



HOLY LIGHT
ADVENT 2012

Welcome to Advent 2012

Rediscovering the Light

Advent is a special time of year when we wait expectantly for the joy of Christmas. Advent is a season filled with rich imagery, colors and symbols. One of the most powerful images that comes out of this season is that of light. As Christians we journey through advent by lighting candles in preparation of a much larger and brighter light. John says it well in his Gospel, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world", and then a few verses later John declares this powerful statement, "the word became flesh." Our focus this advent season is on the task of "rediscovering the light." It is easy to be overwhelmed by the details of the season and forget the larger event that took place two thousand years ago when God sent his light into the world through the birth of his son.

In years past we have passed out and offered Advent Devotionals. This year instead of a devotional we are giving you a list of possible activities that are meant to help you and your family rediscover the light of Christ. Our challenge to you is to choose one activity each week during Advent to complete together as a family. We are giving each family four glow sticks one for each week. As you choose and participate in these activities activate one glow stick as a reminder of the presence of the light of Christ in whichever activity you are completing. You are not limited to four and we have given you a wide variety of activities to choose from for all ages. Enjoy this season of advent and let's rediscover the light of Christ.

1. Family Dinner Discussion: Light overcoming Darkness

How much darkness does it take to overcome light?

How much light does it take to overcome darkness?

Read John 1:1-5, 9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁹ **The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.**

How does Jesus overcome the darkness in our world?

2. Take a walk downtown in your city/community and look at all the different kinds of lights.

Why is it important to have Christ as a light in your community?

Read Revelation 21:22-27

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ **The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.** ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

3. Play a game of hide and go seek in the dark. The person searching should use a flashlight.

How does it feel to be alone in the dark?

Read Ephesians 5:8-10

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

How do we live as children of light?

4. Family night out at a restaurant: When you are out to eat at a restaurant find a way to be a light to your waiter or waitress--be a blessing to them in some way.

Read Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

In what ways can you be the light of the world?

5. Visit a Nativity Scene: Take a trip to the nativity scene in downtown Libertyville or find a nativity scene near your house to visit. Spend some time at the manger.

Read John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, **“I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Where do you see Jesus' light in our world?

6. Internet Activity: Look up one significant event that happened in the year each family member was born.

Read Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep
darkness a light has dawned.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be
on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government
and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

How did the birth of Jesus change the course of history?

How does the birth of Jesus change our lives?

7. Star Walk: Take a family walk on a clear night and look up at the stars.

Read Philippians 2:14-16

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” **Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky** ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

What are some ways you can "shine like stars" this week.

8. Family Game Night: Pick a favorite game or two and enjoy some fellowship time together as a family.

Read 1 John 1:5-7

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**

What difference does it make in your family when you "walk in the light" together?

9. Read the Christmas story: Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-24, Luke 2:1-20, and Matthew 2:1-12 or if you have young children read the story from a children's Bible.

Read: II Corinthians 4:4-6

⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶**For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.**

How does the Christmas story display God's glory?

10. Family Baking Night: Choose a favorite Christmas recipe and bake together as a family. While you are waiting for you cookies to "rise" read and discuss the scripture passage below.

Read: Isaiah 60:1-3, 18-21

**“Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.**

**² See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.**

**³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

**¹⁸ No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,
but you will call your walls Salvation
and your gates Praise.**

**¹⁹ The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.**

**²⁰ Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of sorrow will end.**

**²¹ Then all your people will be righteous
and they will possess the land forever.**

**They are the shoot I have planted,
the work of my hands,
for the display of my splendor.**

Share God’s everlasting light and some of your baked goods with a neighbor.

11. Family Discussion on darkness

Why does darkness bring fear?

What do you fear?

Read Psalm 27: 1-5

**The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?**

**The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?**

²When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

³Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

⁴One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

⁵For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

How can God's light take away our fear?

12. Take a drive to look at the Christmas lights or drive through the Winter Wonderland light show.

Read John 12:44-46

Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵ The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ **I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.**

How does Jesus' birth help us live in the light?

13. Watch the sunrise together as a family

Read Luke 1:76-79

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
⁷⁹ **to shine on those living in darkness**
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

How does Jesus' birth bring us peace?

14. Family Sing-Along: Gather around the piano or bring out your favorite Christmas CD's and sing praises to the newborn king!

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, **that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.** ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

What praises do you give to God today?

Come, Lord Jesus 141

In unison

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Come, Lord Jesus'. It is written for a unison voice part. The score is in 2/2 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and repetitive. The lyrics are provided in three lines, corresponding to the three verses of the hymn. The first line of lyrics is: '1 Come, Lord Je - sus; come, Lord Je - sus;'. The second line is: '2 Come, O Prince of Peace; come, O Prince of Peace;'. The third line is: '3 Come, Em - man - u - el; come, Em - man - u - el;'. The second system of the score continues the melody and includes the lyrics: 'come, Lord Je - sus; come and be born in our hearts.', 'come, O Prince of Peace; come, and be born in our hearts.', and 'come, Em - man - u - el; come, and be born in our hearts.'

1 Come, Lord Je - sus; come, Lord Je - sus;
2 Come, O Prince of Peace; come, O Prince of Peace;
3 Come, Em - man - u - el; come, Em - man - u - el;

come, Lord Je - sus; come and be born in our hearts.
come, O Prince of Peace; come, and be born in our hearts.
come, Em - man - u - el; come, and be born in our hearts.

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We will be singing this song throughout Advent as we light the Advent Wreath Candles each Sunday Morning.

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