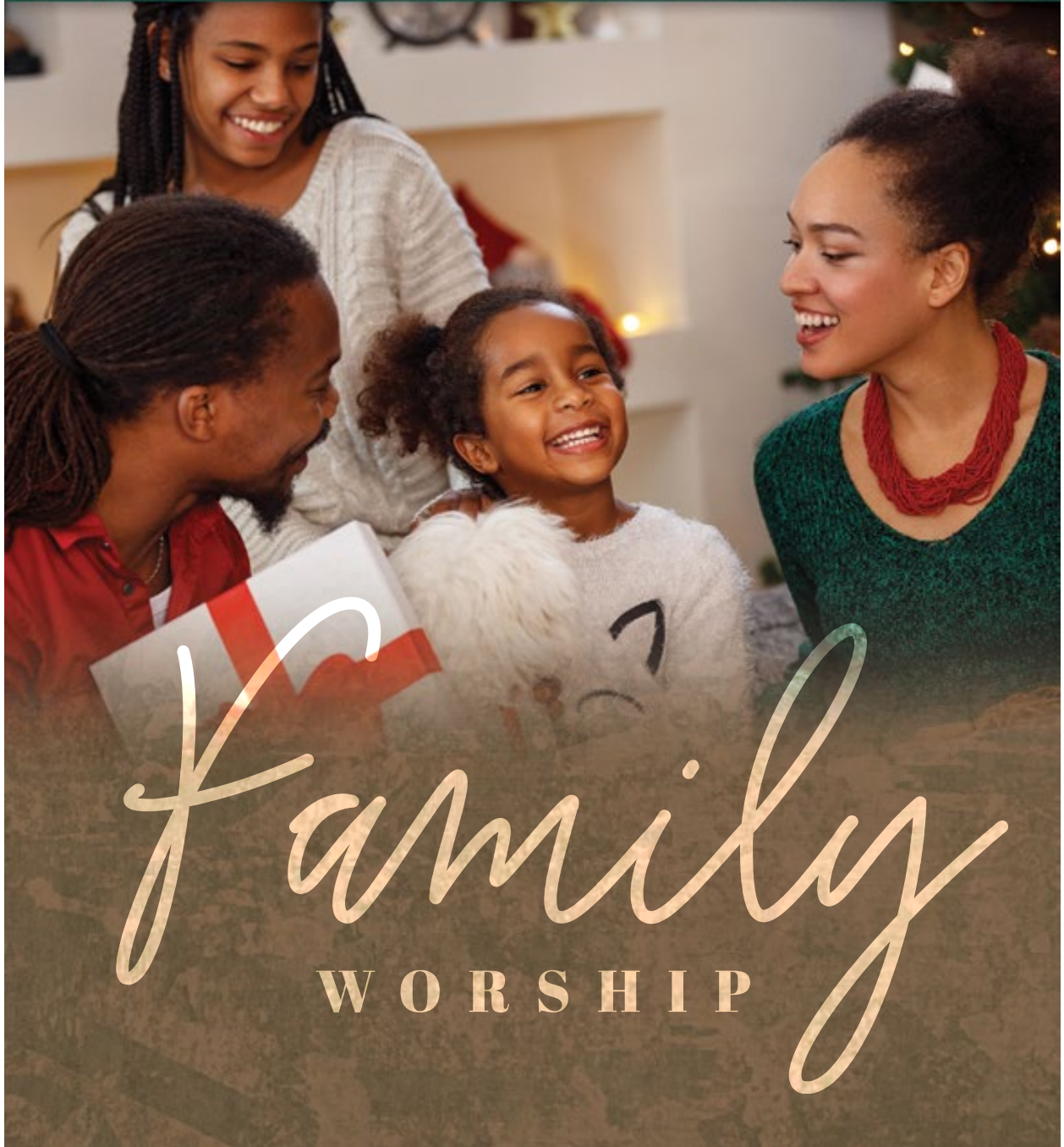


P R E P A R E Y E





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**P R E P A R E   Y E**

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*Family Advent*

**W O R S H I P   S E R I E S**

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *family* W O R S H I P

### INDEX

About the Series.....	5
Newsletter/Bulletin Notices .....	6-9
How to Use the Series .....	10-13
Week One (Ponder) .....	14-35
Week Two (Pray).....	36-57
Week Three (Praise) .....	58-77
Week Four (Proclaim) .....	78-99
Music Guide .....	100-140

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### ABOUT THE SERIES

Prepare the way to celebrate the birth of Jesus with this Prepare Ye Advent Worship Series. Each week individuals and families, children and adults, will come together to worship in an informal setting. We will prepare to welcome the Savior as we ponder God's Word and promises, remember that God answers prayer, praise God for the gift of his Son and proclaim the good news that Christ is born! The order of service each week includes the lighting of the Advent wreath, hymns, special responses for children, prayers, a message for children and adults, a family craft project and discussion questions for a family conversation.

**Week 1:** Ponder (Luke 1:30-33, 38): Mary heard the Word of the Lord—that she would be the mother of the Savior. She trusted the Word of God, knowing that he keeps his promises. We too can trust God to keep his promises. Those attending the service will make a little booklet about the promises of God.

**Week 2:** Pray (Luke 1:13-17): God heard and answered the prayers of the priest Zechariah. He and his wife would have a son—John, who would prepare the way of the Lord. God hears and answers our prayers. Those attending the service will create prayer reminder cards to use in family devotions or share with friends.

**Week 3:** Praise (Luke 1:41-44): The unborn child John leaped for joy in the presence of the unborn Savior. Elizabeth praised God when Jesus' mother came to visit her. We praise God for the gift of his Son! Those attending the service will make invitations to Christmas worship to share with friends and neighbors.

**Week 4:** Proclaim (Luke 3:1-14): John proclaimed the coming of Jesus, the Lamb of God. He helped to prepare the way of the Lord, calling on people to repent of their sins. We have good news to proclaim! Jesus the Savior has come. He suffered, died and rose from death to save us. Those attending the service will create wooden craft stick crosses.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

#### WEEK ONE NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Everyone is invited to attend our Family Advent worship as we prepare the way of the Lord! Parts of these special Advent services are written especially for children, but we are all children of God.

In our first service we will ponder the Word and promises of God, and the way in which those promises were fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. As our Advent craft, we will make a little book of God's promises.

#### WEEK ONE BULLETIN NOTICE

Today we have come together to worship Jesus our Savior, who came in fulfillment of the promises of God. As Mary, Jesus' mother, trusted God and believed his Word, we too can trust the Word of God. For an Advent craft project, we will make a little book of God's promises.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *family* W O R S H I P

### NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

#### WEEK TWO NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Everyone is invited to attend our Family Advent worship as we prepare the way of the Lord! Parts of these special Advent services are written especially for children, but we are all children of God. The priest Zechariah prayed and God heard and answered his prayers, just as God hears and answers our prayers. As our Advent craft, we will make prayer reminder cards.

#### WEEK TWO BULLETIN NOTICE

Today we have gathered to worship Jesus our Savior, who came to set us free. In our second Advent service, we will be reminded that God hears and answers our prayers. For our Advent craft project, we will make prayer reminder cards.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

#### WEEK THREE NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Everyone is welcome at our Family Advent worship as we prepare the way of the Lord! Parts of these special Advent services are written especially for children, but we are all children of God. In our third Advent service we will praise God for the gift of his Son, in whom we have forgiveness for our sins and the gift of eternal life. As our Advent craft, we will make invitations to Christmas worship so that friends and neighbors can join us in praising God.

#### WEEK THREE BULLETIN NOTICE

Today we have come together to worship Jesus our Savior. The unborn prophet John leaped for joy in the presence of his yet unborn Savior! We too rejoice in Jesus' birth and in his presence among us. For our Advent craft project, we will make invitations to Christmas worship so that friends and neighbors can join us in praising God, who sent his Son to be our Savior.



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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

#### WEEK FOUR NEWSLETTER NOTICE

You are invited to attend our fourth Family Advent worship as we prepare the way of the Lord!

Some parts of these special Advent services are written especially for children, but we are all children of God. John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, was sent by God to prepare the people of Israel to welcome the Savior. John proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand, and we proclaim that Jesus, the Lamb of God, has come! As our Advent craft, we will make craft stick crosses.

#### WEEK FOUR BULLETIN NOTICE

We are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Savior, and today we have come together to worship him. John the Baptist proclaimed the coming of the Savior and called on people to repent and prepare the way of the Lord. We too have a message of good news for the world—Christ is born!

For our Advent craft project, we will make craft stick crosses.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *family* W O R S H I P

### HOW TO USE THE SERIES

#### WORSHIP PLANNING

**Advent Praise:** Before the worship begins, enjoy an Advent sing-a-long. Ask children and adults to suggest favorite Advent and Christmas hymns. Sing one verse of each song. If a suggested song is one that will be used in the service, let that serve as a practice session before the service!

**Invocation:** We begin our worship in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who created and redeemed us and who makes us his holy people.

**Lighting the Advent Wreath:** The five candles on the Advent wreath, three purple or blue, one pink or rose and one white, represent the rising light, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world. The pink candle, a sign of joy and anticipation, is lit on the third Sunday in Advent. The white Christ candle, along with all four weekly candles, is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

**Confession and Absolution:** Advent is a season of joy, but also a time of repentance. We confess our sins, admitting that we need of the Savior who was born for us.

**Sentences for Young Children:** This short, rhyming echo pantomime expresses the worship theme for children (and adults!). The leader says the words line by line and performs the motions that go with each line. The children and adults echo the leader, repeating the words and copying the motions.

**Scripture Readings:** Brief readings from the Old Testament and from the Gospels express the theme for the worship service.

**Message:** The message, an object lesson about the worship theme, is for children of all ages, toddlers to adults.

**Family Advent Craft:** Individuals and families work together to create a simple project based on the week's theme. If your worship setting does not allow space for such activities, instructions and supplies for the project can be sent home with the participants. If the projects are done at home, participants may wish to bring their completed crafts to share at the service the following week.

**Family Advent Conversation:** While they work on their craft projects, individuals and family members discuss questions based on the theme for the week. A handout with the discussion questions may also be sent home at the end of the service.

**Offering Prayer:** After the offerings have been brought forward, everyone participates in a simple echo pantomime prayer. The leader says the words line by line and performs the motions that go with each line. The children and adults echo the leader, repeating the words and copying the motions.

**Benediction:** At the close of worship, we leave with the blessing of God, who is with us in Christ Jesus. After the benediction, we sing a hymn that reflects the theme of the service.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Work ahead of time with volunteers to gather craft materials each week, set up paper-covered tables in the worship space and set out supplies for each table. Volunteers should also be available to help participants during the craft activity and to clean up after the service. Volunteers might also help in leading the Family Advent Conversations. Invite families and individuals to serve as volunteers for the services.

## **WORSHIP SPACE**

Your worship space is a reverent place to celebrate the birth of Jesus. These services may be done in the sanctuary, with the project and conversation instructions sent home with the worshippers. The services may also be done in a fellowship hall, gym or similar space, where tables and chairs for the craft activity can be set up ahead of time.

## **CRAFT ACTIVITIES**

If you are making the crafts during the worship time, it will be helpful to provide paper plates or sturdy pieces of cardboard for the fourth week, to be used to carry the craft project home (while the glue is still drying). If the crafts are to be done at home, printed instructions can be distributed after the worship service. Some of the necessary craft supplies (craft sticks, Bible promise template, index cards) can be sent home in clear plastic bags. Families can then supply their own paint, markers, scissors, stapler and glue to assemble the crafts at home.

### **Week 1: A Book of God's Promises**

Needed: Copy paper, white construction paper or cardstock; scissors; staplers; markers, colored pencils, crayons; Bibles and/or template of Bible verses.

Directions:

1. Each participant will need at least two sheets of paper; cardstock can be used for the cover if desired. Cut the papers in half to form four 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheets. Fold these in half and slip one inside the other to form a booklet; staple along the folded edge.
2. Look for Bible verses in which God promises his help and care. Look in the Psalms for verses of hope and comfort, or in other Old Testament books for verses that speak of God's promise to send a Savior. Look for the promises of Jesus in the four gospels. Write a different verse on each page. If using the printed page of Bible verses, fold and cut apart the verses and staple them together inside of a plain folded 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheet.
3. Design and color a cover for the booklet. Illustrate the printed verses or the Bible verses you have chosen.
4. Use your booklet at home as a reminder of the promises in God's Word, or give your booklet to a friend or neighbor.

### **Week 2: Prayer Reminder Cards**

Needed: 3" x 5" index cards (may be ruled or unruled, white or multi-colored); scissors; markers, colored pencils and crayons.

Directions:

1. Give each participant a small stack of cards. Fold and cut each index card in half.
2. On one side of each small card, write down a reminder to pray for family members, friends and co-workers. Include reminders for prayers of thanksgiving and praise, such as thanks to God for family, home, work and the gift of his Son!

3. On the opposite side of the card, draw a simple picture or colorful design.
4. At home, place the cards in a small bowl (a colorful Christmas bowl, if one is available). Each day during family devotions, or at any time, draw a card from the bowl and pray for the person or need mentioned. If you wish, keep a few blank cards and a pen or pencil near the bowl for new prayer reminders.

### **Week 3: Christmas Worship Invitations**

Needed: 3" x 5" (or larger) index cards, ruled or unruled; pens, markers, colored pencils and crayons.

Directions:

1. Use one whole card for each invitation. On one side print the date, time and location of one or more of your church's Christmas services and/or concerts.
2. Decorate the opposite (unruled) side of the card with a colorful Christmas picture—a Christmas tree, Jesus in the manger, the star of Bethlehem or shepherds and angels.
3. Deliver your finished invitations to friends and neighbors and encourage them to come and worship the Savior!

### **Week 4: Wooden Craft Stick Cross**

Needed: large size craft sticks (popsicle sticks); glue; scissors; water-based paint and paint brushes; paper towels; glitter; felt markers; crayons; pieces of cardboard to hold the crosses as they dry; string, yarn or ribbon; small plastic cups for paint and water.

Directions:

1. Use three large craft sticks for each cross. Layer one stick over another to form the cross-piece. Place a third stick just below the place where the two sticks cross. Glue the sticks together and let them dry in place.
2. Tape a loop of ribbon or string to the back of the cross.
3. Use paint, markers, crayons or glitter to decorate the cross. Participants might want to put words on the cross, such as "Jesus Loves Me," or "Jesus Is King." The cross can also be left undecorated.
4. Use the finished cross in your home as part of your Christmas decorations or give the cross to a friend or neighbor.

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**P R E P A R E   Y E**

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*family* **W O R S H I P**

**WEEK ONE: PONDER**

**INDEX**

Order of Service.....	15-19
Complete Script For Worship Leaders.....	20-27
Scripture Readings .....	28
Message.....	29-30
Family Advent Craft.....	31-34
Family Advent Conversation .....	35

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *family* W O R S H I P

### WEEK ONE: PONDER

### ORDER OF SERVICE

*We ponder your steadfast love, O God. Psalm 48:9*

Advent Praise

*(Before the worship service, let children and adults suggest Christ-centered Advent and Christmas hymns and carols. Sing one verse of each song suggested.)*

Invocation

**P** We begin our worship in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*(The first blue or purple candle is lit.)*

**P** We light the first candle on the Advent wreath as we ponder the Word of God and remember his promise to send a Savior.

**C** We love your Word, O Lord!

**P** The promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus, the holy Child of Bethlehem.

**C** We love your Word, O Lord!

#### Confession and Absolution

**P** Let us confess our sins to God and ask him to forgive us.

**C** Almighty God, you speak to us in your holy Word, but so often we do not listen. Instead we listen to other tempting voices and turn away from your Word and will. Please forgive our sins.

**P** Hear the good news! God sent his Son to be your Savior. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead for you. Because Jesus died for you, God forgives all of your sins.

**C** Lord, help us to listen to your Word!

#### Prayer of the Day

#### Sentences for Young Children

*(The leader says the lines and performs the motions. The children and adults repeat the words and copy the motions.)*

An angel spoke to Mary,  
*(Raise arms as if in blessing)*

And said, "You'll have a Son.  
*(Rock "baby" in arms)*

You will call him Jesus;  
*(Shake finger, as if explaining)*

He will be the Holy One."  
*(Point up to heaven)*

Mary listened carefully  
*(Cup hands around ears as if listening)*

And trusted what she heard.  
*(Place both hands on heart)*

She said, "Now let this happen  
*(Point to self)*



According to God's Word."  
(Open hands as an open book)

Song.....Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Old Testament Reading ..... Joshua 1:8-9

Gospel Reading..... Luke 1:30-33, 38

Song.....The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;  
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,  
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."  
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

Message: Trust the Word

Family Advent Craft: A Book of God's Promises

Family Advent Conversation

Offering

## Offering Prayer

*(The offerings are brought to the altar. The leader speaks the offering prayer and performs the motions. Children and adults repeat the words and copy the motions.)*

Our offerings we bring to you,  
*(Hold up cupped hands.)*

Our words of love, and actions, too.  
*(Place both hands over your heart.)*

Use these gifts, dear Lord, we pray,  
*(Fold hands in prayer.)*

To share with people every day  
*(Cup hands around mouth as if shouting.)*

News of great joy for all the earth  
*(Sweep hands up and around in a big circle.)*

Of Jesus Christ our Savior's birth!  
*(Rock a "baby" in your arms.)*

Song..... Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to him belong;  
They are weak, but he is strong.  
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died  
Heaven's gates to open wide.  
He has washed away my sin,  
Lets his little child come in.  
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

## Closing Prayer

**P** Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together.

**C** **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Benediction (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)

**P** "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

**C** **But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."**

**P** "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

**C** **Amen.**

Closing Song ..... Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
Who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

Abram's promised great reward,  
Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—  
Him of two-fold race behold—  
Truly came, as long foretold.

As your coming was in peace,  
Quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me  
Which is yours eternally.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### WEEK ONE: PONDER

#### COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** of the following image (purchased by you from istockphoto.com) can be shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/man-sitting-watching-sunset-gm944915072-258101577>

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*We ponder your steadfast love, O God. Psalm 48:9*

- **Advent Praise** takes place: Before the worship service, let children and adults suggest Christ-centered Advent and Christmas hymns and carols. Sing one verse of each song suggested.

- The **Invocation** is spoken by the pastor:

Ⓟ We begin our worship in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- The **Lighting of the Advent Wreath** is spoken responsively by the pastor or worship leader and the congregation, and includes the lighting of the first candle of the Advent wreath:

*(The first blue or purple candle is lit.)*

Ⓟ We light the first candle on the Advent wreath as we ponder the Word of God and remember his promise to send a Savior.

Ⓒ **We love your Word, O Lord!**

Ⓟ The promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus, the holy Child of Bethlehem.

Ⓒ **We love your Word, O Lord!**

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

Ⓟ Let us confess our sins to God and ask him to forgive us.

Ⓒ **Almighty God, you speak to us in your holy Word, but so often we do not listen. Instead we listen to other tempting voices and turn away from your Word and will. Please forgive our sins.**

Ⓟ Hear the good news! God sent his Son to be your Savior. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead for you. Because Jesus died for you, God forgives all of your sins.

Ⓒ **Lord, help us to listen to your Word!**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor:

Ⓟ Heavenly Father, during this Advent season we get ready to celebrate the birth of your Son. We hear your Word and learn about your promise to send a Savior. Help us to listen to your Word and trust in your promises. Hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

- The **Sentences for Young Children** take place. The leader says the lines and performs the motions. The children and adults repeat the words line by line and copy the motions:

An angel spoke to Mary,  
*(Raise arms as if in blessing)*

And said, "You'll have a Son.  
*(Rock "baby" in arms)*

You will call him Jesus;  
*(Shake finger, as if explaining)*

He will be the Holy One."  
*(Point up to heaven)*

Mary listened carefully  
*(Cup hands around ears as if listening)*

And trusted what she heard.  
*(Place both hands on heart)*

She said, "Now let this happen  
*(Point to self)*

According to God's Word."  
*(Open hands as an open book)*

- A **Song** is sung by the congregation to the tune Jefferson 87 87 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Joshua 1:8-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:  

Ⓟ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 1:30-33, 38, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:  

Ⓟ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end....And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.
- A **Song** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gabriel’s Message 10 10 11 7 3, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
 With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;  
 “All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
 Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
 All generations laud and honor thee;  
 Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
 Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
 “To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said,  
 “My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”  
 Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

- The **Message: Trust the Word** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

*(Needed: a Bible and a smartphone.)*

- Ⓟ If I wanted to hear a message from God, should I expect a call on my cell phone? What if I went outside and shouted up to the sky, “OK, God, I’m listening”? Are those good ways to get a message from God? *(Let children answer.)* God sends his Word in different ways!

Long before the first Christmas, God had promised to send a Savior. He sent his messengers the prophets to the people of Israel to remind them of his promise. But then, when the time came for Jesus to come into the world, God sent a special messenger to earth. God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman in the town of Nazareth, a woman named Mary. The angel said, “Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you!” Then Gabriel said that Mary was going to have a baby and she was to name him Jesus. Mary’s baby would be the Son of God and he would be a king forever. This baby would be a miracle from God; he would be the Savior that God had promised to send.

Mary listened to this Word, this message from God. She answered, “Let this happen to me just as you have said.” Mary knew that she could trust this Word from God. She believed the angel’s message. God would keep his promise.

Today, how do we hear God’s Word? How do we hear his messages for us? *(Show a Bible.)* We have God’s Word right here in the Bible. We can hear and read and study his Word every day. We hear God’s Word for us in church, at home, in Sunday school and Bible class. We can even read and hear God’s Word on a smartphone with a Bible app *(show phone)*!

Mary, Jesus’ mother, heard the Word of God and trusted what God said. We can trust what God says too, because God always keeps his promises. He kept his most wonderful promise—to send a Savior! We were held captive by sin and we could not free ourselves. Jesus came to die on the cross to take our sins away. He rose from the dead and he promises, “Because I live, you will also live.” Jesus keeps his promises. You can trust his Word. When Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven,” you can know for sure that your sins are forgiven. When Jesus says, “You will live forever with me,” you can know for sure that you will live with Jesus forever. When Jesus says, “I am with you always,” you can be sure that he is with you right now and that he will be with you forever. You can trust the Word!

For our craft activity, we will make a little book of Bible verses that tell about the promises of God. You can share your book with friends and neighbors to remind them that God always keeps his promises.



- The **Family Advent Craft: A Book of God's Promises** instruction sheets (see pp. 31-34 for reproducible handouts) are handed out for families to do now or on their own during the week:

Needed: Copy paper, white construction paper or cardstock; scissors; staplers; markers, colored pencils, crayons; Bibles and/or template of Bible verses.

Directions:

1. Each participant will need at least two sheets of paper; cardstock can be used for the cover if desired. Cut the papers in half to form four 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheets. Fold these in half and slip one inside the other to form a booklet; staple along the folded edge.
  2. Look for Bible verses in which God promises his help and care. Look in the Psalms for verses of hope and comfort, or in other Old Testament books for verses that speak of God's promise to send a Savior. Look for the promises of Jesus in the four gospels. Write a different verse on each page. If using the printed page of Bible verses on pp. 33-34, cut apart the verses into four separate pages along the dotted lines and staple them inside of a plain folded 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheet.
  3. Design and color a cover for the booklet. Illustrate the printed verses or the Bible verses you have chosen.
  4. Use your booklet at home as a reminder of the promises in God's Word, or give your booklet to a friend or neighbor.
- The **Family Advent Conversation** (see p. 35 for reproducible handout) can be handed out for use at the craft tables or at home or displayed on a screen and discussed among the families while they work on the craft or after the craft is complete:
    1. Have you ever made a promise to someone? What was it? Did you keep the promise?
    2. What is your favorite promise from God?
    3. Memorize a favorite Bible promise and share it with someone.
  - The **Offering** is gathered.

- After the Offering is brought to the altar, the **Offering Prayer** takes place. The leader speaks the offering prayer and performs the motions. Children and adults repeat the words line by line and copy the motions:

Our offerings we bring to you,  
*(Hold up cupped hands.)*

Our words of love, and actions, too.  
*(Place both hands over your heart.)*

Use these gifts, dear Lord, we pray,  
*(Fold hands in prayer.)*

To share with people every day  
*(Cup hands around mouth as if shouting.)*

News of great joy for all the earth  
*(Sweep hands up and around in a big circle.)*

Of Jesus Christ our Savior's birth!  
*(Rock a "baby" in your arms.)*

- The **Song** is sung by the congregation to the tune Jesus Loves Me 77 77 and refrain, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
 For the Bible tells me so.  
 Little ones to him belong;  
 They are weak, but he is strong.  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died  
 Heaven's gates to open wide.  
 He has washed away my sin,  
 Lets his little child come in.  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

- The **Closing Prayer** is spoken by the pastor or worship leader:

**P** Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together.

**C** **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

- The **Benediction**, from Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16, is spoken responsively by the pastor or worship leader and the congregation:

**P** "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

**C** **But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."**

**P** "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

**C** **Amen.**

- The **Closing Song** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
Who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

Abram's promised great reward,  
Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—  
Him of two-fold race behold—  
Truly came, as long foretold.

As your coming was in peace,  
Quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me  
Which is yours eternally.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### WEEK ONE: PONDER

#### SCRIPTURE READINGS

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Joshua 1:8-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
  - Ⓟ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 1:30-33, 38, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
  - Ⓟ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end....And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *family* W O R S H I P

### WEEK ONE: PONDER

#### MESSAGE

- The **Message: Trust the Word** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

*(Needed: a Bible and a smartphone.)*

- Ⓟ If I wanted to hear a message from God, should I expect a call on my cell phone? What if I went outside and shouted up to the sky, “OK, God, I’m listening”? Are those good ways to get a message from God? *(Let children answer.)* God sends his Word in different ways!

Long before the first Christmas, God had promised to send a Savior. He sent his messengers the prophets to the people of Israel to remind them of his promise. But then, when the time came for Jesus to come into the world, God sent a special messenger to earth. God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman in the town of Nazareth, a woman named Mary. The angel said, “Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you!” Then Gabriel said that Mary was going to have a baby and she was to name him Jesus. Mary’s baby would be the Son of God and he would be a king forever. This baby would be a miracle from God; he would be the Savior that God had promised to send.

Mary listened to this Word, this message from God. She answered, “Let this happen to me just as you have said.” Mary knew that she could trust this Word from God. She believed the angel’s message. God would keep his promise.

Today, how do we hear God’s Word? How do we hear his messages for us? (*Show a Bible.*) We have God’s Word right here in the Bible. We can hear and read and study his Word every day. We hear God’s Word for us in church, at home, in Sunday school and Bible class. We can even read and hear God’s Word on a smartphone with a Bible app (*show phone*)!

Mary, Jesus’ mother, heard the Word of God and trusted what God said. We can trust what God says too, because God always keeps his promises. He kept his most wonderful promise—to send a Savior! We were held captive by sin and we could not free ourselves. Jesus came to die on the cross to take our sins away. He rose from the dead and he promises, “Because I live, you will also live.” Jesus keeps his promises. You can trust his Word. When Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven,” you can know for sure that your sins are forgiven. When Jesus says, “You will live forever with me,” you can know for sure that you will live with Jesus forever. When Jesus says, “I am with you always,” you can be sure that he is with you right now and that he will be with you forever. You can trust the Word!

For our craft activity, we will make a little book of Bible verses that tell about the promises of God. You can share your book with friends and neighbors to remind them that God always keeps his promises.

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# P R E P A R E   Y E

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## *Family* W O R S H I P

### WEEK ONE: PONDER

#### FAMILY ADVENT CRAFT: A BOOK OF GOD'S PROMISES

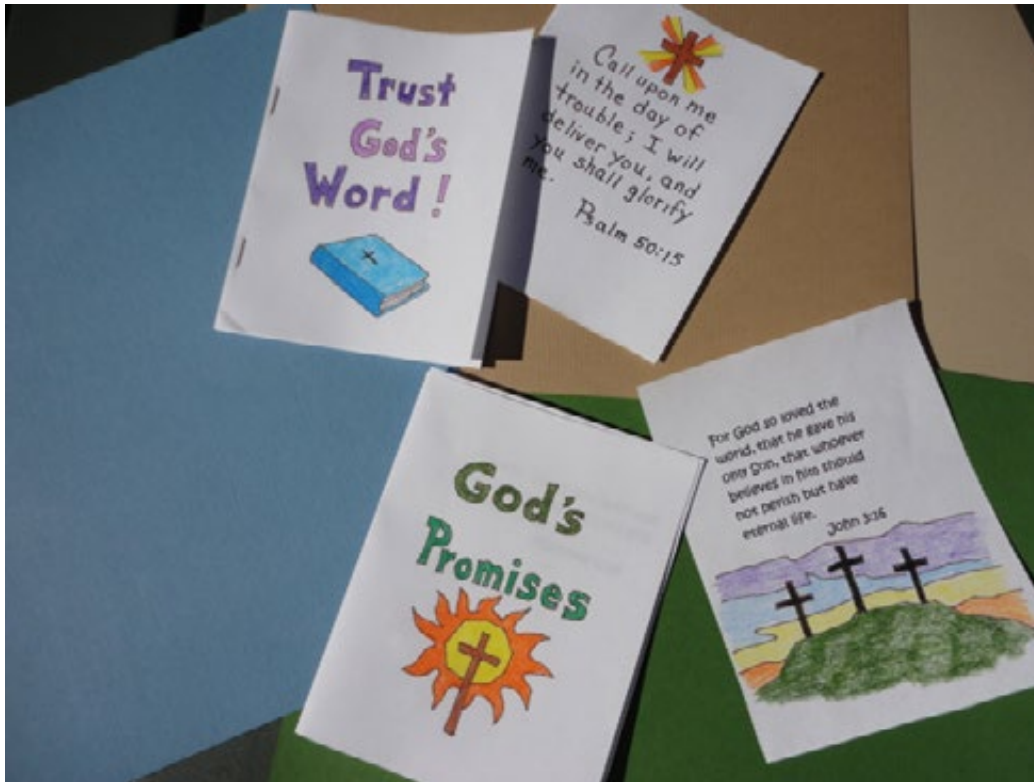
Needed: Copy paper, white construction paper or cardstock; scissors; staplers; markers, colored pencils, crayons; Bibles and/or template of Bible verses.

#### Directions:

1. Each participant will need at least two sheets of paper; cardstock can be used for the cover if desired. Cut the papers in half to form four 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheets. Fold these in half and slip one inside the other to form a booklet; staple along the folded edge.
2. Look for Bible verses in which God promises his help and care. Look in the Psalms for verses of hope and comfort, or in other Old Testament books for verses that speak of God's promise to send a Savior. Look for the promises of Jesus in the four gospels. Write a different verse on each page. If using the printed page of Bible verses on pp. 33-34, cut apart the verses into four separate pages along the dotted lines and staple them inside of a plain folded 5 ½" by 8 ½" sheet.
3. Design and color a cover for the booklet. Illustrate the printed verses or the Bible verses you

have chosen.

4. Use your booklet at home as a reminder of the promises in God's Word, or give your booklet to a friend or neighbor.





And behold,  
I am with you always,  
to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:20

Come to me, all  
who labor and  
are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

For God so loved the  
world, that he gave his  
only Son, that whoever  
believes in him should  
not perish but have  
eternal life.

John 3:16

He who testifies to these  
things says, "Surely I  
am coming soon." Amen.  
Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20

