



IMAGODEI

KIDS



ADVENT CONSPIRACY

FAMILY CURRICULUM

ADVENT

Love All

FAMILY CURRICULUM

Scripture Used

Hebrews 11:1

Luke 1

Luke 10:27



Family Time

The people in the Old Testament waited for God to come to earth for years; 100's of years. God's plan all along was to save the world through His son. And so...people waited. And waited and waited. Read **Hebrews 11:1** "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

And then one day it happened. The announcement of Christ the King! He was coming. And He was coming not as a King on a throne, but as a baby. Read **Luke 1** – Mary becoming pregnant and all that was about to be fulfilled.

When He grew up He began his ministry, announced who He was, and showed everyone whom He was. Jesus was God's son and the only way to the Father was through Him.

When Jesus loved, He loved in ways never imagined. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked, and the sick. He played to the margins.

Read **Luke 10:27** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself."

As we get ready to celebrate Christmas this year, we get to remember who Jesus was, why He came, and how He changed everything for us. We get to worship, to be together, and to love each other. We get to worship Christ our King together.

One way to worship Jesus is to love how He loved. He loved EVERYONE. Not just those closest to him. He cared very much for those that had nothing. He cared for the poor, the sick, and the needy.

Who are those that are the neediest in our world today? (Make a list of both local and global ideas). Yes! Those are the people Jesus wanted to love. And toys and money is NOT how he loved them. He loved them by giving them life and life in Himself. One idea our church has had to love the people in this world that need life is to give water to the kids and moms and dads in countries that HAVE NO WATER. (Show Living Water video from Advent Conspiracy).

Water will remind them that Jesus brings us LIFE. Except His life is everlasting. We can give some money this Christmas to those kids. We can write them letters and build relationship with them too! Next week you can bring money to our offering baskets to help bring water to those who need it.



Parent Preparation

Parents: Read the scriptures above and contemplate advent and God sending His son to us. Specifically focusing on what Jesus came to do and to whom He loved. How could that shape how you lead your family in celebrating Christmas? Pray and ask God to lead you as you lead your kids.

Think about:

- How can you help the children understand what it means to be certain of what they cannot see? Can you share an example of faith in your own life? What must that have been like for the people that waited so many years for Jesus to come?
- How did Jesus really love? Do you love like that? Do your kids?

Family Discussion & Activities

1. Read verses from the Old Testament about people waiting for the Messiah to come (see Hebrews 11 or read The Jesus Storybook Bible for younger children). What must that have been like? Would you have believed and hoped? When the announcement came that Jesus was here, how would you have responded? (Each family member share)
2. Read or reenact the story of Christmas. What really happened? Read the bible so they know the details. Try to stick just to the beginning of the story (of Him being announced – Luke 1). The rest will come in weeks to come.
3. Skip ahead now to the life that Jesus. What was he about? Who did he love? Everyone!
 - Make a list together of all the people Jesus loved.
 - List whom He would love here.
 - List who we might, as a family, love this Christmas.
4. Share who you will love this Christmas with each other. Jesus came to love ALL. How might we love like that? See above “family time” for ideas.
5. Pray and ask God to give you ideas. Pay attention to how your family can *Love All* with Him.



FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN!

1. Read or reenact the story of Christmas! Even two year olds love hearing what happened. Use a nativity set or storybook pictures to help. Read the bible so they know the details (The Jesus Storybook Bible does a GREAT job). Try to stick just to the beginning of the story (of Him being announced – Luke 1). The rest will come in weeks to come.
2. Now talk about whom Jesus (that was born to Mary and Joseph) ended up being. GOD'S SON! And He was God too!
3. When Jesus grew up and was a man whom did He love? Everyone! Yes!
4. Ask your kids who your family could love this Christmas. Each other? Yes. But Jesus came to LOVE ALL. Who else could we love? Make some plans together of how you and your young ones can love others this Christmas. Allow your children to lead you even as you lead them. Their ideas may be simple this year and the next couple years. But they will grow as your family grows in years to come.
5. Pray and ask God to give you ideas and to remind you to love other people this Christmas.



ADVENT

Spend Less

FAMILY CURRICULUM



Scripture Used

Matthew 1:18-25

Luke 2: 1-7

1 Peter 1:13

Family Time

Read Matthew 1:18-25 and also Luke 2:1-7. These give the accounts of Joseph and reveal how all he and Mary had was each other. They didn't have any baby gear or have a baby shower. They just had each other. And as Jesus was born and came into the world he was laid in a manger. A manger! Do you guys know what a MANGER actually is? Yes, that's right – it is a feeding trough for animals. Like pigs! They were seriously in a barn. Have you ever been inside a barn? What is it like? It was stinky, dirty, and cold.

Have your family close their eyes and sit quiet. (Allow it to get really quiet. Turn off the lights if possible. Or even take them outside. Let the silence fall). Now whisper "Imagine Joseph coming up the hill over there with Mary hugely pregnant and probably in labor. And then he does his best to provide some straw and a rag for her as she pushes the baby out. There they are, all alone in a cold dark barn with nothing but each other." "What you would feel like if you were Mary or if you were Joseph?" Listen to their answers. Allow them to get cold if you are outside or just deal with the dark if you are inside. Let your family be drawn into worship as you contemplate.

Yes, they probably felt all of those things. Now remember...who was born? JESUS! Did they know it was Jesus? YES! Did they know what that meant? Yes, they had a pretty good idea. And so there in the dark and the cold without any friends or family or baby stuff around them was the first Christmas. They didn't have any money to buy gifts for each other, but their gift was Jesus. Their gift to one another was being together and worshipping God. To look into each other's eyes and say how they felt about each other. It was enough - MORE than enough.

Did you bring money to church today to give to building water wells or help the people in our city that we talked about last week? Let's pray that God will use this money to give others life and bring the good news of Himself to them.

We like gifts. Kids and even adults really like gifts. But consider this: America spends an average of **\$450 billion** a year every Christmas. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than because you were supposed to? Do you sometimes not know what to buy someone, while your mom and dad just get stressed about the money? The bible shows us that Christmas is about worshipping Jesus, being with one another, and giving what we have. What if our family bought ONE LESS GIFT for each other this Christmas? And instead gave the extra to someone who needs it. Does that feel like a real Christmas? Let me pray for us....



Parent Preparation

Parents: Read the scriptures above. Enter into the story again, like a child for the first time. Go out on your porch or backyard at night and imagine in the quiet what it must have been like for Mary in labor and Joseph trying to provide shelter their first Christmas together. There were no tree or presents, only each other – and the King of the world being born as a baby. The promise from God and from angels of what He was. Pray. Worship. Ask God how you might help the kids (and belief for yourself) understand that spending less equates to worship and giving ourselves. What we have is enough, more than enough.

Family Discussion & Activities

1. Talk about the part of the Christmas story that was just read. Do they have any questions? Let them read some themselves and talk about it. We often assume kids know the story but some of them may not really know it. Feel free to go into the details and explain anything that is confusing (census, Lord appearing to him in a dream, virgin, etc).
2. Read 1 Peter 1:13. Talk about this verse. What does it mean to be self-controlled? Do you act that way during Christmas? Have each family member share.
3. What is your favorite Christmas tradition and why? Have each family member share.
4. Share a way that you can worship God this Christmas without spending money. Give family time to brainstorming together and write a journal of those ideas together. Maybe just pray together that God would give us ideas and help us worship him without spending quite as much money.



FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN!

Light a candle while explaining to the kids that Jesus is our Savior. He gives us life and He alone brings light to our lives.

We are waiting for Christ's birth to come in a few weeks and that is very exciting and good news! How many days until Christmas? The waiting is almost over and when it comes it will be Jesus! Let's hear the story of the first Christmas. Read from The Jesus Storybook Bible about Joseph and Mary being alone and having the baby in the barn. Ask kids how Mary and Joseph probably felt. Ask them if it was a good Christmas for them and why?

Explain that the best Christmas is being together with God and worshipping Jesus. We don't need tons of presents to have the best Christmas ever. Joseph and Mary had Jesus! We do too! In fact maybe we could buy ONE LESS present this year (or make something instead) and give that money to someone who needs it. Did you bring money for the offering baskets today at church for the kids in the world that don't have water?

Talk about the "Bread in a Bag" idea and give out other examples such as cookies that we might bake at home. "We'll prepare it but then we have to wait until the cookies are done cooking in the oven. It is sometimes a long wait but it is always worth it, just like Jesus is worth the wait and that is why we celebrate!"

BREAD IN A BAG RECIPE

2 cups of white bread flour
1-cup whole-wheat flour
3 tablespoons powdered milk
3 tablespoons sugar
1-teaspoon salt
1 package Rapid Rise yeast
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1-cup hot water (125 to 130 degrees F)
Extra flour to use during the kneading process

1. Combine white flour, whole-wheat flour, yeast, sugar, salt, and powdered milk in a 1-gallon heavy-duty Ziploc freezer bag. Squeeze upper part of bag to force out the air. Shake and work bag with fingers to blend ingredients.
2. Add hot water and oil to dry ingredients. Reseal bag. Mix by working bag with fingers, until the dough is completely mixed and pulls away from the bag.

Pray and ask God to give you ideas of how to love each other this Christmas without spending tons of money.



ADVENT

Give More

FAMILY CURRICULUM

Scripture Used

Matthew 2
Matthew 26:6-13
John 3:16



Family Time

Read Matthew 2. The Jesus Storybook Bible has a good paraphrase of this too. This is the account of the Magi. Re-tell it for them more simply after reading the chapter. Help them get it, hear it, and be amazed by it. These men saw the star and heard that the king of the Jews was born – and traveled very far, full of passion and focused on getting there. Just to see Him and give to Him their treasures. Valuable things - the kind of things that meant they had sacrificed and given their best to Him. Not even the King of the land, Herod, could scare them off. They were focused on the One they had heard about and been waiting for, for generations before. And they would do anything to get to Him.

There are some other places in the bible where people worshipped Jesus and gave all they had. One place is in **Matthew 26:6-13**. Read it. Here this woman poured a very expensive bottle of perfume over Jesus' head while he was lying back at the table. Explain to the children that back then his hair was probably not very washed and after they ate they kind of leaned back in their chairs. Kind of like we do! So it wasn't like she just dumped it on his head and he had stinky perfume running down his nose! No!

It was more like this. Have one family member come up and pretend they have just finished eating a good meal. Have them lean back and pretend that he is Jesus. Have him say how He is tired and has a lot on His mind (remember He was going to die soon!) and that He hasn't had a bath in awhile. Now have another come in with a pretend bottle of perfume and gently (very gently) come over to him and smooth back his hair and pour this fancy perfume on him and wipe him clean with a towel. Does that seem worshipful? How and what about that act seems like giving to Jesus? Listen to them and guide their conversation.

There's one more place I want to show you in the bible that talks about giving. You might have heard of it. **Read John 3:16. Yell John 3:16!** Pause for silence and get their attention. Ask them what it means. "Yes, God sent His son to DIE for us so that we could be with Him forever. W O W!

So on that cold night long ago when God sent Jesus to us by Mary having Him as a baby in the barn – God was giving us everything! He was giving us His son. Can you imagine us - your parents giving you to someone? No way! And then.... He gave us His son knowing that people would kill him. And He would die so that we can live. **Jesus gave all.** And so as we look to what we can give this Christmas to those we love, let's think of what is most valuable to God and how we can give more to each other. Let me pray for us...



Parent Preparation

Parents: Read the scriptures above.

- Do a bible study on who the Magi were.
- Do a study on the “treasures” that they brought.
- Do a bible study on what type of perfume the woman in Matthew 26 used to pour on Jesus’ feet.
- You know the story, but do you know the details and why it draws you to worship and give?

Family Discussion & Activities

1. Talk about the part of the Christmas story that was just read. Does your family have any questions? Let them read some themselves and talk about it. We assume kids know the story a lot but some of them may not really know it. Feel free to go into detail and explain anything that is confusing (Magi, King Herod, alabaster jar, the star in the east, being warned in a dream).
2. Read John 3:16. Have kids practice reading it.
3. What does your family think about when you read this? Ask them if they have any feelings or thoughts that it brings up? Share what it brings up for you.
4. Christmas is almost here. How are we doing on preparing gifts? Do we know who we are giving gifts to? Why them?
5. The bible talks about Christmas being a time when Jesus is worshipped and given our treasures and all that we have. Let’s take some time to plan out what we can give to those we love and to those we want to love. And what can we give to Jesus. These gifts don’t have to cost a lot of money or any money. But maybe it could be something that feels big to give.
(Have a family brainstorming session)



FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN!

Sing a Christmas song as you gather. *Away in a Manger* is a great one for them to learn. Also, the chorus of *Star of Wonder*, *Star of Light* is fun. *Joy to the World* is also a favorite. You can find lyrics online.

Start family time by lighting a candle while explaining to the kids that Jesus is our Savior who gives us life and that He alone He brings light to our lives!

Tell children that we're talking about *GIVING*. Tell them "It's almost Christmas and we get to GIVE!"

- Get out your bible and read some of the above verses that talk about giving. *Change your voice & get excited as you read it.*
- The Jesus Storybook Bible has a great paraphrase for young kids on the story of the Magi giving gifts to Jesus.
- Use your nativity set (or go get one/borrow one) of the wise men following the star. Let the kids tell you what needs to be added. Who needs to be there? What were they doing? What do you think the Magi were bringing as presents to Jesus??
- Talk with the kids about what Jesus gave to US. How God gave us His son Jesus! That's what He gave us for Christmas! W O W! Jesus died so that we could be with him forever and God giving Him to us was the best gift anyone could give.
- Wow, that sure makes me want to GIVE this Christmas!
- **What do we do at Christmas??? G I V E!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Parents, you are simply trying to develop a heart for giving in your child. If they are mature enough for more, give them more. Young children have a hard time understanding giving. Help them keep it simple by drawing a picture for someone or giving someone their favorite sticker. You're trying to help develop their heart.



ADVENT

Worship Fully

FAMILY CURRICULUM

Scripture Used

Luke 2: 8-20
Matthew 2:2
Matthew 9-11



Family Time

Read Luke 2:8-20. The Jesus Storybook Bible has a great paraphrase of this. It gives the account of the Shepherds, when the host of angels came to tell them that Christ was born. Their response was to get up, and to go and see! And when they saw, they worshipped. And they spread the news everywhere!

Read Matthew 2:2 and 2:9-11. The Magi's response was TO WORSHIP! This was their first response. Yes, they travelled a long way and they gave all they had, their best treasures to Jesus.... but it was all to worship Him.

What does it mean to worship? Write down your family's ideas. Share with the children what your experience of worship has been. What does the bible say worship is? (See preparation study below).

"It's amazing, isn't it? A whole holiday put aside to give to others and to worship. No wonder it's so many of our favorite time of year!"

What is the first thing we do on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning? Talk about some of the traditions you do. Talk to your kids about the difference between holiday traditions and worshipping Jesus. Share some of the things your family does to worship Jesus. Get the kids to share how they worship Jesus or how they WANT to worship Jesus this year.

Play the Advent Conspiracy video of kids praising Jesus because of clean water. Because people GAVE they live, and they say Jesus' name because of it. There are some other powerful videos on worship too (Pastor Rob Bell has one); pick what you think works best for your family.

Pray a benediction over your family. Have them all stand and raise their hands to the God almighty that sent His Son Jesus to us, to die for us so that we could live. Smile! Praise God with them. Allow them to shout out some prayers.



Parent Preparation

Parents: Read the scriptures above. Do a bible study on worship. What does worship mean? What is your own experience of worship? What are the top times in your life that you have worshipped God? Can you retell them for your kids?

If you could take away all meaningless or secular traditions and were just with your family in a remote town somewhere at Christmas...what would your perfect Christmas be?

Family Discussion & Activities

1. Talk about the part of the Christmas story (shepherds and wise men worshipping) that you just read. Do they have any questions? Let them read some themselves and talk about it. We assume kids know the story a lot but some of them may not really know it. Feel free to go into the details and explain anything that is confusing (host of angels, shepherding sheep, flocks, glory of the Lord shining, shepherds “glorifying and praising God”).
2. Create some space to worship. Perhaps get in a circle and hold hands and thank God. Praise Him, worship Him. Maybe sing some Christmas songs together. You know that feeling you get when you sing silent night with a group of people? Light a candle while you sing or pray and talk about how Jesus is the Light of the World. Make it a special time of worship for your family.
3. Make a worship wall somewhere – with candles (or battery candles) around it. Have thick markers there and let the kids come and write or draw their worship and their THANKS to Jesus for what He’s done and for who He is.
4. Prepare an I-pod full of awesome Christmas music and play it while your family responds.



FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN!

1. Sing Christmas songs as you gather. *Away in a Manger* is a great one for them to learn. Also the chorus of *Star of Wonder, Star of Light* is fun. *Joy to the World* is also a favorite. You can find lyrics online.
2. Start family time by lighting a candle while explaining to the kids that Jesus is our Savior who gives us life and that He alone brings light to our lives!
3. Ask the kids what they think it means to worship. Be prepared to give them some examples (singing songs in church, painting a picture, obeying you, being nice to your little brother or sister, seeing something beautiful in nature, etc).
4. Get out your Bible and open it up for the kids to see the pages. Tell them that the Bible talks about ways we can worship Jesus (example: Psalms 105:2 – “*we can sing to him for all the good things he does!*”). Also Psalm 105:2; Psalm 145:21; Hebrews 13:15-16; James 5:13 (all are good examples.)
5. Don't read the verses word for word (unless it's simple enough) but instead change your voice, facial expressions & get excited as you rework the verses so that the kids understand. You have the freedom to communicate the verses in a way that the kids understand, so have FUN with it!
6. Read from [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) - the part in the Christmas story where the wise men came to worship Jesus. Use your nativity scene or other props (act it out!) to help the kids see it and let them help you share the story. Don't be afraid to give them the details!
7. Ask your kids what they like to do to worship God. Tell them that God loves it when we worship Him and that it makes Him smile! Christmas is a GREAT time to worship God! It's more important than any other part of Christmas.
8. What do we do at Christmas? WORSHIP!
9. Pray and ask God to help us all worship Him fully, with all that we are. Pray that Christmas would be all about worshipping Him.



SPIRITUALLY LEADING YOUR FAMILY THROUGH ADVENT

The church refers to Advent as the “coming of our Savior.” It’s a very holy and spiritual time in the church, and it’s a time of expectation, waiting and preparation. You will find that guiding your family through this time is critical and special, especially for your children. There is a great need for leadership in your home during this time of Advent. Your kids are going to want & expect to have the best experience possible, but they can’t find that experience on their own at such a young & impressionable age. As parents, it is our hope and prayer that you would be on the forefront of that experience.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS FOR YOUR FAMILY

There are four pillars to Advent Conspiracy: **Worship More, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All.** During Advent, look at these four pillars and take some moments to lead your family through each of the themes.

Worship More: During Christmas Eve and Christmas morning, read the Christmas story & make sure to build up the anticipation to Jesus’ birth.

Spend Less: Talk with your kids and spouse about how you’ll be spending your money for Christmas. Does what we spend on someone determine how we feel about them? It can, but explain to your children that really giving of ourselves is much better!

Give More: Take time to discuss who will benefit from your spending less on frivolous gifts. Talk about the different social action issues that Imago Dei is trying to address during Advent.

Love All: Pray as a family for those who will be receiving life-changing gifts for Christmas. Serving Jesus is most readily seen (and most Christ like) when you give gifts to people who can’t give you anything in return. Take some time to gather gifts for a family who can’t afford them, and allow your children to participate in the giving of those gifts.

YOU MIGHT HAVE TO OVERCOME SOME HURDLES...

We live in a culture where spending large amounts of money on meaningless gifts is a commonplace idea. You might encounter some bitterness or resentment from your children because they might not be receiving as many toys as their friends at school... and that’s okay! Being invited into Advent Conspiracy could be a big step for them, and we encourage you to be sensitive with your kids regarding that change. It also might be easy to “drag” your kids through this Advent Conspiracy idea & not stop to think how this might affect their little brains and hearts. It’s important not to drag our kids through this, but to invite, encourage and value their participation in the process! As you include & lead them through Advent, take the time to see the transformation that occurs in your little one.



KIDS ENGAGING IN ADVENT CONSPIRACY

When it comes to Advent Conspiracy, young kids might not totally “get it” and may feel left out, and that’s okay. We are all trying to be conformed to be more like Christ in our giving, so don’t be discouraged if they are a little bummed. It’s counter culture and going to be hard. Our role is to help them see the value and make what we do meaningful. Kids can understand deep truths, in a more simple way. They get that if they don’t have water they’d be thirsty. Use simple facts and truths in explaining the why.

Ask questions that make kids (and us) think...

Why do we give gifts at Christmas?

What gift did God give us?

Was it a thing or a relationship/ friendship/a new life/a hope?

Do we want to be like Christ?

How can we at Christmastime?

How was life before Christ came?

Do you think they were hoping? For what?

Ask questions in relational settings so there can be dialogue while the atmosphere is safe and fun:

At the dinner table

Have a popcorn and cocoa night

Gift making night

While decorating the tree.

Special “advent” dinner: Use the advent wreath as the centerpiece once a week, assign a different child/family member to each advent night, they can pick part of the meal that night and help make it, and then they get to light the candle and pray, older kids can read something too. Go caroling together.

Ideas to incorporate Social Action themes:

WATER - Use water as a tool to bring the need to life for children (this can be great even with very young children; they may not grasp it at first, but over time, they will).

Bath time: As you are bathing them, share that there are kids who can’t take baths and that they need clean water. Let your kids ask questions or share how that makes you feel. Ask them what we could do about it, or tell them as you bathe them.

Mealtime: When serving water, talk about it and ask if we need it and why? Ask what it would be like not to have it. Tell them that some kids don’t have water to drink or use and ask them how/ what that would be like.

