

WEEK ONE

Expectancy

Dear Jesus,

We start this Advent season waiting for you. Like the Israelites who wearily longed – hoping against hope – you would bring your promised Messiah, we desperately wait for you to fill our hearts with your glorious presence this Advent season. Please allow us to see the beauty and refining that comes when we cease our striving and choose to boldly trust your promises will prove true.

Think of a time when you've had to wait expectantly for something. What was it like to feel in your heart that you knew something big was going to happen and yet to also know that you needed to wait for it? How does waiting for God to provide the answers allow us to trust him more?



Reading: Micah 5:2-5; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 7:14



WEEK TWO

Hope

- Dear Lord,
For many of us, we admit the story of the virgin birth has become so familiar it's easy for us to lose sight of how utterly spectacular and astonishing this event was. After years of waiting, your promised Messiah was to be born in the most unlikely of places to the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely of ways. Only You can plan such awe-inspiring works!
You are perfect in your ways, and your plans are magnificent! May we trust you with every aspect of our lives, remembering that Mary's story assures us that you are able to show up and do the miraculous. Nothing, nothing is impossible for you, Lord!

Together discuss:

- What do you think surprised Mary more – the angel, or the angel's message?
- Would you want an angel to give you a message about something that was to happen in your life?
- Share a time when God miraculously "showed up" in your life to offer you either physical or emotional provision in a way that you never could have provided.

Reading: Luke 1:26-38; Luke 1:47-55



WEEK THREE

Joy

Dear Lord,
It's hard to imagine what it would have been like to see the armies of heaven Lighting up the shepherd's fields as they praised your name! We praise you today that you chose to personally enter our world as the promised Messiah, humbling yourself to become human so you could truly live among your people. With your birth, we are made whole! You offer salvation to all that call out to you, and that makes our hearts sing with joy!

How do you see the great celebration of joy the shepherds saw?
In terms of your life, how do you celebrate both the big and little victories?
Even if you're going through something difficult right now, what can you choose to celebrate with joy today as you remember that, like Simeon, God will fulfill His promises for you?

Reading: Luke 2:8-20; Luke 2:25-32



WEEK FOUR

Peace

Heavenly Father,
You were born into a sinful, restless world looking for answers and desperate for peace. It may not look like ancient Bethlehem, but our world is an equally broken place filled with anxious hearts eager to discover purpose and lasting hope. We're thankful you demonstrate over and over your heart's desire to connect with us, offering authentic joy, peace and love. This Advent season, may our world see Jesus' birth as an olive branch of peace. No matter what their circumstances, may their minds be opened to the fact you give us an incredible peace that cannot be shaken or taken away. Thank you for being the path to peace. We rejoice in your amazing peace today as we celebrate your son's birth!

Describe how Mary and Joseph found themselves after Jesus' birth.

Do you think they had a reason for peace?

How do you think the miracles surrounding Jesus' birth, (prophecies fulfilled, angels' appearance, etc.), bolstered the faith of the young Mary and Joseph for their future life as the earthly parents of the Messiah?

Reading: Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; Psalm 23:1-2

