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Glory
to God!

Getting Started

Here is what you need:

1. A wreath of evergreens and five candles, 4 of the same size and one larger, all placed inside the wreath.
2. Find a prominent place to put the wreath such as your coffee table or fireplace mantle.
3. Once a week, gather around the wreath with your family or roommates and intentionally use this time to be filled with the wonder of God's great love demonstrated through the birth of Christ.

How to begin:

1. Turn off the TV, radio, or other distractions and enjoy some silence.
2. Light the particular candle(s).
3. Grab your Bible, read the Scripture and discuss it.
4. Pray together



Glory to God!

We want to be one of the first to say Merry Christmas! We also recognize it can be difficult to pivot emotionally and head into the Christmas season, especially if it has been a hard year. We get that and can empathize. I can even feel the tension while I'm drafting this note. Just because life is hard doesn't mean it can't be good and full of God's glory (His presence). God is still worthy of "highest" praise (Luke 2:14).

When we think of the circumstances surrounding the birth of our Savior, Jesus, those in the original cast can relate to hard times. Think about it. There was an engaged virgin found pregnant, the dilemma Joseph had until God spoke to him in a dream, Mary and Joseph having to flee because of Herod's jealousy of another king being born, no room left in the Inn, and the story goes on. I think what makes God's presence so rich, incredible, and breathtaking is how He makes Himself known in the hard times, the losses, in our grief, and in the strains of life. ***Glory to God*** for showing up for them, back then, and for us today!

Considering this, we pray this ***Advent Guide*** can be a blessing to you and yours. Our hope is that it will provide moments each week for your family to come together, to prepare your hearts for a fresh work of Jesus by His Spirit, to be embraced by God's glorious presence, and to ***Glorify God in the highest*** for the birth of Jesus, our Savior, our Redeemer, and our King.

Whether in hard times, happy times, or in average times we pray your Christmas is full of the glory of the LORD as we bring Him glory in the highest and see His favor rest on more people. Each week you'll be able to enjoy a devotional from a member of our pastoral team which will help you get to know them a bit more and will provide you with a beautiful variety of devotions as we highlight our Savior's Birth. I encourage you to follow the instructions, embrace the invitation from the Holy Spirit to give ***Glory to God***, and to make this a rhythm during Christmas that brings lasting fruit in your walk with Him.

You and your loved ones are invited to either of our identical Christmas Eve Services where we celebrate the birth of Christ, light the Jesus Candle, and conclude with our giving ***Glory to God*** while our candles are all lit!

Wednesday, Dec. 23rd 7pm or Thursday, Dec. 24th @ 4pm

Merry Christmas!

Pastor DJ & Jenny

Prophecy Candle

Sunday, November 29th

The prophet Micah lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born. During his time, the leaders of Judah were not serving the Lord or their people well. With God's direction Micah looked ahead and predicted that in the future the craziest thing would happen. In the smallest and most insignificant place called Bethlehem, a ruler would be born who would be the kind of leader who would shepherd and take care of the people like never before. Bethlehem was a little farming town near the big, important city of Jerusalem. Yet instead of Jerusalem getting the fame for the birth of a newborn king, Bethlehem does! Jesus our Savior was born there just as Micah prophesied. God knew exactly what he was doing elevating the little, ignored city to be the humble birthplace of the Messiah. He loves to raise up the "overlooked" in this world to fill them with divine purpose and love according to his good plan. Glory to God! -Kim Satterthwaite

Light one of the smaller candles

Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5-6

Reflect

- What does it mean to be overlooked and insignificant? Why do you think God loves to raise up those who are overlooked?
- What are other examples of God using very unlikely people to do his work? Or have you seen God doing work in unlikely places? Where?

Pray

Thank you, Father, for allowing us to see the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy from so long ago! Your Word is true and your plans are good. We are grateful to celebrate that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not on accident, but on purpose. You have purpose for each of our lives, the places we go, the people we talk to, and the doors of opportunity that you open for us. We trust your plan to show your love to the world through Jesus our Savior. We celebrate him now! Amen.

Bethlehem Candle

Sunday, December 6th

King Jesus was not born in a palace surrounded by riches. He entered this world through humble circumstances, during a time of great uncertainty, and was laid in a manger. What a beautiful reminder that God's greatest blessings can come in unexpected ways. Just as God provided for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, He provides for us too, through all the seasons of joy, uncertainty, and hardship. And as we reflect on the humble birth of our King, may we rejoice in the greatest gift of all this Christmas season: our Savior, Jesus Christ. -Kate Schneider

Light two of the smaller candles

Read Luke 2:4-7

Reflect

- Has God blessed you in an unexpected way? What was that like?
- In what ways has God taught you humility?

Pray

Father, we thank you for sending us your son Jesus in such a beautiful and unexpected way. We praise you for the way you are always working in our lives, even when it might not make the most sense at first look. Please transform our hearts this Christmas season, softening us to be more like our Savior - humble, patient, trusting, and joyful. We pray this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

Angel Candle

Sunday, December 13th

This year's theme is Glory to God! I think if I were one of the shepherds and I saw the angels appear with the Glory of God shining all around them, it would be easy to fall on my knees and give glory, praise and adoration to God. But in my everyday life it seems harder to figure out how to do that. I guess it comes down to recognizing God in everything in my life. When I see beautiful fall trees, I thank him for the beauty he gave us in this world. When I get an answer to prayer, I remember to thank him for his love for me. When we pay all our bills and tithes, I thank him for his provision. When we go through hard times and come out on the other side of it, I thank him for his strength that brought me through. God's love for us is everywhere and if we recognize it and thank him for it-even tell others about it-I think that is giving Glory to God. -Linda Huff

Light three of the smaller candles

Read Luke 2:8-14

Reflect

• What in your life can you thank God for right now?

• Is there a hard time that you have gone through that now you can see God's hand in?

• Here is the hard question: How do you give Glory to God?

Pray

Thank you, Lord for who you are, a loving and generous God. Thank you for what you have done, dying on the cross for each of us. Thank you for your kindness, giving us a beautiful world of color and seasons. Thank you for your generosity, always giving us just what we need when we need it. Thank you, Lord, for your strength, bringing us through hard times. Thank you for your protection even when we don't see it. Lord, you are worthy to be praised and I chose to glorify you with my words and actions today. In Jesus' name. Amen

Shepherd Candle

Sunday, December 20th

In today's reading, we are invited to re-enter an unexpected divine moment. We find ourselves out in a field with a gaggle of shepherd boys. As the sky fades back to inky black and stars, the amazed group is agreed: they have to go and see. They follow the angels' instructions and meet baby Jesus, the miracle of God's glory made close.

Then we find ourselves back on the road with the young shepherds. They leave the young family, amazed that everything was just as the angels said. Going on their way, they revel and reflect about what they have just seen, praising and giving glory to God.

I love that God chose teenagers as the first people to witness his arrival on earth. They were young. They were poor. They didn't have influence. They didn't even have fully developed brains. But God chose them as witnesses. He revealed himself to them and empowered them. I don't know what life looks like for you this holiday season. But I do know that God wants to reveal himself to you, just like he did for those teenage kids. There is nothing about you or your circumstances that can stand in the way of his invitation. You are invited to go and see, to treasure and ponder. And not only that: you are empowered to go and tell of God's glory.

- Alyssa Simonson

Light four of the smaller candles

Read Luke 2:15-20

Reflect

- How can you spread joy to those who may be going through hard times or have lost all their joy?
- Share a moment God has brought you joy.
- Who is someone you can invite to a Christmas Eve Service?

Pray

God, the way you chose to reveal yourself to us is amazing. Help me to remember and believe that, because of your son, there is nothing that stands between you and me. Help me to celebrate your birth with the people around me. Help me to reflect on your work and let it sink deep in my heart and mind. And please help me to share you with people in a way that they can receive you.

As I go and see, treasure and ponder, and go and tell, let me experience your glory and give you glory. Amen.

Jesus Candle

Sunday, December 24th

Today, we read about the angels announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. Imagine being out in a field at night when suddenly the sky fills with the glory of God, and an angel tells you that the Savior has been born! The angel brings a message of good news, great joy, and peace for all people. That's what the Jesus Candle reminds us of: Jesus is the light of the world, the reason we celebrate Christmas, and the greatest gift God has ever given us. Christmas isn't just about the presents under the tree, the food on the table, or the time we spend together; it's about celebrating that God loves us so much He sent His Son to be our Savior. And the best part? This good news isn't just for a few people; it's for everyone! As a family, we get to share the joy of Jesus with the people around us through our words, our kindness, and the way we love others. This Christmas, remember that no matter what is happening in your life, Jesus brings us hope, joy, and peace. Jesus is the reason for our joy, and His good news is meant to be shared! -Jenny Vick

- **Light all the candles**
- **Read Luke 2:10-14**

Reflect

• Share the joy: What is one thing about Jesus that makes you joyful? Take turns sharing your answers as a family.

• Spread the good news: Who is someone we could encourage or show Jesus' love to this week? What is one thing our family could do for them?

• Celebrate Jesus: If you could give Jesus a birthday gift this Christmas, what would it be and why?

Pray

Dear Jesus, thank You for being the greatest gift we could ever receive. Thank You for coming into our world to bring us hope, joy, and peace. Help us remember that Christmas is all about You and the incredible love You have for each of us. Fill our hearts with Your joy and help our family share Your love and good news with everyone around us. May our words and actions shine Your light so that others can experience the joy of knowing You, too. We love You, Jesus, and we celebrate You as our Savior and King. In your precious name we pray, Amen.

Sunnyside Advent

Visit sunnyside4.org for more information.

CHRISTMAS EVE INVITES

Grab an ornamant off of the tree in the front foyer as an invite to one of our Christmas Eve services. Give one to a friend or neighbor today!

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OUTREACH

Our heart is to spread the joy of Jesus this Christmas! **Globally**, we've partnered with **Compassion First**. They are an effective ministry that rescues young women from human trafficking and restores them with Christ's love. To donate to this ministry, please visit sunnyside4.org/giving, click give online and choose Compassion First-Global Outreach.

Locally we are supporting families by partnering with **YoungLives,** a divison of YoungLife. YoungLives supports teen parents through mentorship, community, and a life with Christ. Please visit the Christmas tree in the foyer and grab a gift tag and support a young mom, dad or their child with specific needs this Advent season.

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FIRE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday, December 13th • 6:00 PM

Students 6-12th grade, put on your PJs and join us for a movie night in the Sunnyside Room. Snacks and drinks provided– bring your slippers, blankets, and friends!

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wednesday, December 23rd at 7 PM and Thursday, December 24th at 4 PM

Expect a traditional candlelight service with Christmas carols, a reading of the Christmas Story, and an inspiring message. A Love Offering will be received for Love INC. Kids ministry will be available for kids 2 years & under.

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SUNNYSIDE KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY • KIDS MINISTRY

Sunday, December 27th

We're rounding out the Christmas season in style! Put on your pj's and join us for a Sunday morning movie party. We'll have hot chocolate and snacks to enjoy with our movie. It's going to be a blast – can't wait to see you there!



