



CHRISTMAS PACKET | 2021

## HOW TO USE THIS PACKET

Christ can easily be overlooked in the hustle and bustle of the Christmas Holiday. The purpose of this packet is to take holiday symbols that surround this season and focus them on Jesus. Hopefully, you will be armed with helpful ways to help draw your little ones closer to our Savior this year.

Several stories and activities were taken from The ADVENTure of Christmas by Lisa Whelchel.

### Finding the Birth of Jesus in the Scripture

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-11 (portions of the story)

Luke 1:26-45, 2:1-20 (the entire account)

### Additional Books

What is Christmas? By Michelle Medlock Adams

The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado & Thomas Nelson

The Pine Parable, The Parable Series #4 by Liz Curtis Higgs & Thomas Nelson

The First Christmas by Carol Heyer

### Online Resources

Jesse Tree:

A Jesse Tree is an advent project. Each day an ornament represents part of the lineage of Christ. The tree begins with creation and stretches through the Old and New Testaments until we reach the wonderful story of the birth of Jesus.

<http://christmas.yourway.net/jesse-tree-ornaments/>

Advent Calendar with Scripture Reading:

<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/holidays/making-meaningful-christmas-memories/celebrate-advent.aspx>

## **ADVENT WREATH**

The word advent means, "to come." The advent wreath is used to prepare our hearts as believers for the coming of Jesus.

Advent is completed over a four week period and consists of three purple candles, one pink candle and a fifth white candle lit on a circle-shaped wreath of evergreen. The three purple candles in the wreath symbolize hope, peace, and love. These candles are lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The pink candle symbolizes joy and is typically lit on the third Sunday. The fifth, white candle is lit on Christmas Eve/Day and symbolizes the birth of Jesus.

The accumulation of light is an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. The circular wreath represents God's eternity and unity. Evergreens are a symbol of enduring life.

### Advent Wreath

#### Materials Needed

- Garland or greenery attached to a Styrofoam wreath
- Pine cones (optional)
- 3 purple candles, 1 pink candle, 1 white candle
- 5 candle holders

#### Directions

1. If using a Styrofoam circle wreath, insert your greens and pinecones into the Styrofoam to make a wreath. If using garland, create a circle with your garland and tie it together. Adorn the garland with pinecones and other items of your choice.
2. Place the wreath around your candleholder. Place four purple candles, one pink candle and one white candle in the center.
3. On the next page you will find an example of an Advent family devotional. Feel free to add verses, carols, and discussions of your own.

### **First Sunday/ Dec 2nd: “The Prophet’s Candle” (HOPE)**

This candle is meant to signify the hope of Jesus’ coming

- Light one purple candle
- Have a time of prayer
- Read Isaiah 60: 2-3
- Extinguish the flame

### **Second Sunday/ Dec 9th: “The Bethlehem Candle” (PEACE)**

This candle is in honor of the city of Christ’s birth

- Light two purple candles – hope and peace
- Pray
- Read Mark 1:4
- Extinguish the flames

### **Third Sunday/ Dec 16th: “The Shepherd’s Candle” (JOY)**

- Light two purple candles and one pink to symbolize joy
- Pray
- Read Isaiah 35:10
- Extinguish the flames



### **Fourth Sunday/ Dec 23rd: “The angle’s Candle” (LOVE)**

- Light all four candles- hope, peace, joy, and love
- Pray
- Read Isaiah 9:6-7
- Extinguish the flames

### **Christmas Eve/Day: “The Christ Candle”**

- Light all four candles and add the fifth white candle to the light of Christ.
- Prayer/Thanksgiving/Celebration
- Read the Christmas Story... Luke 1:68-79 and Luke 2:1-20
- Keep the candles lit a bit longer, or safely throughout the day/evening.
- Celebrate the highlight of Advent... the birth of Jesus! Discuss ways to celebrate Him all year long!

## CHRISTMAS TREE

While decorating your Christmas tree discuss...

The Christmas tree is a perfect reminder of why Christ came as a baby. One day, Christ would be nailed to a tree and die for the sins of all mankind. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness."

Other connections:

1. The tree boughs extend outward like the arms of Christ stretched upon the cross.
2. The tree points toward heaven drawing our attention to our Father that loves us.

### Scrap Tree Activity

Materials needed:

- Green, brown, yellow, red, white paper/fabric
- Scissors
- Circle punch/hole punch (optional)
- Glue

Directions

1. Cut green paper into various length strips.
2. Glue the strips down to form a tree.
3. Add a brown stump and yellow star.
4. Use a circle/hole punch or trace circles on the red paper. Use the red circles to decorate the paper tree.



## THE STAR

Anytime this symbol is around discuss...

Matthew 2:2 says, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

The star plays such an integral part of the birth of Jesus and we use this symbol all through the Christmas season. Even Jesus refers to himself as the bright morning star in Revelation 22:16.

### Star Gazing

Materials Needed:

- A clear night
- Blanket

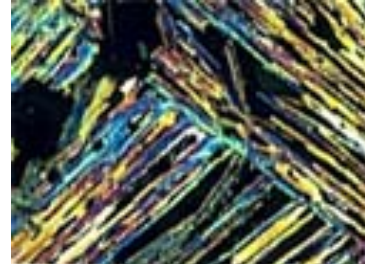
Directions

1. Take your kiddos outside to try to do some stargazing. It may be hard to find a good spot, but it will be well worth the hunt.
2. Lie on your backs and absorb the brilliance of God's handiwork. Use the opportunity to talk about what a miracle it was for that star to plant itself directly over the baby Jesus.

### Starry Art (crayon etching)

Materials Needed

- White Poster board (although paper could work)
- Crayons
- Popsicle stick / paper clip



See note below

Directions

1. Fill the paper with crayon patterns making sure to press hard. It is best to use shades of yellow and white for this activity
2. Once you have filled the paper with crayon patterns, color heavily over the whole paper using black crayon.
3. Begin to scratch star designs using your stick or paper clip into the black crayon. The light colors will show through where you scrape away the black.
4. If you want your picture to have a polished look, rub wax paper on it over the top to give it a shine.

**NOTE: for younger kiddos they can just etch into the black and you can talk about being lights in a dark world.**

## LIGHTS

While driving around admiring the lights discuss...

Christmas lights scream to us what we are to be – shining through the world's darkness. Matthew 5:14, 16 read, "You are the light of the world-like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

Other connections:

1. Jesus wants us to shine like these Christmas lights. Can you think of ways we can be a light to our neighborhood?"
2. The Christmas lights that line peoples' driveways remind me of Psalm 119:105 which says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path." It is a lot easier to see where we are going with all these lights. Lets help one another remember to be reading God's word so that we are better in step with Him.

## Luminaries

Materials Needed:

- Lunch Sacks
- Hole punch or decorative punch
- Sand or kitty litter
- Votive candles

Directions

1. Punch the sides of the lunch sacks with hole/decorative punch
2. Fill the bottom of each bag with an inch of sand/kitty litter
3. Anchor a votive candle firmly in the sand and light the candle.
4. Line your walkway or porch and shine for your neighbors!

## CARDS

When sending or receiving cards discuss...

The purpose of the original Christmas card has gotten lost through the centuries. Cute sayings and pictures of ourselves have taken the place of the original purpose of sending greetings during this season. Christmas cards were first produced in 1843. They were illustrated with nativity scenes and would echo the words of the angel who delivered the very first Christmas message, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." (Luke 2:10)

Other Connections:

1. Discuss how your family can spread the good news of Jesus by sending cards. Explain the importance of making sure that if we send cards that they depict the true meaning of Christmas.
2. Why do you think people who don't believe in Jesus still love Christmas so much?  
(Explain that even people who reject Jesus still long for the peace, joy, and love that he can bring. That's why it is important that we help others know who can give them all of that and more.)

### Card Pile Up

Materials Needed:

- Collected Christmas cards
- Metal ring/ ribbon
- Hole punch

Directions:

1. Gather the cards and photographs that your family has received throughout the month.
2. Punch a hole in the corner of each card or photograph and string them on a metal ring or ribbon.
3. Keep this stack near your kitchen table. Each evening pray for one or two (depending on how many you have) of the families represented in each card.
4. When you get to the end, start over. By the end of the month your kiddos will know your family friends better and have a deeper understanding of praying for others.



## GIFTS

While buying, wrapping, or opening gifts discuss...

Around the 1800s people began purchasing small trinkets rather than making homemade Christmas gifts, which was the custom. In order to make these store bought presents seem more meaningful, people would wrap them in brown paper and decorate the paper themselves... and so began the tradition of wrapping gifts. The greatest gift giver wrapped His gift up in swaddling clothes. Philippians 2:6-7 says, "Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form." The best gift ever given was wrapped and sent to save us all.

### Other Connections

1. Why was God's gift to the human race so important?  
(discuss hope, grace, and salvation)
2. What difference does it make to us today that God wrapped himself in human flesh and came to earth?  
(talk about being able to better understand him as the Son of God when we can relate to Him as the Son of Man).
3. Ask your kids to think of one gift that they are really hoping to get this year. Discuss why it does not come close to comparing to the gift of baby Jesus.

### Homemade wrapping paper

Materials Needed:

- Plain or brown wrapping paper / newspaper
- Art supplies to decorate with (flowers, stickers, glitter, buttons, etc).

### Directions:

1. After hearing about the wrapping of gifts in the 1800s, your kiddos may want to wrap their own gifts to add their own personal touch to the gifts they give.
2. Allow them to wrap and decorate their wrapping in anyway they would like.

## The gift game

Materials needed:

- A gift sack for each of your children
- Random objects from around your house

Directions

1. Ask your child to hunt through the house for something you or another family member (that is present) would want. Tell them to secretly place it in the gift sack once they find it. Double check the gift before it is given. You may have to do a little coaching here. I have had to say, "that is a nice gift and YOU would really like it, but is that something SHE would really like?"
2. Upon returning with the gift sack ask them to give it to the person they got it for.
3. The recipient of the gift has two rules. The first is that they must say thank you and the second is that they have to say one positive thing about the gift that they received.
4. Play the game this way two or three times until they become good at coming up with the positive response. If you have multiple kids they can take turns.
5. Once they have gotten the hang of it ask them to find something that the other person will probably NOT enjoy and bring it back in the gift sack.
6. The recipient still has the same two rules only this time it becomes a little more difficult to find something positive to say. Give your kids help in this area. Good phrases to arm them with are: "Thank you, I don't have one of these." "Thank you, that is a really nice color." "Thank you. I will enjoy sharing this with my brother/sister." You will, however, be surprised at what great things they can come up with when given the chance to think about it.

\*\*\*Play this game periodically throughout the month. When the time comes to open gifts this holiday season, give them a little reminder of what they have been practicing!

## Gifts of the Magi

If you're looking for a different way to look at Christmas gifts with your family this year, here is a different spin. There were three wise men that brought gifts to baby Jesus. They brought gold (something of value), frankincense (something used in worship that brought others closer together), and myrrh (something useful or needed). You could pattern your gift giving in the same fashion. Your children could receive something of value (something they have really been wanting), something the whole family can do together (passes, tickets, new books to read, etc), and something practical that they need (shoes, clothes, etc).

For more info on these gifts:

<http://voices.yahoo.com/the-meaning-behind-gifts-wise-men-2366505.html?cat=34> - <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-meaning-behind-gifts-wise-men-2366505.html?cat=34>

## **Scripture memory**

Luke 2:10-11

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord...”