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To find out more about this Advent devotional, go to [thegoodbook.com/a-jesus-christmas](http://thegoodbook.com/a-jesus-christmas)

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## DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

### GOD'S PLAN FOR CHRISTMAS

#### EXPLORE

What lie did the serpent tell Adam and Eve? (verses 4-5)

*The serpent lied when he said they would not die and that they would be like God when they ate the fruit.*

What did God tell the serpent? (verses 14-15)

*God said the serpent would crawl on the ground from then on. And God said one day a son would be born who would crush the serpent's head. At the same time, the serpent would strike the son's heel. This is God's first promise to send his Son Jesus.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) Why do we run away from God instead of to him?

*We run away from God when the lie of the serpent causes us to think we cannot trust God and that he does not really love us.*

(younger) Ever since Adam and Eve believed the serpent, what lives in our hearts?

*The terrible lie of the serpent lives in every heart.*

(older) What makes God's promise of Jesus the very best promise ever?

*God's promise of Jesus means we can trust him and his Word. Because of Jesus, instead of running from God we can run to him and be his child.*

(younger) What promise did God give to Adam and Eve and us all?

*God promised to send a son to crush the serpent and destroy evil.*

## DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>

### LIKE THE STARS IN THE SKY

#### EXPLORE

What did God promise Abram? (verses 4-5)

*God promised Abram a son, and more children than he could count.*

How did Abram respond to God's promise? (verse 6)

*Abram believed God.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) Why is believing the truth about Jesus a good thing? What does this mean for you?

*God helps those who believe the truth about Jesus to understand his truth. Believing God's truth helps us recognize the lies of the serpent. Responses will vary for "what does this mean for you."*

(younger) Why do we need Jesus to rescue us?

*We need Jesus to rescue us from the serpent's terrible lie in our hearts.*

(older) What would you say to someone who asked, "Why do we need Jesus?"

*We all have a big problem called sin. Because the terrible lie of the serpent lives in our hearts, we love ourselves more than God. God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to rescue us from this big problem and give us hearts that believe in Jesus and see God's truth.*

(younger) Who does Jesus rescue?

*Jesus rescues all who believe in him.*

## DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

### A PROMISED CHILD

#### EXPLORE

What did God give to Abraham and Sarah, just as he promised? (verses 1-2)

*Sarah had a son just as God promised.*

How did Sarah react to having a son? (verse 6)

*Sarah laughed with joy because God gave her a son just as he had promised. Sarah knew that all who heard the good news would share her joy.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) For every day to seem like Christmas, we would need gifts and special treats every day. Why does the joy from a Christmas gift last only a short time?

*The happy feeling of opening gifts cannot last because things wear out, break, or we lose interest. Even the best gift cannot satisfy us forever. God made us so that he is our greatest and lasting happiness.*

(younger) How do we know God always keeps his promises?

*We can know God always keeps his promises because he sent Jesus just as he said.*

(older) The lasting joy we all really want comes from Jesus. Have you told him, "Jesus, I trust you as my Rescuer; you alone can give me a new heart and a new life with you forever"?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) How long does the joy Jesus gives us last?

*The joy Jesus puts in our hearts never wears out—it lasts forever!*

## DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup> A STAIRWAY TO GOD

### EXPLORE

What did Jacob see in his dream? (verse 12)

*Jacob saw a stairway extending from earth to heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and down the ladder.*

What did God promise Jacob? (verses 13-15)

*God promised Jacob and his whole family, the land he slept on. God also promised that Jacob would have many children; and that all the people on earth would be blessed through Jacob's family. God kept his promise and sent Jesus through Jacob's family line.*

### ENGAGE

(older) How is Jesus the Stairway to God?

*As a stairway is a way for us to get upstairs, Jesus is the way God made for us to come to him.*

(younger) Who is the Stairway to God?

*Jesus is the way to God.*

(older) People say that Santa's gifts depend on how you answer the question, "Have you been good this year?" The Bible asks a totally different question: "Have you trusted in Jesus (not in your own goodness)?" Have you received God's gift of Jesus and given him your love and life?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) What is God's rescue plan?

*God sent Jesus to be the way to God and to take us to God. We are not strong enough to climb to him.*

## DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> THE ONLY TRULY GOOD PERSON

### EXPLORE

Why did Moses need to take off his sandals? (verses 5-6)

*Moses was standing in God's presence. Moses learned that God alone is holy.*

Why was God sending Moses to Egypt? (verses 8-10)

*God sent Moses to rescue his children who were slaves in Egypt and to take them to the land God had promised.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Why is Jesus the only one who can rescue us?

*The serpent tried and tried but could never get Jesus to sin. Only Jesus is strong enough to rescue us.*

(younger) Who is the only one that can rescue us?

*Jesus is the only one who can rescue us.*

(older) Christmas is mostly fun, but problems happen. When you speak mean words and you sin, how can Jesus be your Rescuer? (Adults, share honestly about your own need, to get the discussion going.)

*Adults, to get the discussion going, share honestly about your own need for Jesus as your Rescuer.*

(younger) How is Jesus different from every other good person?

*Jesus never sinned.*

## DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> THE PASSOVER LAMB

### EXPLORE

The leaders of Israel were also called elders. What instructions did Moses give to them? (verses 21-23)

*God would send Jesus, the Lamb of God, to give his life blood as the way for our sin to be forgiven. For the people to understand sin's punishment, Moses instructed the people to take the life blood of a lamb; apply the blood on the sides of the door; and then stay in their house until morning.*

What did God's people tell their children about Passover? (verses 26-27)

*The next generation in every home must know about God's grace and mercy seen in his plan for sin to be punished and the sinner to be forgiven.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Why is it good to see how bad sin is?

*When we know how bad our sin is and how much sin hurts us and everyone, we realize that sin is a big problem we cannot fix ourselves. It is good to see our need for Jesus and run to him for the help only he can give.*

## DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

### GOD'S TRUE TENT

(younger) The Bible calls Jesus the Lamb. Why?

*Jesus took the punishment for sin we deserve to keep us safe with God.*

(older) Imagine this: When a fire came, a mother bird covered her chicks with her body to keep them safe. She died but the fire did not touch the chicks. Punishment for sin will be like a deadly fire. How does knowing Jesus as your Passover Lamb help you know you are safe from sin's punishment?

*God's justice is perfect. It would be unjust to ignore wickedness, rebellion and sin. God does not treat his children as their sins deserve because Jesus suffered the full punishment for our sins. God will never punish his children for the sin that Jesus paid for. God sees us, his children, as he sees Jesus—righteous (Romans 3 v 21-26).*

(younger) What is God's plan to punish evil and forgive his people at the same time?

*God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin. Now we can be forgiven.*

## DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

### LIFE-GIVING BREAD

#### EXPLORE

Why did the people grumble? (verses 1-3)

*The people missed the meat they had eaten during their years of slavery in Egypt.*

What did the people call the bread God gave them to eat? (verse 31)

*The people called the bread manna.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) How is Jesus the only way to true happiness?

*People try many things they hope will make them happy—and they may be happy for a while. True and lasting happiness is only found in life with God—the One who made us for himself. Jesus is the only way to God. Therefore, to believe in Jesus as our Rescuer is the way to true happiness—life with God forever.*

(younger) Why is Jesus the Bread of life?

*When Jesus fills our heart with God's love, it is even nicer than when bread fills our stomach.*

(older) What kind of hunger do you see in the lives of your friends? Now, be honest with yourself—what hunger is in your life?

*Adults, talk about ways you hunger for lesser things than Jesus, to encourage open sharing.*

(younger) When is a person truly happy?

*Money, friends and talents will only make us happy for a while. True happiness in life comes when Jesus fills our hearts with himself.*

#### EXPLORE

Why did God want the people to build a tabernacle (big tent)? (verse 8)

*God wanted his children to know of his love for them. God wanted to live with them.*

How did the people know what to build? (verse 9)

*God told them exactly how to build the tent. The tent was a picture of God's love in sending Jesus to be God with us. God alone had the plans for the perfect Tent—Jesus.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) What does it mean to you that God loves you so much that he wants you to be close to him?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) Who is God's true Tent?

*Jesus is God's true Tent.*

(older) It is easy to feel lonely when you believe God lives far away. What loneliness do you see in the lives of your friends? How might God use you to help them know his love?

*Loneliness comes when we feel like no one listens or understands. A person may even feel lonely in a room full of people. You may know someone who feels like everyone has a friend to talk to or a party to go to, except them. God will use your act of kindness to help your friend know of his love.*

(younger) Where does Jesus make his home?

*Jesus came to show us God's love and make our hearts his home.*

## DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>

### RUTH'S SON'S SON'S SON'S ... SON

#### EXPLORE

How did the women describe Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth? (verses 14-15)

*The women said Ruth's love for Naomi was an amazing gift—better than having several sons.*

What was the name of Naomi's grandchild (Boaz and Ruth's son)? (verse 17)

*Naomi named her grandchild Obed.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) Who can become a child in God's family?

*God's children believe the truth about Jesus. They trust Jesus as their Rescuer from sin and live to show others the greatness of God. Before Ruth saw it, she believed what God said about the day a Rescuer would come. In a similar*

way, although we don't see Jesus, we believe he died on the cross as the payment for our sin. All who trust in Jesus are God's children.

(younger) Who did Ruth choose to believe, and who was her son's son's son's ... son?

*Ruth chose to believe God and her son's, son's, son's son was Jesus.*

(older) When you are in a new school or neighborhood, Christmas can be hard. Who do you know who might feel that they don't belong? How could you show them that Jesus's love includes them?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) Who does God adopt into his family?

*Anyone who turns from sin and trusts in Jesus as their Rescuer and Lord.*

## DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> THE FOREVER KING

### EXPLORE

What are the four things the LORD did for David? (verses 8-9)

*David was a shepherd and God made him a king. God was with David wherever he went and kept David safe from his enemies. God promised to make David one of the most well-known men in the world. God promised to provide a home-land for his people Israel. God promised peace and rest for his people from their enemies.*

What did the LORD promise to build for David? (verses 11-13)

*The LORD said he would build a house (family) for David.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Why do some people think they need to do good things for God to love them?

*Some people think God will only accept them if they are good enough to deserve his love. But we are so ruined by sin that we could never deserve God's kindness on our own. Nothing we do on our own is totally and completely good. All people need God's grace all the time. Grace is God's powerful kindness given before we deserve it. God's grace gives us faith to believe in Jesus and changes our hearts to love God.*

(younger) Who is King David's son's son's son's ... son?

*King Jesus is King David's son's, son's, son's ... son.*

(older) If we study hard, we get good grades. If we practice hard, we get on the team. And at Christmas, some people say that if we are good, we get lots of gifts! How is God's way different?

*God knows that on our own, we cannot please him. When we place our trust in Jesus Christ, God gives us his Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, we are able to hear and*

*understand God's Word. With the Holy Spirit's help, we are able to please God.*

(younger) What did God build for King David?

*God built a family for David. Jesus, God's true King, came from David's family.*

## DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> THE KING WHO UNDERSTANDS US

### EXPLORE

What will the child be called? (verse 6)

*He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

What will the child do in David's kingdom? (verse 7)

*He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom. He will make sure everything in the kingdom is done in God's perfect way.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Do you think Jesus knows what it's like to feel afraid or sad (Hebrews 2 v 17-18)? What else do you think Jesus understands about you?

*Jesus understands us and can help us. As a child and as a man, Jesus was tempted to sin. Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted in every way that we are. He overcame every type of temptation we face with the gifts God gives every believer: God's Word, prayer and the Holy Spirit. He loves us and has the power to help us with every need.*

(younger) How is King Jesus different from other kings in David's family?

*Other kings were weak and sinful. Jesus was a human being and was tempted in every way we are but never sinned.*

(older) It helps to talk to someone who understands, so what would you like to tell Jesus?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) Why does Jesus understand us so well?

*Jesus was a human being and in his early years he was a little child, just like you. Jesus cried and was hungry. He had to learn to talk and walk, like any other baby. He grew up from a child to a man, like any other boy. He talked to his friends. He slept. He went through all the temptations you have. Even though Jesus never sinned, he understands you and will give you strength to live for God.*

## DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> BORN TO DIE

### EXPLORE

What are four things to learn about Jesus from these verses? (verses 2-4)

*Jesus grew up and looked like an ordinary person. He was hated and rejected by many people. Jesus knew what it was like to be sad and in pain. Many people did not like Jesus and did not respect him.*

Why was Jesus pierced and crushed? (verse 5)

*Jesus was killed by men and bore God's righteous anger against sin for us. Now we can be forgiven of sin and welcomed by God into his family.*

### ENGAGE

(older) When Jesus died it seemed that the serpent had won. Why was it God's plan for Jesus to die?

*Jesus died to take the full righteous anger of God against sin. His death frees us from the serpent's plan to make us slaves to sin and suffer sin's punishment forever. Jesus died so that we can be forgiven and welcomed by God into his family.*

(younger) How is Jesus different from other kings?

*Most kings want to be served. But King Jesus came to serve us. He left heaven to come and die for us.*

(older) Jesus frees us from the devil's power and gives us strength to fight against sin (John 8 v 34-36). If you are God's child, talk about a time when you were tempted to sin and Jesus gave you power to say "No."

*Adults, to get the discussion going, share honestly.)*

(younger) Why did Jesus die?

*Only Jesus could crush the serpent. Through Jesus' death, he broke the serpent's power over us.*

## DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> GOD WITH US

### EXPLORE

What did the angel of the Lord tell Joseph? (verses 20-21)

*The angel told Joseph to not be afraid to get married because Mary's baby was from God.*

What does Immanuel mean? (verse 23)

*Immanuel means "God with us".*

### ENGAGE

(older) What did coming to rescue us cost Jesus?

*Jesus left his home in heaven to come to us. In heaven Jesus, the Son, enjoyed a perfectly loving relationship with his Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus put on a human body*

*to come and be tempted in every way we are. Jesus never sinned yet he took God's full righteous anger against sin. Now we can be free from sin's punishment and have a relationship with God.*

(younger) How was Jesus different from every other baby?

*Mary was Jesus' mother and Jesus is God's Son.*

(older) What are you learning about Jesus that is making your love for him grow?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) How is Jesus different from other good teachers?

*All other good teachers are human beings and also sinful. Because Jesus is both God and man, only he can bring us to God.*

## DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> MARY'S CHILD

### EXPLORE

What are at least four things the angel told Mary about Jesus? (verses 32-33)

*The angel told Mary not to be afraid. God loved Mary. God chose Mary to have a son. Mary was to name her son, Jesus. Mary's son would be God's Son and the Forever King everyone was waiting for.*

How did the angel answer Mary's question? (verses 35-36)

*The angel told Mary that God's power would fill her and cause God's Son, Jesus, to grow in her body, like other babies grow.*

### ENGAGE

(older) All who turn away from sin and trust in Jesus are God's children. What could you say to a friend who is not sure they are God's child?

*All who believe Jesus is the Son of God who died for us and came alive again for us are promised forever life with God and Jesus (1 Corinthians 15 v 1-4). We can be sure that Jesus will do what he says. Faith is not about being strong enough to hold on to Jesus. He is our strong Rescuer who holds onto us (1 John 5 v 11-13).*

(younger) How long will King Jesus live and rule with his children?

*King Jesus will live and rule with his children forever.*

(older) Jesus lived for us, died for us, and rose to life for us. One day King Jesus will come back, and then all his children will enjoy forever life with him. If you are not sure you are God's child, will you use this space to write out a prayer asking God for faith to trust Jesus?

*Start writing and see what God shows you. You might enjoy reading your prayer aloud to him. You can be sure God hears what is in your heart. This prayer will act as a sweet reminder of his love for you.*

(younger) How long do God's children live?

*God's children enjoy life with Jesus now, life with Jesus in heaven after their body dies, and with Jesus in his kingdom forever.*

## DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> TRUE HAPPINESS

### EXPLORE

How did Mary respond to the angel's news? (verse 38)

*Mary knew her life was not about herself. As God's child, she wanted God to be in charge of her life.*

What did the Holy Spirit show Elizabeth about Mary's baby? (verses 42-45)

*The Holy Spirit showed Elizabeth that Mary's baby was the Rescuer they had waited for for so long.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Reading God's Book, praying, and obeying God are part of giving your life to Jesus. In this crazy busy time of year, what smaller joy will you put aside to spend time with God?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) Who knew that God's plan for her life was good?

*Mary knew that God's plan for her life was good.*

(older) Life with Jesus means doing whatever he wants—even when it means changing our plans. Even when it isn't fun. Even when no one else is watching! How might you use your hands, feet, eyes, tongue, mind, and heart to help someone else be truly happy today?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) When are we truly happy?

*We are truly happy when we give our lives to God. God made you—and his plan for your life will give you the greatest happiness.*

## DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> WE LIVE FOR JESUS

### EXPLORE

What did Mary say that God had done for her? (verses 48-49)

*Mary said that God had done great things for her. She knew this was not because of what she had done but because of who he is.*

What are at least four reasons why Mary rejoiced in God? (verses 50-55)

*Mary rejoiced in God as Merciful; Mighty; Gracious to those who do not trust in their efforts but depend on him; Faithful to his promises.*

### ENGAGE

(older) What happens when you believe the lie that "your life is all about you"?

*The truth is that God made me for himself. I belong to God because he created me. We are never truly happy until we know him, love him, and live for him.*

(younger) What gift did God give Mary?

*God gave Mary the gift of being Jesus' mother. This was a bigger dream for her life than she had for herself.*

(older) What purpose does God have for your life, which is bigger than any of your dreams?

*Our life goals will always be too small until we understand God made us for himself. God gives us dreams that are bigger than our abilities. He gives us the desire and then the power to do what only he can do through us. As God makes the "dream come true" we love him even more.*

(younger) What is it like when we try to live for ourselves instead of for God?

*Nothing in life can make you as happy as God. You were made for him. He has a dream for your life that is better than you could ever dream for yourself.*

## DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> PREPARING THE PATH

### EXPLORE

What will Zechariah's child (John) do to prepare the way for Jesus? (verses 76-77)

*As a prophet of God, John will prepare people to know Jesus.*

What is the result of God's tender mercy? (verses 78-79)

*Instead of giving us what our sins deserve, God gives us Jesus, who forgives our sins and gives us peace with God.*

### ENGAGE

(older) A home may look clean until sunshine streams in, showing the dirt and dust. And our lives may look clean until God's light shines in. What "dirt and dust" in your life is God showing you? Will you admit your sin to God?

*Adults, talk about what God is showing you, to encourage open sharing.*

(younger) Who did God send to get people ready for Jesus?

*God sent John to get people ready for Jesus.*

(older) Use this space to write a prayer, and ask God to help you see your need for Jesus to pick you up and make you clean.

*Write to God for help and speak your prayer to him. He knows your heart and will help you, maybe in ways you don't expect. God works creatively and lovingly to wipe away our sin. Keep watch and wait. Turn from whatever sin he shows you.*

(younger) What does it mean to repent?

*To repent means to turn away from our sin and run to God. Jesus helps us love him more than our sin. Jesus helps us trust him for our forgiveness of sin. Because of Jesus, forgiven children run to God and find true joy.*

## DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> THE REAL JESUS

### EXPLORE

What names of people and places are in these verses?

*Caesar Augustus / Roman world / Quirinius / Syria / Joseph / Nazareth / Galilee / Judea / Bethlehem (town of David) / David / Mary*

Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem? (verses 4-5)

*Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem because everyone went to their family's city to register for the census and Bethlehem was the city of the family of David.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Faith doesn't mean wishing that everything turns out okay. Faith in Jesus is trusting truth. How does knowing that Jesus really lived, died, and came back to life help you know for sure that he is coming again?

*Faith in Jesus is not wishing or hoping. History records his life and death and many eyewitnesses have written about him. Jesus did what he said he would. We know he has the power to return. He has the power to accomplish everything just as he said.*

(younger) How do we know the story of Jesus is real?

*Every story in God's Word is true. Caesar Augustus and Quirinius were real people and Bethlehem is a real place.*

(older) When Jesus returns, there will be no more death or pain (Revelation 21 v 4). His children will live with him forever in the world as it should be (Revelation 21 v 3). How does this amazing truth change how you want to live today?

*Responses will vary. It is hard for a child to grasp how short life is and how fast it goes. But God's big plan gives the perspective needed. Every day is a gift to us to live by faith.*

(younger) What is God's plan for Jesus?

*Jesus came to live with us and one day he is coming again as God's powerful King to reign with God's people forever.*

## DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>

### THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE FOR ALL

#### EXPLORE

Why were the shepherds in the fields? (verse 8)

*The shepherds watched their sheep through the night to make sure they stayed safe.*

Name at least five things the angel told the shepherds. (verses 10-12)

*Do not be afraid / I have great news for you / This great news will bring amazing joy to all people / Today the Rescuer has been born right here / He is the long-awaited Messiah / He is the Lord*

#### ENGAGE

(older) How is God's way of loving people different from the way we usually love people?

*We usually love people who are like us. We like those who can do something for us or give us what we want.*

(younger) Who were the first people God chose to hear that Jesus was born?

*The shepherds were the first people God chose to hear that Jesus was born.*

(older) How could you reach out to show Jesus's love to someone you think no one else would talk to?

*Be specific and expect responses to vary. Pray for God to show you what to do next.*

(younger) Who did Jesus come for?

*Jesus came for all people. Jesus came for ..... (insert your child's name.)*

## DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>

### THE BEST WORDS EVER

#### EXPLORE

What words from God did the angels tell the shepherds? (verse 14)

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."*

What did Mary do with the shepherd's words that she knew were from God? (verse 19)

*Mary held dear everything the shepherds said about Jesus. Mary's mind saved every word to learn more and more from what they told her.*

#### ENGAGE

(older) How do you know God's Book is different from every other book?

*The Bible is unlike any other book because, through the Bible, God speaks truth to us in words. The Holy Spirit*

*makes us understand that the Bible is God's Word, at work in us.*

(younger) What are the very best words we will ever hear?

*God's words given to us in his Book, the Bible, are the best words ever. The Bible is not like any other book.*

(older) Remember when you've tried to make the sweetness last after you ate a piece of candy? Mary wanted to hold the sweet truths of Jesus in her heart forever. What sweet truths about Jesus do you want to hold in your heart?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) What makes the Bible different from any other book?

*As we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to love truth about God and find life in his plan for sending Jesus.*

## DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> SIMEON SEES HIS SAVIOR

### EXPLORE

What did the Holy Spirit tell Simeon he would see before he died? (verse 26)

*Simeon would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah/Christ, who is Jesus.*

What did Simeon know about Jesus that caused him to praise God? (verses 30-32)

*Simeon knew that Jesus would rescue all God's people, both Jew (people in the family of Abraham) and Gentile (people who were far away from God).*

### ENGAGE

(older) If we compare ourselves with others we might say, "Bad people may need Jesus, but I'm pretty good." What is the truth about our sin and Jesus's rescue?

*The Bible tells us we are all broken—no one has escaped the problem of sin. We are all sinners in need of a Rescuer. God loves sinful people so much that he sent Jesus to rescue us.*

(younger) What special promise did God give to Simeon?

*Simeon would see the Rescuer before he died.*

(older) Have you heard these lies? "Don't worry about sin—God is happy with what you do for him." / "Everybody does some bad things, but when you do, you make up by doing good things." / "Little sins aren't that bad—just tell God you're sorry." What lies does the serpent whisper to you about your sin? What is the truth?

*The truth is that even good things we do are stained with sin. All sin is hurtful to us, to others, and an offense to God. We need God's mercy. He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin.*

(younger) What did Simeon know when he saw baby Jesus?

*He knew Jesus was the Rescuer. Jesus came to rescue us from the sin in our hearts. All who trust Jesus are rescued from their sin and made God's children. Simeon also knew that God had kept his promise to him.*

## DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> GOD HEARS US

### EXPLORE

What did Anna do all day, every day? (verse 37)

*Anna stayed in the temple worshiping God night and day, fasting and praying.*

How did God show Anna that he had answered her prayers? (verse 38)

*When Anna saw Mary and Joseph's baby, God's Spirit helped her know the baby was his promised Rescuer.*

### ENGAGE

(older) How do you need God's help today? Will you pray right now for his help? You don't need any special words. Just come to God through faith in Jesus and he will hear you.

*Help your child write a prayer in the journal space provided.*

(younger) What did Anna pray for every day?

*Anna prayed every day that God would send Jesus.*

(older) Who in your life needs to know about God's love? Pray right now for this person and ask God to give you a way to love them this week.

*Help your child write a prayer in the journal space provided.*

(younger) What is talking to God like for God's children?

*God invites his children to talk with him like best friends talk. God loves us and hears our prayers because of Jesus.*

## DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

### EXPLORE

The Magi are sometimes called wise men. What did they know about Jesus? (verse 2)

*The Magi knew Jesus had been born because they had seen the star. They knew Jesus was God's king.*

How did people find out where God planned for Jesus to be born? (verses 4-6)

*The people knew God's king would be born in Bethlehem just as God's Book said.*

### ENGAGE

(older) The Magi left home on a long journey to find the new King. In Jerusalem they finally learned from God's Book the

truth about Jesus. How has reading God's Book helped you see the truth, and the lies people believe?

*God's Book shows us what pleases him and what lies the serpent uses to keep us from God's love.*

(younger) How did the Magi know a king was born?

*The Magi saw a new star shining over Israel.*

(older) The Magi worshiped Jesus when they learned he was the true King. What truths about Jesus have you learned that make you want to love him and live for him?

*Help your child remember the Jesus truths from God's Word. Record these truths in the journal space. A future blessing awaits!*

(younger) What did the Magi find out about Jesus?

*The Magi worshiped Jesus as the greatest truth of all. The stars and trees and creatures all point to the truth that Jesus made them—he is the true King of kings.*

## DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> JESUS CAME TO WIN

### EXPLORE

What reason did Herod give the Magi for wanting to know more about Jesus? (verse 8)

*Herod said he wanted to know so that he could go and worship Jesus too.*

How did Herod react when he discovered the Magi had outwitted him? (verse 16)

*In Herod's selfish anger, he wickedly planned to get rid of Jesus by killing all the baby boys in Bethlehem.*

### ENGAGE

(older) How does Jesus's death help us know that God uses the bad things he allows for good?

*God did not spare his only Son Jesus, but gave him up, for our eternal good (Romans 8 v 32). Jesus willingly took the punishment for our sin knowing his death would give us life with God forever. Because of Jesus, we can trust God's good purposes even when we do not understand what he is doing.*

(younger) Who did Herod try to kill?

*Herod tried to kill Jesus. Instead of giving his life to God's great King, he let the sin in his heart rule. Herod's awful sin tried to kill Jesus.*

(older) What hard things that have happened to you, or a friend, will you ask God to use for good?

*Ask good questions to draw your child out. Start by asking: "What are some hard things that have happened to a friend?" Be sure to pray. Watch, wait and worship God as he answers.*

(younger) How did Jesus win over sin and death?

*Herod did not kill Jesus. One day, because it was his will, Jesus gave his life to rescue us from sin and death. Jesus rose to life and crushed the serpent.*

## DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> A JESUS CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE

Who is the true light that came to shine light into the dark world? (verses 5 and 9-10)

*Jesus*

What right does Jesus give to all who believe in him? (verse 12)

*The right to become children of God.*

### ENGAGE

(older) Christmas is all about Jesus. Will you begin the greatest celebration of all by asking Jesus to shine his light into your mind and heart? Will you receive God's gift of Jesus and become a child of God?

*Pray for a genuine response.*

(younger) Who is the true Light that lights our way to God?

*Jesus is the true Light.*

(older) God's children celebrate Christmas all year long by shining Jesus's light into the world. How is Jesus shining out into the dark world through you? In what ways do you want to shine more brightly in the year ahead?

*Responses will vary.*

(younger) Will you thank God for Jesus—the greatest gift of all?

*Lead your child in a short prayer to thank God for sending Jesus to live for us and die for us.)*