



# What Child **IS** This?

*Family Devotional 2025*



# Introduction

This family devotional is designed to go along with the sermon series What Child IS This that we will be using during the season of Advent. Each week, gather as a family around a nativity scene. You might light a candle on an Advent wreath or a single candle as you begin your devotional time. Read the scripture together and talk about it. Each week there are simple suggestions for singing, playing, serving, and praying together.

Be sure to use the corresponding What Child IS This? Advent Calendar to discover the many names of Jesus used in the Bible!



# Week 1: King of Kings (Hope)

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**Light the Candle:** We light this candle for the hope we have in Jesus.

## Wonder:

The Bible calls Jesus the King of Kings. What does a king do? If you were a king, what would you do? What do you think it means that Jesus is a king? What do you think it means that Jesus is the King of Kings?

**Read:** Luke 2:1-5

## Learn and Share:

Did you know that the Christmas story has 2 kings in it? The first king is Caesar. He was the Roman ruler at the time that Jesus was born. He ordered all of the people to return to their home towns so that they could be counted in a census. This wasn't easy for people like Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph. The Jewish people lived under Roman rule, which was not always fair or kind, especially to those who were poor.

Who is the second king in the Christmas story? Jesus!

The Jewish people didn't like living under Roman rule. They wanted a new king, a savior, who would restore the nation of Israel and give them their freedom and make life easier for them. But God had an even better plan! God sent Jesus, who isn't just king of the Jewish people, but the ruler of God's kingdom. Jesus showed us that real leadership isn't about how much money you have or how much power or control you have over people, but how well you love them and serve them.

Let's think about some of the stories that we know about Jesus. (You might recall Jesus' healings, the feeding of the 5000, his teachings on love and forgiveness, washing the disciples feet, etc.) What kind of king do you think Jesus is? How is this different from kings or rulers on earth? How did Jesus bring hope to God's people? How do you think we, as citizens in God's Kingdom, should live and treat one another?

## Sing: *What Child is This?*

What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

[Chorus] This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh. Come, peasant, king to own Him.

The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

## Play:

Make a paper plate crown in honor of Jesus, the King of Kings. Fold a flimsy paper plate in half. Cut lines from the center of the folder edge out toward the edge of the plate like you are cutting pie slices, but don't cut all the way to the edge. Unfold the plate and pull the triangles upward to form the points of the crown. You can decorate the crown with markers, crayons, paint, or glitter glue. Glue on buttons or beads as jewels.



## Serve:

There are many facing hard times in our world today who could use some hope. Gather some food, clothing, or toy items that you can donate to help someone this holiday season.

## Pray:

Dear God, you love us so much you gave us Jesus to bring us hope for a better world. Help us to follow Jesus as our King and live his rules to love you and love others. Amen.



## Week 2: Prince of Peace (Peace)

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**Light the Candle:** We light this candle for the peace we have in Jesus.

### Wonder:

The Bible says that Jesus was born in a place where the animals were kept and laid in a feeding trough (a manger) to sleep. What animals might have been there? What do you think it smelled like? What did it sound like?

**Read:** Luke 2:4-7

### Learn and Share:

The hymn Silent Night suggests that the night Jesus was born was calm and peaceful, but the Bible suggests something different! Mary and Joseph were tired from the journey and struggled to find a place to stay. They ended up in the place where animals were kept, without even a bed to place the baby! We don't know if animals were present, but if they were, it was likely not a very silent night at all!

Mary and Joseph likely had very different plans for their life before God stepped in and made them the parents of the son of God. Both Mary and Joseph said "yes" to God's plan, even though they knew it wouldn't always be easy because they trusted God's plan for the world and for their lives. Their trust gave them peace.

Peace is what happens when we know that God is with us and God is for us. This is the Christmas promise. Another name for Jesus is Emmanuel, which means God with Us. The Bible says that Jesus is God's Word made flesh to live among us. The Christmas promise is that God came to be with united with us in our messy world so that we can live in peace with God. That's why Jesus is also known as the Prince of Peace!

How does knowing that God is with you bring you peace?

## Sing: *Silent Night*

Silent Night, Holy Night, Round yon virgin, mother and child  
Holy infant so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven above

Heavenly hosts sing Allelujah

Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

## Play:

Get out your family's nativity and retell the Christmas story. Invite the children to play with the animals in the story. What was the donkey doing? The sheep? What do you think that night was like for Mary and Joseph? For baby Jesus?

## Serve:

In honor of the animals in the nativity story, collect old towels or blankets and take them to an animal shelter. You might also bring some dog or cat food and toys.

## Pray:

Dear God, we thank you for Jesus, the Prince of Peace. We know that through Jesus, you are with us and you are for us. Remind us of your presence when we are scared or lonely. Bring us peace when we feel anxious or frustrated. Help us to share your peace with others. Amen.



## Week 3: Son of Mary (Joy)

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**Light the Candle:** We light this candle for the joy we have in Jesus.

### **Wonder:**

What brings you the greatest joy?

**Read:** Luke 1:26-56

### **Learn and Share:**

Jesus is referred to as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. One of the divine mysteries of our faith is that Jesus is both fully God and fully human. The Christmas Carol we are using as our theme song in our sermon series is called "What Child is This?" refers to Jesus as the Son of Mary over and over again, reminding us that Jesus was raised by a brave woman who said "yes" to a difficult situation, putting her trust in God. Upon hearing the news she would bear God's son who would bring salvation to the world, Mary sings a song of joy for the work God does on behalf of those who need it the most. Even in hard times, we can find joy in knowing that God is at work in our lives and that Jesus is always with us.

What can we be grateful to God for? What blessings has God given us? How can we share that joy with others?

## Sing: *Joy to the World*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Him room. And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing. And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns. Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods, Rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat the sound joy

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love  
And wonders of His love; and wonders and wonders of His love

## Play:

Make instruments with paper plates. Fold a paper plate in half and fill it with dry beans, rice, corn, or beads. Glue the edges together to make a half-moon tambourine. You could punch holes along the sides and add ribbons or streamers if you'd like. Play Christmas music and dance around shaking your tambourines.

## Serve:

Bring joy to someone by sending them a homemade card or bringing a homemade treat.

## Pray:

Dear God, thank you for all the many blessings you have given us. We thank you especially for your son Jesus, who brings salvation to the world. Amen.



## Week 4: Enthroned by Love (Love)

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**Light the Candle:** We light this candle for the love we have in Jesus.

### **Wonder:**

What makes you feel the most loved?

**Read:** Matthew 1:18-25

### **Learn and Share:**

Joseph and Mary were to be married, but when he found out that she was having a baby and he was not the father, he had intended to leave her quietly. But an angel told Joseph that Mary's baby was God's son - the Savior of the world! We know from the Bible, that Joseph and Mary did get married and that Joseph raised Jesus as his own son. He was there when Jesus was presented in the temple after his birth. He was with Jesus and Mary when they fled to Egypt to escape from the evil King Herod. He was there when 12-year-old Jesus got lost in Jerusalem and they found him in the temple. God made sure that Jesus had a parents to love him, protect him, and teach him the faith.

Families are formed in many different ways - by marriage, by birth, by adoption, by friendship, by love. God gave us families, including our church family, to love, protect, encourage, teach, help, and serve one another. We need each other. How does your family care for each other?

## Sing: *Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky  
and stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay close by me forever,  
and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

## Play:

Make and decorate a family tree. Draw and color a tree trunk. Cut out leaves from construction paper or draw leaves representing different family members from all sides of your family. You can include anyone who feels like family - friends, church members, pets, etc. Talk about how each of you show love to one another and help each other.

## Serve:

Perform random acts of kindness in your community. Do a household chore without asking. Write a kind note or leave a gift for a delivery person or bus driver. Make a point to compliment your waiter or cashier. Clean up someone else's mess. Or find other ways to show love and kindness in surprising ways.

## Pray:

Dear God, thank you for the love that we have in Jesus. Through Jesus you have adopted us all into your family. You love us and care for us and protect us. You are with us always. Thank you for Christmas. Amen.



# Christmas

*What child is this?*

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## Light the Candle:

We light the Christ candle  
to celebrate Jesus is born!

**Read:** Luke 2:1-20

We've spent this whole Advent season getting to know who Jesus is. Spend some time talking about who Jesus is to you. Today read the Christmas story from the scripture in Luke or from a children's storybook Bible and celebrate the good news together with your own family traditions.