THE SAME ROUTE AGAIN.

Reflection

THOSE WHO TRULY SEEK JESUS ALWAYS FIND HIM, AND THEY ALWAYS LEAVE DIFFERENT THAN THEY CAME.

Discussion Questions

1. WHAT "STARS" OR SIGNS HAS GOD PLACED IN YOUR LIFE LATELY TO DRAW YOU CLOSER TO JESUS?
2. IN WHAT WAYS DOES ENCOUNTERING JESUS LEAD YOU TO TAKE A DIFFERENT "ROUTE" IN LIFE?
3. HOW CAN YOU BE MORE ATTENTIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO GOD'S GUIDANCE THIS SEASON?

NOTES:



THE CHARACTERS OF CHRISTMAS

Z ECHARIAH'S SONG

“PRAISE BE TO THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, BECAUSE HE HAS COME TO HIS PEOPLE AND REDEEMED THEM. HE HAS RAISED UP A HORN OF SALVATION FOR US IN THE HOUSE OF HIS SERVANT DAVID (AS HE SAID THROUGH HIS HOLY PROPHETS OF LONG AGO), SALVATION FROM OUR ENEMIES AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US—TO SHOW MERCY TO OUR ANCESTORS AND TO REMEMBER HIS HOLY COVENANT, THE OATH HE SWORE TO OUR FATHER ABRAHAM: TO RESCUE US FROM THE HAND OF OUR ENEMIES, AND TO ENABLE US TO SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE HIM ALL OUR DAYS.”

LUKE 1:68-75 (NIV)



THE CHARACTERS OF CHRISTMAS

MARY'S SONG

AND MARY SAID:

“MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD MY SAVIOR, FOR HE HAS BEEN MINDFUL OF THE HUMBLE STATE OF HIS SERVANT. FROM NOW ON ALL GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME BLESSED, FOR THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME—HOLY IS HIS NAME. HIS MERCY EXTENDS TO THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. HE HAS PERFORMED MIGHTY DEEDS WITH HIS ARM; HE HAS SCATTERED THOSE WHO ARE PROUD IN THEIR INMOST THOUGHTS. HE HAS BROUGHT DOWN RULERS FROM THEIR THRONES BUT HAS LIFTED UP THE HUMBLE. HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS BUT HAS SENT THE RICH AWAY EMPTY. HE HAS HELPED HIS SERVANT ISRAEL, REMEMBERING TO BE MERCIFUL TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS FOREVER, JUST AS HE PROMISED OUR ANCESTORS.”

LUKE 1:46-55-75 (NIV)



Staff Favorites

CHRISTMAS GUIDE



RELAX & ENJOY

OUR STAFF HAS CURATED A CHRISTMAS GUIDE FULL OF WONDERFUL RECIPES AND FESTIVITIES. DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON ENJOY THESE TREASURED TRADITIONS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.



CHRISTMAS FAVORITES

FAVORITE TRADITIONS

- READING THE BIRTH STORY OF JESUS
- EATING BRUNCH TOGETHER WITH EXTENDED FAMILY
- PLAYING GAMES AS AN EXTENDED FAMILY

FAVORITE MUSIC TO LISTEN TO

- LOUISE ARMSTRONG - 'ZAT YOU SANTA CLAUSE
- HARRY CONNICK JR. - CHRISTMAS
- DAVID CROWDER BAND - CHRISTMAS ALBUM

FAVORITE OUTING (WHEN KIDS WERE YOUNGER)

- HUNTING FOR HOMES WITH AWESOME LIGHT SHOWS WHILE DRINKING HOT CHOCOLATE
- KINGSTON WATERFRONT LIGHTS



I PICKED THESE TRADITIONS AS MY FAVORITES BECAUSE THEY KEEP WHAT IS MOST MEANINGFUL TO ME AT THE CENTER - GRATITUDE FOR JESUS AND SHARING LIFE WITH MY FAMILY. THE LAUGHTER AND GREAT FOOD WE HAVE ARE MORE FULFILLING THAN ANY PRESENT I COULD GET. THE OUTINGS WE USED TO DO ARE MARKED WITH THE WONDER AND AWE. I'D SEE IN MY BOYS' FACES AS WE SEE THE DISPLAY OF LIGHTS. IT WAS ALWAYS FUN TO MARVEL AT HOW MUCH TIME AND ENERGY PEOPLE PUT INTO THEIR LIGHT SHOWS.

AND ON THOSE DRIVES, WE'D LISTEN TO HARRY CONNICK JR BECAUSE HIS CHRISTMAS SONGS ARE FILLED WITH SO MUCH CREATIVITY, UNIQUENESS AND FUN. DAVID CROWDER IS ALSO SIMILAR IN HIS RENDITIONS OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS - THEY MAKE ME RETHINK AND UNIQUELY FEEL THE DEPTH OF THE SONGS. AND TO CAP IT OFF, THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE HARMONIES THAT LOUISE ARMSTRONG COMES UP WITH THROUGH HIS VOICE AND TRUMPET. I IMAGINE HIM AND THE BAND HAVING TO TRAVEL THROUGH DIFFERENT TOWNS AND EVEN THOUGH HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STAY IN MANY OF THE NICER ESTABLISHMENTS BECAUSE OF HIS COLOR, HE STILL KEPT SOLDIERING ON AND PERFORMING. MUCH RESPECT.

MARIO WHITE, DEVELOPMENT PASTOR



AREA FAVORITES

WE ENJOY GOING TO CAFÉ COCINA AND SEEING SANTA (ERIC'S PARENTS), GETTING OUR TREE FROM HUBERT'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM IN SEABECK, HAVING HOT APPLE CIDER IN THE CABIN ON THEIR PROPERTY, AND LOOKING OUT AT THE MOUNTAINS. TYPICALLY WE WILL ALSO GET A FAMILY PICTURE AT BOTH PLACES AND USE THE BEST ONE FOR OUR FAMILY CARD.

DOUG LENZ, DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES

OUR FAMILY'S TOP 3 AREA FAVORITE TRADITIONS



**POLAR EXPRESS TRAIN
RIDE FROM MT. HOOD
OR MT. RAINIER**



**ZOO LIGHTS AT POINT
DEFIANCE ZOO**



**LUMEN FIELD OF
LIGHTS**



SUGAR COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

SUGAR COOKIES

1 CUP BUTTER

1½ CUPS SUGAR

⅔ CUP MILK

4 TSP VANILLA

4 CUPS FLOUR

1 TBSP BAKING POWDER

½ TSP SALT

FROSTING

1 STICK OF BUTTER

4 CUPS POWDERED SUGAR

4 TABLESPOONS MILK

1 TEASPOON VANILLA

DIRECTIONS

MIX TOGETHER, PLACE IN PLASTIC WRAP AND REFRIGERATE FOR 30 MINUTES. ROLL OUT ON FLOURED SURFACE, CUT AND BAKE AT 350° FOR ABOUT 10 MIN.

CREAM BUTTER, SLOWING MIX IN OTHER INGREDIENTS UNTIL THE CORRECT CONSISTENCY. ADD FOOD COLORING, IF DESIRED.



MICHELLE BRUNEAU, KIDS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

FAMILY FAVORITES

PORTMANN'S FAVORITE CHRISTMAS:

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS SONGS

"OH HOLY NIGHT"

"SANTA CLAUSE IS COMING TO TOWN"

- BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

OPENING PRESENTS

DURING FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE BUT DAD (ME) GOES INTO OUR ROOM AND WAITS IN SILENCE TO HEAR THE SILVER BELL RING AND THEN COMES OUT TO LOOK FOR THE HIDDEN GREEN PICKLE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE TREE - WHOEVER FINDS IT GETS TO OPEN A GIFT FIRST.

READING SCRIPTURE

WE READ THE WHOLE CHRISTMAS STORY LUKE 2 AND TAKE TIME TO PRAY BEFORE WE OPEN GIFTS.

FAVORITE FOOD

JOANNE'S CHRISTMAS HAM IS A NATIONAL TREASURE.

FUNNY MEMORY

FUNNY NOT FUNNY MEMORY AS A KID- ONE YEAR WHEN I WAS A CHILD WE ATTENDED A CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AND JUST AFTER WE SANG SILENT NIGHT A GIRL IN THE ROW IN FRONT OF US BEGAN PROJECTILE VOMITING AND THE WHOLE ROOM BEGAN TO SMELL LIKE RANCID CHEESE.

CHURCH TRADITION

FAVORITE COLLECTIVE CHURCH MOMENT IS SINGING SILENT NIGHT AND LIGHTING THE CANDLES TO CELEBRATE JESUS AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.



JEFFERY PORTMANN, LEAD PASTOR



SCOTCHAROOS

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
<p>1 CUP SUGAR 1 CUP LIGHT CORN SYRUP 1 CUP CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER 6 CUPS RICE KRISPIES 1 CUP SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS 1 CUP BUTTERSCOTCH CHIPS</p> 	<p>IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN OVER MEDIUM HEAT, COMBINE SUGAR AND CORN SYRUP. BRING TO A BOIL, THEN REMOVE FROM HEAT. STIR IN PEANUT BUTTER. ADD RICE KRISPIES; STIR UNTIL EVENLY COATED; PRESS INTO A GREASED 13X9-INCH PAN.</p> <p>IN A SMALL SAUCEPAN, MELT CHOCOLATE CHIPS AND BUTTERSCOTCH CHIPS OVER LOW HEAT, STIRRING UNTIL SMOOTH. SPREAD OVER CEREAL MIXTURE. COOL, THEN CUT INTO BARS.</p>



AMBER TRIEB, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS



FAVORITE CHRISTMAS ITEMS

MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- ADVENT CANDLES AND ACTIVITIES
- JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS AND STORYTELLING
- FINDING WAYS TO KEEP THE REAL REASON OF CHRISTMAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR MINDS
- EATING/MAKING POTATO LEFSE (MY MOM'S SIDE)
- EATING SWEET POTATOES A'ROYAL (MARIO'S FAMILY'S RECIPE)
- ENJOYING MULLING SPICES AND DAIRY FREE NOG



MICHELLE WHITE, MISSIONS PASTOR



FAMILY TRADITIONS

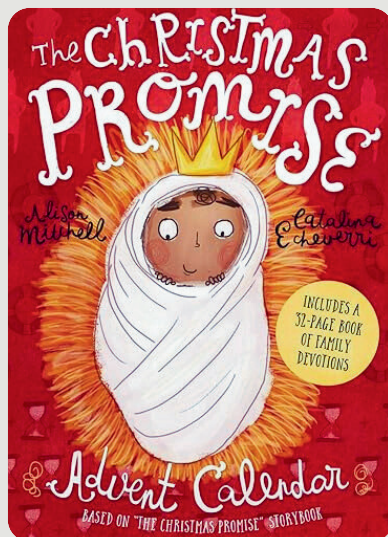
OUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

- READING AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL AS A FAMILY
- TAKING DOWN AND FLIPPING OVER A JESSE TREE CARD EACH DAY
- HANGING THE CARDS LIKE GARLAND WITH CLOTHESPINS
- READING THE CHRISTMAS PROMISE WITH OUR YOUNGER KIDS
- ENDING EACH DAY WITH A SHORT PRAYER TOGETHER

ONE OF THE TOOLS OUR FAMILY LOVES IS OUR SET OF JESSE TREE ADVENT CARDS (PICTURED HERE).

THESE CARDS WALK THROUGH THE STORY OF SCRIPTURE—FROM CREATION TO THE PROPHETS TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST—SHOWING HOW THE ENTIRE BIBLE POINTS TO JESUS. WE HANG THEM LIKE GARLAND USING TWINE AND LITTLE CLOTHESPINS. EACH DAY THE KIDS TAKE ONE DOWN, FLIP IT OVER, AND WE READ THE SCRIPTURE AND SHORT REFLECTION TOGETHER. IT'S HANDS-ON, VISUAL, AND A BEAUTIFUL WAY FOR KIDS TO SEE GOD'S BIG RESCUE PLAN UNFOLDING DAY BY DAY.

WITH YOUNGER KIDS IN OUR HOME, WE ALSO READ THE CHRISTMAS PROMISE AND USE THE CHRISTMAS PROMISE ADVENT CALENDAR. IT'S SIMPLE, ENGAGING, AND HELPS OUR LITTLE ONES UNDERSTAND WHO JESUS IS: THE KING GOD PROMISED.



SHELLY COLE, KIDS PASTOR



TOP 10 CHRISTMAS SONGS

EVERY YEAR, OUR FAMILY DEBATES WHEN IT'S OKAY TO START PLAYING CHRISTMAS MUSIC (AND WATCHING HALLMARK CHRISTMAS MOVIES). I THINK THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING IS THE RIGHT TIME, BUT OTHERS IN OUR HOUSE WANT TO START MUCH EARLIER.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC BRINGS THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO LIFE AND REMINDS US WHAT THIS SEASON IS ALL ABOUT—JESUS!

HERE'S A LIST OF MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS SONGS THAT I ENJOY EVERY YEAR.

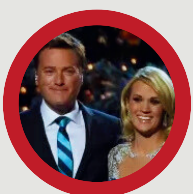
KIRK ELLIS, WORSHIP PASTOR



"WHITE
CHRISTMAS"
BING CROSBY



"A CRADLE IN
BETHLEHEM"
NAT KING COLE



"ALL IS WELL"
MICHAEL W. SMITH &
CARRIE UNDERWOOD



"IT'S THE MOST
WONDERFUL
TIME OF THE YEAR"
ANDY WILLIAMS



"GOD BLESS US
EVERYONE"
ANDREA BOCELLI



"JOY TO THE
WORLD"
WHITNEY HOUSTON



"THIS CHRISTMAS"
DONNIE HATHAWAY



"THE HAPPY ELF"
HARRY CONNICK JR.



"WINTER
WONDERLAND"
TONY BENNETT



"CHRISTMAS TIME
IS HERE"
VINCE GUARALDI TRIO





GATEWAY CHURCH
CHRISTMAS GUIDE 2025

