



# WE ARE FAMILY

**An advent workbook for all the family,  
with Bible readings, discussion prompts,  
prayers and activities for each of the four  
weeks leading up to Christmas**



# HOPES AND DREAMS

## WEEK ONE



### INTRODUCTION

**Explain:**

Advent is about waiting, longing for the day we can celebrate Jesus' birth: Christmas! A day is coming that will bring hope and joy to everyone.

### BIBLE READING

One of the adults or an older child could read the passage out loud to the family:

**Luke 1 v 26 to 45 & 2 v 1-7**

If you have the 'Jesus Storybook Bible' the story from pages 176 to 183 is a great version of the same passage and might be simpler for younger ones to understand.

### DISCUSSION TIME

Recap the story in your own words, or ask an older child to summarise what you just read. Talk about the different people in the story who have been waiting for things to happen:

- Mary was waiting 9 months for her baby to be born
- God's people had been waiting for hundreds of years for God's rescuer, the Messiah.

### QUESTIONS

Here are a few questions to prompt your family discussion time:

- How do you think Mary felt?
- What about God's people (skip ahead and read Luke 2:25-35 if you like)
- What's one thing you're looking forward to?
- What are your dreams for this Christmas?
- What are your dreams for the next year?
- What are your dreams for your family?

### GOD'S PROMISE

**Explain:** From the very moment that Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, God promised to find a way to rescue his loved ones and bring them back to him. God's hopes and dreams for his son were that Jesus would rescue God's people and bring them back into a loving relationship with their heavenly father.

### FAMILY PRAYER

Have someone pray this prayer:

Father God, thank you that you sent your Son Jesus to be born as a baby. Thank you that because of Jesus, we don't have to wait for you to be near us but you are with us all the time. Thank you for the gift of hope through Jesus this Christmas.

### Parents - What are your dreams for your children?

Focus on character traits, values, behaviour (rather than careers or successes)

Take a few minutes to write down your dreams and hopes for your children in the space below and make a commitment to pray these dreams (you might already be doing this).

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

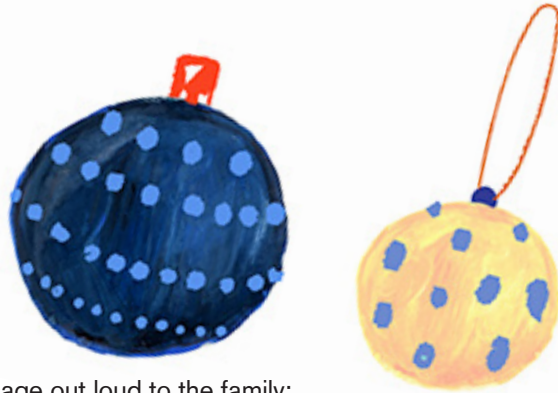
.....

### ACTION

- Over the course of this week, take time to speak to your children about your hopes and dreams for them.
- Commit to praying these things regularly for them.

# JOY

## WEEK TWO



### BIBLE READING

Have someone read the passage out loud to the family:

**Luke 2:8-21**

If you have a copy of 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' you can find a version of this passage on pages 184 - 190.

### DISCUSSION TIME

Recap the story in your own words, or ask an older child to summarise the passage. Talk about the ways people experienced Joy in the story:

- The angels brought 'news of great joy'
- The Shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God (v20)

### QUESTIONS

Here are a few questions to prompt your family discussion time:

- What was the 'news of great joy' in the story
- Can you remember a time when you had some really good news?
- What brings you joy?
- What happens when that joyful moment finishes? How do we feel?

### GOD'S PROMISE

**Explain:** Jesus is a gift from God who is always with us.

No matter what happens, the joy we have in Jesus, always stays.

### FAMILY PRAYER

Father God, thank you that you sent your Son Jesus into the world. Help us to share this joyful news with others this Christmas. Help us to go through each day this week, thinking about how we can bring joy to other people.

### ACTION

Using the space below, write the name of at least one person who does things for you on a daily basis - eg. bin men, postal workers, school crossing patrol, local shop keeper, teacher etc.

Write down ideas as a family, for ways you can bring them joy this week.

PERSON	IDEAS TO BRING THEM JOY

### CRAFT

Use blank cards and stickers to make cards for people and help to share the Joy of Christmas. Include something about why you're thankful for them.

# GIVING

## WEEK THREE



### BIBLE READING

Have someone read the following passage out loud:

**Matthew 2: 1-12**

Pages 192 - 198 or the 'Jesus Storybook Bible' tell a lovely version of the same passage.

### DISCUSSION TIME

Recap the story in your own words, or ask an older child to summarise the passage.

Talk about the journey that the wise men took to find Jesus

**Explain:** The wise men had been waiting and waiting for a special baby, so it was really important for them to visit Jesus and to bring him gifts.

Christmas is a time when we enjoy receiving presents but it's also really important to enjoy giving them too.

In Acts 20: 35 Luke reminds us that: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'

Chat about what this means for your family.

### QUESTIONS

Here are a few questions to prompt your family discussion time:

- Can you remember a time you gave something to someone?
- To a friend?
- What about a stranger?
- How did it feel?

### GOD'S PROMISE

**Explain:** Jesus didn't come to be a bossy ruler, he came to be a servant. He came to help others (like us) and we can show other people God's love by serving them and giving to them too.

### FAMILY PRAYER

Father God, thank you that you sent your Son Jesus into the world. Thank you that he came, not as a King to give orders, but as someone who would show us how to love and serve other people. We love receiving gifts but help us to practice giving to others this Christmas - without expecting anything in return.

### ACTION

As a family, use the space below to draw up a plan of things you could give away this week.

eg. Unwanted towels and bedding to animal rescue centres, toys and clothes to charity, food and essential items to local food banks etc.

Or give away some of your time - ring a relative for a chat, tidy up without being asked, help someone in need.

# Peace

## WEEK FOUR

### BIBLE READING

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

Matthew 2: 13-21

### DISCUSSION TIME

Recap the story in your own words or ask an older child to try and summarise the passage.

**Explain:** This isn't an easy part of the Christmas story to talk about, but it's really important to remember that Jesus and his family's early life wasn't easy. He and his parents had to leave their home and the people they knew to find safety - like so many refugee families today.

Jesus wasn't vulnerable as a child, but he grew up to be someone who brought hope and God's love to everyone.

### QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to prompt your family discussion time:

- Can you remember a time when you didn't feel safe?
- Do you worry about things happening or not happening?

### GOD'S PROMISE

**Explain:** God promises that he won't let you down or leave you (Deuteronomy 31:6)



### FAMILY PRAYER

Father God, thank you that you sent your Son Jesus into the world. Help us to remember all those families, just like Mary and Joseph and Jesus, who are trying to find a safe place this Christmas. Give us ideas of how to help them. Remind us that you are a God who brings hope and peace, that you sent your son to rescue us all - but there is still work to be done. Help us to be your hands and feet in the world.

### ACTION

As a family, talk about places in the world where there is a big need, places where people have to flee home. Is there a charity that you could connect with this Christmas? Is there an organisation working with refugees?

Could you make a one-off gift or becoming a regular donor?

Could children give up pocket money? Could parents give up a take-away or bottle of wine and give the money?

Write down what you decide to do using the space below.

Stuck for ideas? Visit [Tearfund.org](http://Tearfund.org) or [OpenDoorsuk.org](http://OpenDoorsuk.org)

### CRAFT

Light a simple candle or get creative and make Christingles (find instructions and explanations of Christingles on the internet). Talk about Jesus 'The Light of The World' and ways we can also be like light to others.